

## Referrers' Commonly Asked Questions



### How is the Cancer Psychology Service funded?

The Cancer Psychology Service is free to the user. Funding comes from the MidCentral and Whanganui, District Health Boards (DHBs), and Regional Cancer Treatment Service (RCTS) Trust Fund.

### Who can use the Cancer Psychology Service?

Any person affected by cancer (including patients and family/whanau or friends) during initial diagnosis, treatment, and during the months and years following treatment. We can arrange appointments with the individual, couples or family. We also welcome clients wanting to bring a support person to the appointment.

### Who can make a referral to the Cancer Psychology Service?

Any medical, nursing, or other health professional can make a referral to us. As can Hospital Chaplains, Māori Health Providers, and Cancer Society support staff. Referrals are processed by the Service Coordinator to determine whether the client is appropriate for our Service, and you will receive notification that the referral has been received. If you do not hear from us, please call as we may not have received your referral.

### Where is the Cancer Psychology Service located?

We are based at the Massey Psychology Clinic, Palmerston North and make visits to local areas such as Levin, Pahiatua, Dannevirke and Wanganui.

### Where are appointments held?

Appointments in the Manawatu are held at the Massey Psychology Clinic, Palmerston North Hospital or at Addis House. We also arrange appointments at local health centres and make home visits when the person is not able to leave their home.

### What records do you keep?

Our files are kept separately from hospital files although we are aware there is typically a note on the client's hospital file that a referral was made to our service. Clients have the option of seeing a psychologist at the hospital or our clinic. For clients seen as inpatients a note about the visit is recorded on the hospital file. For clients seen outside of the hospital, we maintain our own records at the clinic.

### Who has access to client information?

Client's files at the clinic are available to Cancer Psychology Service team members and we seek the client's permission before sharing file information with other professionals.

### How can Psychology be useful?

Our Service is concerned with understanding and treating the psychological, emotional, quality-of-life and functional aspects of cancer; from prevention through to recovery/ post-treatment, as well as bereavement/ survivorship. Many people find the cancer experience very distressing. Psychological skills and strategies are important resources available to help deal with some aspects of cancer. People can improve their coping abilities by using psychological techniques to:

- Make decisions and solve problems
- Manage stress levels
- Reduce physical symptoms like pain, anticipatory nausea and panic attacks
- Recognise and address any fears, anxiety or depression they may be experiencing
- Improve relationship skills
- Build support networks
- Improve self-esteem and self-image
- Acquire information or decrease information overload
- Assist with meaning, purpose, wairua and spiritual concerns.

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