



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

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EFFECTS OF LIMB LOSS

Amputee Rehabilitation Centre
Regional Disablement Services

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE
INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES**



EFFECTS OF LIMB LOSS

Experiencing an amputation is a significantly stressful event in a person's life. Anyone placed in such a situation and having to spend extended amounts of time in hospital will often experience a wide range of emotions and thoughts.

These may include feelings of sadness, anxiety, depression, anger and helplessness.

People often feel that their emotions are out of control, as they may feel they are coping one minute and not the next.

All of these reactions are common and normal when limb loss occurs, however everyone will have an individual response.

THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The Clinical Psychology service at Regional Disablement Services (MPH) is available to help patients with an amputation and their families in adjusting to, and managing, the emotions that come with limb loss

Shortly after admission, or as an outpatient, patients may be introduced to the Clinical Psychologist who will offer them an initial, routine appointment.

The purpose of this is to familiarise all patients with the services Clinical Psychology can offer.

At any time during rehabilitation if a patient has a concern that they would like to discuss with the Clinical Psychologist, individual sessions can be arranged.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Just as patients are likely to experience a range of emotional reactions to an amputation, so, too are their family members and close friends. These feelings can include anger, anxiety, depression, guilt, and feelings of being unsettled or moody.

As with patients of the unit, family and friends can choose to speak to the clinical psychologist on an individual basis if they have any concerns.

HOW CAN A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST HELP ME?

Clinical Psychologists assess and treat people who are having difficulties dealing with the emotional side of adjusting to limb loss and subsequent rehabilitation.

Specific concerns the Clinical Psychologist will often be asked to see include:

- Feelings of depression
- Feelings of anger, irritability or frustration
- Feelings of anxiety or stress
- Sleeping problems
- Concerns about how family are coping
- Body Image problems
- Sexuality Issues
- Pain management (phantom pain)
- Difficulties coping with the hospital routine

CONFIDENTIALITY

Psychologists have strict guidelines about confidentiality, however there are some occasions when they would need to talk to other professionals. The psychologist will talk to you about this when you meet. Ask if you have any concerns.

HOW TO CONTACT THE SERVICE

Making sense of your own particular reactions can be difficult. It can help to talk to a partner, close friend or family member. You may find it helpful to talk to one of the professionals involved in your care. If at any time you would like to talk to someone independent, about your emotional adjustment you can ask your Consultant, Physio/OT/nurse if they could arrange for you to meet with the Clinical Psychologist who is based at the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre.

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