

What is a clinical psychologist?

A clinical psychologist is a specialist who has been trained to help people who are experiencing some distress or difficulty in their life.

All clinical psychologists have completed professional training, which lasts for a minimum of six years.

Clinical psychologists are not psychiatrists or medical doctors. They do not prescribe drugs or give physical examinations but they do work closely with other healthcare staff.

What sort of problems could a clinical psychologist help with?

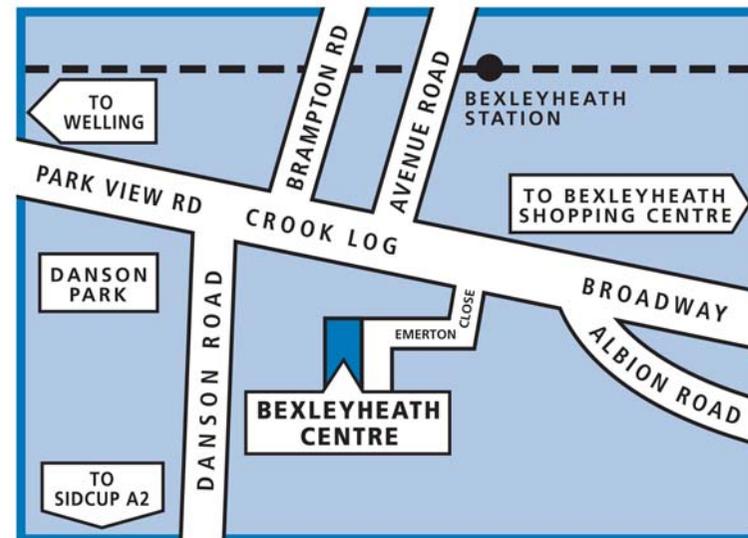
There are a wide range of problems that can cause distress or difficulty for people. These include:

- adjustment to health changes
- anxiety/panic
- bereavement
- carer stress
- dementia
- depression
- memory difficulties
- relationships.

Contact details

If you need to contact Clinical Psychology Services for Older People in Bexley, please telephone or write to:

Clinical Psychology
(Bexley OPMH Team)
The Bexleyheath Centre, 4 Emerton Close
Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 8DX
Tel: 020 8301 9447
Fax: 020 8301 9408



Buses:
89, 96,
422, 494,
B11, B12,
B13, B15
and B16
stop near
the centre.

Trains: The nearest train station is Bexleyheath.

Car parking: There is limited car parking at the centre and there is a pay and display car park between the Broadway and Albion Road.

Accessibility: The building is easily accessible for people with mobility problems.

Any problems

Please tell us if English is not your first language or you have sight or hearing difficulties. We will then be able to make suitable arrangements.

We welcome your views on the services we provide.

If you are worried about seeing a psychologist or have any other problems, for example how to get to your appointment or if you need to change appointment times please contact us on 020 8301 9447.

If you are not happy with any aspect of the service, please talk to the person involved or the team manager. Alternatively, you can speak to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 917 7159. Their role is to help people with any concerns they may have about their contact with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.

If you are unable to resolve your concerns or would like to take the matter further, please write to:

Head of Critical Incidents and Complaints,
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

Pinewood House

Pinewood Place

Dartford

Kent, DA2 7WG

Tel: 01322 625751

Fax: 01322 625711

What will happen once I have been referred?

You will be sent a letter or contacted by phone either offering you an appointment or telling you of the likely waiting time. Appointments usually take place at the Bexleyheath Centre, 4 Emerton Close Bexleyheath Kent DA6 8DX, but if you are unable to travel home visits may be possible.

In some cases you may be offered an appointment with a trainee clinical psychologist. If so, the letter will tell you this. You can be assured that the person has the appropriate skills and experience and will be supervised. If you have any concerns about being seen by a trainee clinical psychologist please get in touch with us to discuss this.

What should I expect?

The first consultation may be longer than later appointments, lasting one hour or more. You will have an opportunity to talk about your problems as you see them and how you would like them to change.

You may find it helpful to write down any questions you want to ask beforehand.

The clinical psychologist will usually ask about other aspects of your life and personal experiences. This is necessary to gain a more complete understanding of you as a person, and not just the symptoms you are experiencing.

Are relatives and friends involved?

It may be that relatives and friends are concerned about your welfare. In certain cases, psychologists may need to talk with members of your family or others involved with your care. This will only be done with your knowledge and consent.

What will happen next?

After the first few sessions, the psychologist will usually devise a plan with you about how to approach your problems. This may involve meeting for further sessions to talk about your reactions to situations and how you coped, how you view and think about important areas in your life and what you are feeling.

This may involve seeing you individually or with your partner or family, or by suggesting you join a group. You may be asked to fill in some assessment forms about your problems or keep a brief diary.

In some instances another person or organisation may be suggested as more appropriate to help you.

Appointments

The number of appointments will depend on the plan agreed between you and the psychologist. Appointments usually last between thirty minutes and an hour. It is important to let the psychologist know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend.

What are the risks?

Talking about your problems can be upsetting at times and may make you feel worse for a while. Generally this is a phase in treatment, and in time talking things through with a psychological therapist can make the problems easier to bear. Please be sure to tell the person you see for therapy if you feel that treatment is making you feel worse, or if you have any other concerns or worries about therapy.

What will happen with the information you give us?

The psychologist will usually contact your GP, and the team member who referred you after the first few appointments to let them know the agreed plan. You have the right to receive copies of letters. Please ask to see the *Sharing information with relatives, partners and friends (carers)*'.

All our staff are required to abide by a strict code of conduct on confidentiality. We may share some information with other staff who do not work for Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. Examples of these may include your GP and social service employees. When considering who may see information about you, our staff use the following principles:

- **only** share information with those who **need to know** in order to provide good quality care
- share the **minimum information** necessary to ensure good quality care.

Shared records are stored on a secure computerised system. Additional paper copies are stored safely in locked drawers or cupboards. You are entitled to see the information kept on you if you wish, and can apply to do so through the psychology service or through the Data Protection Officer at Pinewood House (01322 625700).