

## FREE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES



### A GUIDE TO FREE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES AT THE CANCER CARE AND HAEMATOLOGY UNIT AT STOKE MANDEVILLE HOSPITAL

#### Why produce this leaflet?

This leaflet is designed to welcome all patients, relatives, carers and staff at the CCHU, to the Complementary Therapy Treatment Section in the CCHU. It will answer your questions about the therapies available and how the Complementary Therapy Section works.

#### What are Complementary Therapies?

As the name implies, these therapies are designed to complement and be used alongside the normal medical treatments. They are caring and relaxing treatments which aim to improve both the physical and mental well being of patients in the unit.

## Who are the therapists?

There are around 8-10 qualified, mature therapists who provide free treatments to patients and, if appropriate and time allows, to family and carers of patients. Therapist has an arranged day of the week and time when they attend the CCHU. Most volunteer therapists provide 3 hours of treatments.

## What types of therapies are available?

Different therapists offer different treatments according to their qualifications. At present, we have therapists giving treatments in Massage, Aromatherapy, Reflexology, Reiki and Indian Head Massage.

## Can you explain what each of the above treatments involves?

**MASSAGE** is a caring and relaxing "hands on" massage treatment. This can be of the whole body, with the patient lying on a massage couch. Alternatively, it can be modified to massage certain parts of the body as best suits the client's needs. For example, massaging the back, shoulders and neck, the arms or legs. In this case, it can be done while the patient is sitting in the Chemotherapy Unit.



**AROMATHERAPY** provides a massage treatment in which aromatic or sweet smelling plant oils are used to enhance the relaxing effects of the "hands on" massage. The plant oils are selected to best suit the patient's needs, with various oils providing relaxation, uplift, release of muscle tension, or help in relieving headaches. A full body Aromatherapy massage can be provided or it can be used on individual areas such as hands or feet.

**INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE** provides a relaxing and soothing massage to those areas of the body which most often carry stress – namely the upper back, neck, shoulders, upper arms and head. The massage can be given either through clothes or with minimal removal of clothes. The patient will be sitting down.

**REFLEXOLOGY** is an extremely relaxing treatment, focusing on the feet. The various areas of the feet relate to equivalent body areas, for example, the toes relate to the head. The feet are first massaged and then the different areas of the feet are worked to help balance the energy within the body. This relieves stress and tension. Only shoes and socks (or equivalent) need to be removed and Reflexology can take place in the Therapy Room or in the Chemotherapy area.

**REIKI** comes from Rei, meaning universal and Ki, meaning Life Force Energy. This vital life force nourishes all life - people, animals and plants. In a Reiki treatment, the practitioner places his or her hands on or just above the recipient. This channels and recharges the vital life force energy, helping restore balance and improve the body's ability to heal itself. Benefits may be felt in both the physical body and in attitude, providing calm and helping the mind to focus on positive thoughts.



## **How long do treatments take?**

Normally, a treatment using Massage, Aromatherapy, Reflexology or Reiki would take about an hour. An Indian Head Massage would take approximately half an hour. However, it is quite possible to vary the treatment time to best suit the needs and wishes of the patient. Before the first treatment is given there will be a brief introduction to the therapy and a consultation with the patient to assess the individual needs of that person.

## **Where are the complementary treatments carried out?**

This is in the therapy room in the Cancer Information and Support Service area which is set up specifically for complementary therapies. It is a quiet room with a couch and all relevant facilities, such as hand washing, background music etc. Alternatively, treatment can take place in the Chemotherapy Treatment area while the patient is receiving his or her normal medical treatment.

## How many treatments can one have?

Our aim is to provide up to four therapy treatments for each patient. Treatments can fit in with normal visits to the CCHU, or alternatively at other times. By usually limiting the treatments to four per person we are able to accommodate new patients. However, this is a generalisation and could be adapted to suit individual needs.

## Are the therapies safe?

Yes! All therapists carefully consider the patient's condition and adapt their treatment. Doctors, both at Stoke Mandeville and on a wider national and international level, encourage relaxing therapy treatments to be used alongside conventional medical cancer care.

## How can I book a treatment?

Treatments can be booked via the Cancer Information and Support Service on 01296 316089 or via the nurses and therapists when you are visiting the CCHU. A variety of treatment are available throughout the week and those are indicated in the booking diary.

**All complementary therapies are 'complementary' to a cancer patient's treatment and care and not a replacement for conventional treatment. All of the therapies aim to alleviate stress, anxiety, feelings of nausea, etc. For many therapies there is no need to remove your clothing.**



**COME and TRY**

**A RELAXING, GENTLE THERAPY TREATMENT  
IT is FRIENDLY, FREE and FORTIFYING**

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