Persistent pain is complex and can affect people in a number of ways, not just physically. Clinical psychologists can help people with a wide range of physical health problems to cope with the emotional consequences of these difficulties, and to improve their quality of life.
The Oxford Pain Management Centre is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of consultants in anaesthesia and pain management, clinical psychologists and advanced nurse practitioners.

Chronic pain is often difficult to explain, difficult to understand, and a challenge to treat. Our aim is not to cure your pain but to help you return to a better quality of life, despite your pain.
How can clinical psychology help?

People’s personal goals for psychological treatment vary enormously. They can often include being able to:

- increase understanding of chronic pain
- improve mobility
- reduce low mood and depression related to pain and ill-health
- decrease anxiety and anger about pain
- improve how you deal with stress
- help you to lead as normal a life as possible, despite pain, through gradual return to activities you find important
- make sure you are using your pain medication effectively, including helping you to reduce long-term use of medication, if required
- improve your confidence in managing your pain.

(Please note: psychologists are not psychiatrists and do not use medication as a way of helping you.)

Is it “All in my head” then?

Just because your Pain Doctor has recommended that you speak with one of our psychologists, this does not mean that they think you are ‘mad’ or somehow ‘making up your pain’. All pain is real and doesn’t just affect your body; it also affects how much you can do, how you feel emotionally, the quality of your life and the life of those around you.

You can continue to take any medical treatments you use while you are having psychological treatment, with the hope that these approaches will all work together to help you.
How do I access clinical pain psychology?

1. **Referring yourself**

   The first step is to let us know that you would like to be seen (see the end of this leaflet for ‘How to refer yourself for a clinical psychology assessment’).

   The receptionist will add your name to the psychology waiting list. Once your name reaches the top of the waiting list (which may take a few months) you will be sent an appointment for an assessment.

2. **Assessment**

   At the assessment we will talk about how your chronic pain is affecting your life, and your current ways of coping. We will discuss your goals and decide together whether clinical psychology might help you. We may also recommend that we refer you on to other services, or discuss other sources of potential help.

3. **Clinical treatment**

   After your assessment, if we decide that you would benefit from going ahead with psychological treatment with us, this can start right away. You will be offered a series of hour-long appointments, typically carried out over 4, 6, or 10 sessions, spaced apart as needed. You will need to come to all sessions and commit to working on goals yourself between sessions, to really get the benefit.

Where to come to

**Oxford Pain Management Centre**
(Formerly the Pain Relief Unit)
Churchill Hospital
Old Road
Oxford, OX3 7LE
Useful sources of information

Books:
Overcoming Chronic Pain, by Frances Cole.
Living Well with Pain & Illness, by Vidyamala Burch.
The Pain Management Plan, by Robert Lewin and Mike Bryson.

Websites:
Living with chronic pain
Website: www.paincd.org.uk
Patient information and a free audio download.

Pain UK
Website: www.painuk.org
National alliance for UK pain charities.

MIND
Website: www.mind.org.uk
Leading UK mental health charity.

The Pain Toolkit
Website: www.paintoolkit.org
Patient self-help and support.

The British Pain Society
Website: www.britishpainsociety.org
An alliance for health professionals who care for people with pain, but with lots of information for patients.
How to refer yourself for a clinical psychology assessment

If you think you would like to see a clinical psychologist, please use one of the following methods to let us know:

1. Face-to-face in the Pain Relief Unit – show this leaflet to one of our receptionists.

2. By telephone – call 01865 572 081 (Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm)
   You will be asked for your name, date of birth, and MRN (hospital) number, if you have it.
   Please state that you have this leaflet and would like to refer yourself to the clinical psychology team.

You must let us know within one month of receiving this leaflet from the Pain Doctor whether you would like to be assessed. If we don’t hear from you within a month, we will assume you do not wish to see a clinical psychologist. This will not affect any other treatment you may be receiving from the Pain Management Centre.
If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk

Dr Sandra Wiltshire
Consultant Clinical Psychologist
October 2015
Review: October 2018
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information