

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME) Group Therapy Management Programme (MEMP)



One + all | we care

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for people who are taking part in the CFS/ME Group Therapy Management Programme (MEMP). It aims to answer some of the questions that you may have about the programme.

What is the Cornwall CFS/ME Service?

It is a countywide service providing: diagnosis, assessment, treatment, review, information and advice. Consultations are offered face-to-face in clinic or in your home, and/or on the telephone and/or via video if you are unable to visit a clinic. Face-to-face medical and clinical specialist consultations are offered in clinic at Truro, psychology consultations in clinic at Truro, Hayle (St Michael's) and Bodmin, and specialist occupational therapy in your home. Interventions are delivered individually, as a couple, family or in group work, as clinically appropriate.

The service aims to help people with CFS/ME to:

- learn new skills
- choose to do things differently
- better manage your condition
- improve your symptoms
- increase your well-being.

This service is provided by a multi-disciplinary team (more than one professional): a Medical Consultant, a Clinical Specialist Therapist, Specialist Occupational Therapists (OTs), a Consultant Clinical Health Psychologist and Systemic Family Psychotherapist, a Clinical Secretary/Administrator and a supporting admin team.

What is the CFS/ME Group Therapy Management Programme (MEMP)?

MEMP is an outpatient programme for people with CFS/ME. We work as part of a team. We follow a holistic, therapeutic approach aimed at improving people's lives and knowledge. It runs for seven consecutive weeks. Four programmes per year are offered countywide. Participants (8-10 people) meet for three hours from 10am - 1pm or 1pm - 4pm. There is one follow-up at 3 months. Venues vary so that MEMP is accessible across Cornwall.

What are the aims of MEMP?

To help you and your family improve your quality of life despite CFS/ME by:

- gaining greater control over your symptoms
- reducing the emotional distress associated with CFS/ME
- improving your function and well-being
- meeting others and sharing experiences.

These goals can be achieved through a process of increased awareness, acknowledgement, acceptance and adaptation. It has to be your journey; the group facilitators are there to help and encourage you along the way.

What will I learn?

Activity management is a planned approach to achieving tasks by recognising tolerance to activity, and doing things throughout the day for periods of time which are manageable and do not make your symptoms worse. With **energy conservation, graded activity** and allowing yourself resting time, you can become more productive, and increase your energy levels.

Goal setting helps us to make changes in our lives, by planning things we wish to achieve. Goals need to be realistic, relevant to you and achievable. With a goal set, you can begin to have a sense of regaining some control. As personal goals are met, this feeling of control increases.

Becoming aware of and modifying unhelpful **thinking styles and emotions** attached to CFS/ME and drastic lifestyle changes (such as a sense of reduced self-esteem and loss) can help you start constructing new meanings about your role and relationships, giving you a sense of purpose and direction.

By using **open communication** about how CFS/ME has affected your life and your family's, a better sense of understanding and acceptance can reduce any strain CFS/ME may have brought to family life.

Coping strategies are techniques that help you manage CFS/ME and associated symptoms (such as fatigue, pain or disturbed sleep) on a day-to-day basis and during setbacks or flare-ups. Strategies include relaxation, stretching, appropriate use of medication, and activity management.

Who are the MEMP team?

- Consultant Lead Clinical Health Psychologist and Systemic Family Psychotherapist, Dr. Cristina López-Chertudi, with 25 years of clinical experience, who helps address the emotional aspects of CFS/ME such as depression, stress and anxiety, and reduce emotional barriers (eg unresolved trauma) which prevent you from coping with CFS/ME. Changes in role and relationships are explored to regain confidence. Coping skills such as relaxation and techniques for improving sleep are taught, which can help quality of life.
- Clinical Specialist Therapist, Carol Wilson a Registered Occupational Therapist and Registered Psychotherapist, who has worked with CFS/ME patients since 1998 and was a co-opted expert on the 2007 NICE Guidelines and is a specialist in activity and symptom management.
- One of the Specialist Occupational Therapists, who helps to address the social and occupational aspects of CFS/ME by promoting an understanding of the relationship between CFS/ME and physical and cognitive (mental) effort and encouraging you to find a sustainable balance between activity, leisure and rest.

The team will also teach you gentle stretching and will advise you on graduated exercise to improve stamina, strength and fitness, and on healthy eating, to help you manage symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and food sensitivities in CFS/ME.

The team has access to advice for individual cases on the medical management of symptoms from the team's Consultant Physician.

How is MEMP evaluated?

As part of your participation in MEMP at the end of the programme you will need to rate how you achieved your goal. These scores will be stored on computer but only MEMP staff members will have access to it. Personal details will be removed from any data used for audit and research purposes.

What will I need to bring?

You will need to bring your own refreshments and food. It is useful to bring comfortable clothing, pens and a notebook. You will be given a handbook with the structure, contents and handouts.

And finally, a lot of courage!!!

How can you contact us?

Group facilitators:

Dr Cristina López-Chertudi - Consultant Lead Clinical Health Psychologist, Systemic and Family Psychotherapist.

Carol Wilson - Specialty Lead & Specialist Clinician.

A Specialist Occupational Therapist.

Telephone: 01872 252935

How do I provide feedback about the service?

If you have any complaint, comment, or compliment to make about the treatment you have received or any other aspect of your care, we would be grateful if you would bring them to our attention. If you have a complaint please let us know as soon as possible so that we can try to put things right. You can make a complaint about the service by contacting either the Patient and Family Experience Team on 01872 252793, or the Specialty Lead and Service Manager on 01872 252935 or write to her:

Carol Wilson, Specialty Lead, Cornwall & IoS CFS/ME Service, The Lighthouse, Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro, TR1 3LJ.

Written by Dr Cristina López-Chertudi, Consultant Lead Clinical Health Psychologist and Systemic Family Psychotherapist

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version
or in another language, please contact the General Office on
01872 252690

