

## Lost that loving feeling?



Thinking about psychosexual therapy?

**INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS**

**ABOUT**  
**Psychological Therapy**  
**for people living with a cancer diagnosis**

This information is available in other formats on request. Please ask your nursing staff to arrange this

## Why Psychosexual Therapy?

Sometimes being ill or adjusting to disability can create changes in intimate relationships or how you feel as a sexual person.

Studies have shown that this happens for many patients, whether their illness is chronic or acute, whether their disability is sudden or slow to develop. We have a psychosexual therapist to support the recovery of our patients.

## Why might changes have occurred?

Following illness or disability, your body may look, feel or behave differently. This might be because of the physical effects of surgery, chronic pain, nerve damage, or hormonal changes that affect how you feel or perhaps the side effects of chemotherapy or other drugs that can make you feel ill or affect sexual response. Perhaps your partner has had to become your carer or your lover has become your patient and it is hard to talk about the impact of this on your intimate relationship.

## Common problems that people report include:

- Loss of intimacy/ability to talk about sexual matters.
- Fear or anxiety about sex
- Feelings of rejection
- Loss of sexual desire
- Inability to accept changes to the way the body looks or responds
- Inability to get (or keep) an erection
- Difficulty with orgasm
- Painful sex

## About our psychosexual therapist

Our psychosexual therapist has more than 20 years specialist nursing experience and is qualified as a psychosexual therapist with Relate and registered with the College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists.

## What will happen when I come to clinic?

Each appointment lasts up to one hour. At the first appointment you will talk about the effect that your illness, disability or treatment has had on you and your intimate relationship/s. If you have a partner it is advisable that you come together.

Some patients find that talking it all through just the once is enough, whilst others require several appointments, where goals for recovery can be negotiated.

At follow on appointments you will be set exercises to do at home to help you achieve your goals. You should be prepared to give detailed feedback about your 'homework' so that progress can be monitored.

*At no time will you be asked to undress or do anything sexual in the therapy room.*

## Will it be confidential?

Your conversations with the therapist are often of an extremely private and sensitive nature. Confidentiality is taken very seriously and will be safeguarded. The only exception to this is if there are concerns about your safety or the safety of others.

Usually your GP and the Clinical Team looking after you have a copy of a letter merely to say that you are working with the Psychosexual Therapist and another when we complete. The content of the letter will be discussed with you.

## How do I take this forward?

If you feel that you have issues with intimacy, sex or your close relationship following illness or disability, and would like to talk this through please let your GP, Consultant or Nurse Specialist know so that an initial appointment can be arranged.

The service runs on a Monday and Tuesday in the day time.

Further information about psychosexual therapy can be found on the website of the College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists:

[www.cosrt.org.uk](http://www.cosrt.org.uk)

The Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre  
1 Willaston Crescent  
Harrogate  
HG2 7BF  
Direct line: 01423 55 7300  
Email: [cancerinformation@hdfnhs.uk](mailto:cancerinformation@hdfnhs.uk)  
[www.hdfnhs.uk](http://www.hdfnhs.uk)

Version:4

HDFT approval date: 16 August 2012