Psychological care/support for people with a diagnosis of skin cancer

This leaflet is to explain psychological support for patients with a diagnosis of skin cancer.

**Psychological care, what is it?**

Psychological care is support offered to help you cope and manage the many thoughts, feelings and emotions you may experience when diagnosed with skin cancer.

Cancer can affect people in different ways. It is very common to feel fear, anxiety and sadness. Research into cancer care has shown that emotions and feelings brought to the surface by receiving a diagnosis of cancer can have a significant impact on how an individual copes on a daily basis.

**How will I feel?**

Many people will feel a mixture of emotions when they are told they have skin cancer. You may also have other stresses to deal with such as financial worries or concerns about your family. This may cause you to feel low emotionally, tired and even tearful. You may experience physical symptoms as a reaction to emotional distress such as nausea (feeling physically sick) or pain (increased pain or un-associated pain).

We all cope with stressful events in our lives in a variety of ways. It is important to recognise when we feel overwhelmed and find it hard to manage from day to day and seek help, someone to speak to.

**Who should I speak to?**

You can mention any worries or fears you have to any of the healthcare professionals you meet and if you are in agreement your concerns will be passed on to an appropriate member of staff such as your key worker, who is one of the skin cancer nurse specialists (Tel: 01202 705205) or your GP.

**What will they do?**

They will discuss with you your feelings and concerns to help build up a picture of how you are coping and what might help improve things for you. You will be asked to complete a psychological assessment form as part of the process of the pathway through your diagnosis, treatment and follow up appointments, which will help identify how you are feeling at that time.

**How can they help?**

Sometimes talking through your worries and fears can help put things into perspective and you may not need any further help. They may suggest specific healthcare professionals such as a counsellor; welfare benefits support worker or social worker.
Can I help myself?
Yes! There are many different approaches to managing anxiety and distress such as exercise, breathing techniques, relaxation techniques and support groups. Your CNS or GP can discuss these options with you.

Other agencies that offer support and information

Macmillan Cancer Support:
Freephone 0808 808 2020  www.macmillan.org.uk
Macmillan offers a range of support for the emotional and practical impacts of living with cancer, for you, your family, and friends. From giving you someone to talk to, providing information about what to expect or what financial help is available, through to cancer support groups, they are there to help.

Wessex Cancer Trust:
Tel: 023 8067 2200  www.wessexcancer.org
Wessex Cancer Trust is a Southampton based charity that offers help, information and advice to patients who have cancer. The trust provides leaflets, complementary therapies and has its own counsellor who is available to patients and families who have been affected by cancer.

Bournemouth Cancer Support Centre
Fairview House, 17 Hinton Road, Bournemouth. BH1 2EE.
Open: 10am - 4 pm  Monday - Thursday
Tel: 01202 315824
Email: Bournemouth.centre@wessexcancer.org.uk
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Our mission
To provide the excellent care we would expect for our families.

The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,
Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW

The Bournemouth Hospital Charity raises funds for the Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals to enhance patient care and purchase items which directly benefit patients and staff above and beyond that which can be funded by the NHS alone. If you would like to contribute to the Bournemouth Hospital Charity please contact them on 01202 704060, email charity@rbch.nhs.uk or visit www.bournemouthhospitalcharity.org.

If you have any queries or concerns about your care at the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) would be happy to help you and can be contacted on 01202 704886/704301 or pals@rbch.nhs.uk.

If you would like this leaflet printed in a larger font, please contact the Communications Team on 01202 704905 during the office hours of 8.30am-5pm Monday - Friday.

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Website: www.rbch.nhs.uk  ■  Tel: 01202 303626