

#### 4. WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE

Many people find meeting with a psychologist helpful, and it can be hard work at times. Before you come to your first meeting, you could think about what you want to get out of your meetings. It is also helpful to come to the sessions with an openness to change and growth.

#### 5. HOW TO CONTACT US :

You can ask to meet with a psychologist by calling **0116 295 8442** or by writing to the address below. We also accept referrals from professional workers who can complete a referral form on your behalf.

**Suzanne Elliott**  
**Clinical Psychologist**  
**Homeless Mental Health Service**  
**OSL House**  
**East Link**  
**Meridian Business Park**  
**Leicester**  
**LE19 1XU**  
**Tel: (0116) 295 3098 or 295 8442**  
**Fax: (0116) 295 8443**  
**suzanne.elliott@leicspart.nhs.uk**

Staff who would like more information or additional referral forms should call us on the above number. Please feel free to photocopy and distribute this leaflet to service-users.



The Leicester Homeless Mental Health Service:  
Health and Wellbeing category winner in Regional  
Awards and finalist in National Awards 2008.

Speaking out ✂ Living peacefully  
✂ Getting involved ✂ upholding  
your human rights ✂ Doing things  
differently ✂ Standing up ✂  
Building better relationships ✂  
Connecting with spirituality ✂  
Being kind to yourself ✂  
Challenging unjustness ✂ Finding  
meaning ✂ Making positive changes  
✂ Challenging inequalities of power  
✂ Consciousness raising ✂ Letting  
go of blame ✂ Finding your  
community ✂ Sharing hurt ✂  
Being empowered ✂ Resisting  
prejudice and discrimination ✂  
Remembering who you are ✂  
Releasing feelings ✂ Being  
compassionate ✂ Celebrating your  
uniqueness ✂ Finding connections  
with others ✂ Taking action ✂  
Thinking about your environment ✂  
Finding your place ✂ Supporting  
wellbeing ✂ Telling your story ✂  
Overturning oppression ✂ Finding  
joy ✂ Taking part ✂ Respecting  
yourself ✂ Exposing secrets and  
denial ✂ Working together ✂  
understanding yourself ✂ Joining  
with others ✂ Making sense of what  
has happened ✂ Discovering yourself  
✂ Forgiving ✂ Respecting others ✂  
Celebrating strengths and  
achievements ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂

# PSYCHOLOGY



*Cast a pebble into a pond; ripples  
form and move outward across the  
water. Each ripple causes another,  
and another, and so on. A very small  
act can make a significant difference.*



This leaflet will help you decide whether you wish to see a psychologist. It gives you information about:

1. What is a psychologist?
2. What you can expect following a referral to our service.
3. Confidentiality and our communication with other professionals.
4. What you can do to prepare.
5. How to contact us.

## **1. WHAT IS A PSYCHOLOGIST?**

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Psychologists spend between 6 and 10 years in training to develop an informed and in-depth understanding of how people's relationships, situations and backgrounds influence their behaviour, thoughts and feelings.

Psychologists work with people whose life experiences or current situation causes them discontent and distress. They are different from psychiatrists; for example, they cannot prescribe medication or admit people to hospital under the Mental Health Act.

Psychologists in the Homeless Mental Health Service work alongside the nurses and psychiatrists in the team.

## **2. WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FOLLOWING A REFERRAL TO OUR SERVICE**

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You will usually be seen within 3 weeks of your referral being received. A psychologist will contact you to arrange the first appointment. We offer appointments in many convenient venues; we are often able to come to your hostel.

Each appointment lasts about an hour but can be less if you prefer. At first, you and the psychologist will get to know each other and decide whether you want to continue to meet regularly. You might talk about why you would like to see a psychologist, your background and what, if anything, has been helpful in the past. This is called an 'assessment'. You will not have to talk about anything you are uncomfortable with.

If you and the psychologist decide you would like to work together regularly, you will arrange to meet for regular appointments. You and the psychologist will use the meetings to talk and think about the situations that are causing you distress. The psychologist will not tell you what to do, but you will work together to discover ways to change things that suit you.

Sometimes people are referred to a psychologist because they have difficulties learning new information, may be forgetful,

or might have experienced a head injury. The psychologist may then use more formal assessments. These tests are not something to be worried about and generally involve answering a number of set questions so that the psychologist can get a clearer picture of how a person manages in their day-to-day life.

## **3. CONFIDENTIALITY AND OUR COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS**

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Whatever you talk about with your psychologist will remain confidential unless there are concerns about your safety or the safety of other people.

After your first meetings, your psychologist will write to your GP and the person who referred you. You and your psychologist will talk together about what information will be useful to pass on to your GP about your meetings.

Sometimes it is helpful for other professionals (eg GP, STAR, Social Services, hostels) to know about the work you and the psychologist have done together; for example, what has been useful and how they can support the changes you might be making. You and your psychologist will talk about what it would be useful to share with other professionals before writing to them.