



## The psycho-oncology service

A guide for patients and their carers



## Introduction

A diagnosis of cancer can be very difficult. You may experience a range of emotions and find this hard to deal with. Whilst you have your own personal resilience, perhaps the support of family and friends and that of the nurses and doctors treating you, sometimes you may feel you need some extra help. We are a specialist team who can support you with coping with the emotional and psychological challenges of having cancer.

## What can psycho-oncology help me with?

We can support you if you are:

- feeling low and unable to enjoy life
- experiencing anxiety which is affecting your day to day life
- struggling to cope with your diagnosis, investigations and treatment
- distressed about the changes in your body and appearance
- finding that your illness has affected your intimate relationship with your partner
- struggling to adjust
- having difficulty coping with loss
- someone who has a pre-existing mental health problem and you need extra support whilst under the care of The Christie

If any of the above apply to you and you are a Christie patient, you can ask a member of staff involved in your treatment at The Christie to refer you to our service.

## Who will I see?

Our team is made up of counsellors, psychologists, mental health nurses and doctors who specialise in the psychological impact of cancer. Members of our team also specialise in the mental health of older adults, including memory difficulties and confusion.

## What help might I be offered?

Our nurses and doctors can provide emotional support and can give you advice about other treatments that might help you. We offer a range of talking therapies including counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), psychotherapy, couples' counselling (for issues related to the cancer diagnosis and journey) and psychosexual counselling. The therapy is an opportunity to explore the impact of the cancer diagnosis and treatment and to help you find ways of coping with it.

Our nurses and doctors can give you advice on other treatment options such as antidepressant treatment. You may also be sign-posted to other agencies that can help support you or be referred to other services more local to you if appropriate.

Our psychologist offers a detailed assessment for people who have complex and chronic problems.

We have a Macmillan dementia nurse consultant who can provide support regarding care and decision-making for treatment of people with dementia and cancer.

## I'm interested, what do I do?

We accept referrals from within The Christie. You can ask any of the nurses, doctors or other staff involved in your care to fill in a referral form for you.

## What will happen next?

You will be offered an outpatient appointment with a member of our team. We will either write to you or telephone you about this.

The appointment will usually be held at The Christie in the psycho-oncology department which is located close to the Wilmslow Road entrance in department 42. Please report to the reception in department 42 for outpatient appointments. We will advise you if your appointment is to be held elsewhere on site.

We aim to see all referred outpatients promptly. If this is not possible we will make prompt contact with the person who referred you to offer advice where possible. There is a waiting list for counselling and psychological therapies.

We also see urgent referrals on the inpatient wards.

## What happens at the appointment?

Your first appointment will last approximately one hour. You will have the opportunity to discuss your current concerns and difficulties and we will agree a plan of action with you. A letter may be written to your Christie consultant, referrer or GP to advise them that you have been seen by our service. This letter may include details of what the plan we have agreed entails. The content of these letters can be discussed with you when you are seen.

## What happens if I can't attend the appointment I am sent?

You can contact us and let us know if you can't make it and we will try to offer you an appointment which fits in with you.

Call the psycho-oncology department on **0161 446 3681** or **8004** (9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday).

## I don't think psycho-oncology is for me, what other support is available?

There are other ways of accessing support with your mental health and psychological well-being.

Here are a few of the options available:

- Your GP may be able to offer you access to counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy and medication.
- The cancer information centre at The Christie (department 3) has information about support services and groups in various locations.
- The complementary therapy team can support patients and carers through all stages of their cancer journey. They provide advice and treatment sessions which can include hypnotherapy, reflexology, aromatherapy and relaxation techniques.
- In an emergency, support with your mental health is available via your local Accident and Emergency department or via your GP's out of hours service.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard.

If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact [patient.information@christie.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@christie.nhs.uk)

Contact The Christie Hotline for  
urgent support and specialist advice

**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### Visit the Cancer Information Centre

The Christie at Withington **0161 446 8100**

The Christie at Oldham **0161 918 7745**

The Christie at Salford **0161 918 7804**

Open Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm.

Opening times can vary, please ring to check  
before making a special journey.

### The Christie NHS Foundation Trust

Wilmslow Road  
Manchester M20 4BX

**0161 446 3000**

**[www.christie.nhs.uk](http://www.christie.nhs.uk)**



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