A clinical psychologist...who’s that?

Clinical psychologists:
- Are trained in the NHS to work with people of all ages and backgrounds (so although you will see someone who has chosen to specialise in working with children and young people, they have experience of working with adults and families too)
- Help people to make sense of feelings or experiences and think about the best way of supporting them
- Work with people in lots of different places like hospitals, community mental health teams, clinics, health centres, charities, schools and prisons
- Are not psychiatrists and do not prescribe medication.

Is there an age limit on seeing a clinical psychologist?

Clinical psychologists work with people of all ages but mental health services for young people have upper age limits - usually between age 10-25. At this age, if you still need support, you will need to move to adult services and your clinical psychologist should help you make a plan for this transition.

What to do if you don’t feel like it’s helping...

1. If you feel comfortable to, speak to your clinical psychologist. They will want to give you the best help possible, so should be interested in your feedback and make the relevant changes needed.
2. If you don’t feel comfortable doing this you could speak to another staff member at the service (if you know them) or ask a family member or friend to discuss on your behalf.

Some of the reasons why people see a clinical psychologist include:
- Feeling unhappy
- Feeling sad or anxious
- Difficulties with eating
- Developing problems
- An problems
- Health problems
- Unusual experiences (like seeing or hearing things others don’t)
- Developmental differences (including difficulties on the autism-spectrum)
- Having difficulties with attention and concentration
- Either the person or somebody else is worried about their behaviour
- Having had a very bad experience which troubles them.

You might not be sure about the way you are feeling or behaving but it may have started to get in the way of your day-to-day life.

REMEMBER – you are not alone, at least 1 in 10 children and young people will experience difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing. Lots of young people see a clinical psychologist (or other mental health worker) so don’t be worried.

So, it’s my first appointment...

In your first appointment the psychologist will want to get to know you and understand better what is happening that has brought you to see them. To do this they will usually:
- Listen to you and ask you questions to find out more about you and what is going well and not so well with your life
- Fill out questionnaires about how you are feeling and discuss your answers with you
- Think about other people it might be important to talk to in your life - this might include your parent(s), family members and/or other important people in your life.

They will then start to make a plan with you about how to best support you (this might take more than one session).

Will what we discuss be kept private?

Your clinical psychologist will discuss privacy and confidentiality with you in your first session. This will include:
- What will happen if the clinical psychologist is worried about you or others not being safe, who they might need to share this concern with so that you can be best supported, and how they will keep you informed about this.

How does a clinical psychologist work?

Clinical psychologists help and support you by using different therapies. This usually involves you building a helpful relationship together and talking, but you might also use drawing and diagrams or other ways you find help to communicate.

Your clinical psychologist might work with:
- You on your own
- You as part of a group of young people, or
- With you and/or your family or people who are close to you (with your permission) to help to understand each other’s feelings, support each other and find ways to make life at home easier, if that’s difficult right now.

To start with, clinical psychologists build up a formulation with you. This is a bit like a jigsaw puzzle, piecing together all the things you talk about to help you both understand the different things that are having an effect on you and also where your strengths are. You’ll be able to think about what it is that you would like to be different and how you might work towards this. The formulation helps to show how you can work together to make these changes.

Clinical psychologists might also complete different assessments and tests which look at memory, concentration, attention and other thinking skills (if you decide together that this would be helpful).