



Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Oxfordshire Psychological Therapies

Systemic Family Therapy

Contents

What is Systemic Therapy?	3
What happens in therapy?.....	4
Benefits of Therapy.....	5
Patient Feedback	6
How can I contact Psychological Therapies?.....	7
Accessibility	8
Get in touch.....	8
Feedback	8

What is Systemic Therapy?

Rather than seeing only the person who is distressed, the people who are close to the person are also consulted about what might be happening.

Their views can help to build a shared understanding of complicated situations and help to find solutions. Family work is especially helpful if you are worried about relationships within your family.

Family therapists help family members to share their views and feel heard and understood. Therapists manage differences of opinion and stressful feelings, which often occur in family discussions.

They help family members look for solutions to their difficulties.

Families are supported to think about their strengths and encouraged to recognise what they are still managing in life, despite the difficulties.

What happens in therapy?

An initial appointment is offered to the person who is distressed or unhappy, and to whichever family members would like to come along.

After that first discussion, if everyone agrees that further conversations might be helpful, more appointments will be arranged.

Sometimes the whole family comes to sessions, sometimes only part of the family. It may also be appropriate to involve a professional colleague with whom the family are involved such as a community psychiatric nurse.

The number of meetings varies depending on the difficulties.

Family therapists often work in small teams because of the value to the family of different points of view. The teams have at least two members.

They may make contributions themselves directly or via the therapist. Families can see a therapist alone without a team if they prefer.

Benefits of Therapy

People find working in this way is very helpful in sorting out their problems or at least providing some steps on the way.

Families tell us that although every problem may not be resolved, their understanding of the problems and their family relationships is much improved. This helps them to manage the problems better.

Therapy can be tough sometimes, and it can be upsetting to discuss situations hoping for a long-term benefit which is not clear.

For instance, people may be advised to face up to anxiety-provoking situations, or to talk about upsetting memories. Though this may make you feel worse temporarily, it offers the chance of feeling much better in the long run.

Such difficult tasks will be discussed beforehand and do not proceed without your agreement.

Patient Feedback

"This has been really helpful for the whole family. Thank you so much."

"[Therapist] is totally brilliant in what she does, she has helped our family through some hard times. We would not be as good as a family without her. She will be sadly missed."

"Useful to talk through issues with an independent person".

"So grateful for what she's done for me and my family."

How can I contact Psychological Therapies?

Email

Oxon.psychologicaltherapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Telephone

01865 902 005.

Address

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Adult Mental Health Team

Psychological Therapies

May Davidson Building,

Warneford Hospital, Warneford Lane,

Headington, Oxford OX3 7JX

Accessibility

Patient information leaflets are available on our website:
www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/leaflets

Get in touch

Address Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
 Trust Headquarters
 Littlemore Mental Health Centre
 Sandford Road, Oxford OX4 4XN

Phone 01865 901 000
Email enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
Website www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Feedback

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides advice and support to patients, families, and carers, helping to resolve any problems, concerns, or complaints you may have.

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Email PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
Become a member of our foundation trust: www.ohftnhs.uk/membership

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