

Mental Health – What are my options for psychological treatment?

This is a quick guide to psychological services available for common mental health complaints.

Anxiety

Most people feel anxious from time to time. However, anxiety can become abnormal if it interferes with your day-to-day activities. Anxiety is abnormal if it:

- Is out of proportion to the stressful situation; or
- Is still there when a stressful situation has gone, or the stress is minor; or
- Appears for no obvious reason when there is no stressful situation.

About 1 in 20 people have an anxiety disorder at any one time. Anxiety is a symptom of various anxiety disorders. Anxiety can also be one of a number of symptoms as a reaction to stressful situations. Anxiety disorders can often be treated. Treatments include various talking (psychological) treatments and medication.

Depression

Depression is common. About 5 in 100 adults have depression every year. Symptoms can affect day-to-day life and can become very distressing. Sometimes it is mild or lasts just a few weeks. Many people know when they are depressed. Some people do not realise when they are depressed. They may know that they are not right and are not functioning well but don't know why. The main symptoms of depression are:

- Sadness or low mood that you can't shake off. This may be with or without weepiness.
- A loss of interest or pleasure in activities, even for activities that you normally enjoy.
- Other common symptoms include troubled sleep, change in appetite, tiredness or loss of energy, finding it difficult to concentrate, feeling agitated or slow, feelings of being worthless, or too much, or inappropriate guilt.
- For some people thoughts such as "life's not worth living" or "I don't care if I don't wake up" are common.

Treatments include talking (psychological) treatments and antidepressant medicines. Treatment takes time to work but has a good chance of success. Some people have repeated episodes of depression and require long-term treatment to keep symptoms away.

How we can help

You can talk to your healthcare professional about what might be best for you. They might try to help you make a choice based on some of the following things:

- the types of problems you have come in with today
- how bad those problems are, how long you have been affected and how much they are affecting your life
- your background and history
- the likelihood that these services will help you feel better

The final decision is up to you. You should think about what is most important to you when considering the pros/cons of each option.

Self-help

This approach lets you tackle your mental health on your own using books, websites and support from family and friends and your local community. Recommended materials use a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach.

Moodjuice: www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk Moodcafe: <http://www.moodcafe.co.uk/> Angus libraries provides CBT self-help books to support you. You can download a list of suitable title here: www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk/bookprescription

Pros

- Can access these immediately to take control of own mental health

Cons

- This form of treatment is mainly suitable if you are quite motivated to help yourself. For some people this can be difficult at first due to how they think and feel during a mental health crisis.

Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Computerised CBT means using an online programme to learn to cope with anxiety and depression.

The Beating the Blues programme: www.beatingtheblues.co.uk involves eight sessions each lasting about 50 minutes. After each session there are things for you to do and think about. You can be referred by your GP.

Pros

- Anyone can use Beating the Blues - no computer experience is necessary
- Normally you'll received an activation code within two weeks
- The program is completely confidential and available 24/7 so you can work through the program at your own pace and when you want to do it

Cons

- You won't speak to a therapist face-to-face.
- You need to be able to access to a computer

Guided self-help

Guided self-help means working through self-help books or web materials with support for managing your mental health over the phone.

NHS Living Life is a service that is available to anyone over 16 suffering low mood, mild to moderate depression and/or anxiety. This also adopts a CBT approach. NHS Living Life can be accessed either through GP referral or by phoning the number directly on freephone: **0800 328 9655**. The phone line is open **Mon-Fri 1.00 pm - 9.00 pm**.

Pros

- Research has shown guided self-help can help people with milder mental health problems
- You have a coach supporting you through that process

Cons

- Need access to a phone and be available during appointment hours

Face-to-face therapy

Psychological treatment for anxiety and depression is provided by the Angus Adult Psychological Therapies Service. This is a team made up of Applied Psychologists and Psychological Therapists. They help people with mild to moderate mental health problems by exploring difficulties, agreeing aims for treatment and helping you to learn how to cope with difficult situations.

Pros

- Treatment is face-to-face, which some people prefer
- You will have a therapist supporting you through the process
- Appointments are usually available at your local surgery or in another Health Centre nearby

Cons

- There is a longer wait for this service. Usually you are given your appointment within 18 weeks.