

Psychological services for people experiencing non-epileptic attacks



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Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have been referred to the Non-Epileptic Attack Disorder (NEAD) service provided by the Neuropsychology Department at Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust.

We hope that it will give you an idea about what to expect.

How can psychological therapy help with non-epileptic attacks?

We are a specialist team of psychologists who work with people living with non-epileptic attacks. Non-epileptic attacks are usually linked to difficult thoughts and feelings relating to past experiences or stressful situations an individual may be living through at the moment.

Attacks may also be related to physical stress such as pain and fatigue or long term health difficulties.

Psychological therapy (also known as talking therapy) is the recommended treatment for non-epileptic attacks. Psychologists help people to identify the cause(s) of the attacks and what is keeping them going.

They also help people to find different ways of coping with or managing the attacks as well as the difficult thoughts and feelings associated with them.

Having a psychologist involved in your treatment does not mean you have a mental illness or that the attacks are “all in your mind”.

Psychologists are involved in treatment of non-epileptic attacks because attacks are caused through the link between the mind and the body.

A large part of your treatment will involve learning to control things that affect your mind as well as your body - psychologists are the best people to show you how to do this.

What happens during the assessment?

You will be invited to come for an assessment. This usually means attending two appointments, each lasting up to an hour.

During the assessment, the psychologist will ask you questions that will help them to learn about the attacks you have been experiencing and the impact they have had on your life.

This is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and find out more about the service we provide.

You will be sent some questionnaires which you will need to fill in and give to the psychologist at the first appointment.

If you need help with the questionnaires for any reason, let the psychologist know when you come to the first appointment.

Do I have to come?

You have been referred because psychological treatments are the recommended treatment for NEAD but this does not mean that you have to come.

It can be helpful to keep an open mind and come along to find out more; it is OK to come with lots of questions.

Will I be given medication/scans/tests?

No, we are not medical doctors and do not prescribe medication or ask for scans and tests.

If you are worried about any physical health problems the psychologist will recommend that you see your GP.

Can I bring someone with me?

You can bring someone with you to the first appointment but it is important that you feel able to talk freely in front of them. If you prefer, you are welcome to invite someone to wait for you in the waiting area.

If you and the psychologist agree to meet for further sessions, the psychologist will probably suggest that you come to your appointments alone.

What about confidentiality?

What you and the psychologist speak about is kept private and you and the psychologist can decide what to share with the rest of the team involved in your care. However, sometimes private information may have to be shared with other professions even if you do not agree. For example, if the psychologist becomes worried about your safety or the safety of someone else.

The psychologist will also discuss the work they are doing with you in a confidential meeting with a senior colleague in the department to make sure you are getting the best treatment. The psychologist will make notes about your appointments. Paper notes are locked safely in the Neuropsychology Department. Electronic notes are also only accessible to members of the Neuropsychology Department.



What will happen at the end of the assessment?

You and your psychologist will discuss your needs and whether you would benefit from psychological treatments with the NEAD service.

For most people, the first stage of treatment is to attend the NEAD Information Group.

In some circumstances the psychologist may decide that individual therapy sessions are more suited to your needs at this stage.

What is the NEAD Information Group?

Coming to the group gives individuals a chance to find out more about non-epileptic attacks and what causes them. People who attend the group will also learn strategies that will help them to manage their symptoms.

The group runs weekly for four weeks, each session is two hours.

What will happen after the NEAD Information Group?

For most people, coming to the group helps them to begin making changes to their lives that help them to manage NEAD.

Some people might need extra support to understand the reasons why they are experiencing attacks and learn additional ways to manage them. In this instance it is likely that you will initially be offered 10 appointments which are usually every two weeks.




What happens next?

We hope to see you at your first appointment. **If you would prefer not to be seen, because you feel better or for any other reason, please let us know so that we can offer your appointment to someone else.**

If you have any questions then we would be happy to talk about them at your first appointment.

Contact details

For more information about our department please visit our website:

 www.srft.nhs.uk/about-us/depts/neuropsychology/

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact us:

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If you need this interpreting please telephone

Polish

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Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس ترجمانی کی ضرورت ہے تو مہربانی کر کے فون کریں۔

Arabic

إذا كنتم بحاجة الى تفسير او ترجمة هذا الرجاء الاتصال

Chinese

如果需要翻译，请拨打电话

Farsi

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