

December 2018

Couple Neuropsychology for Clients and their Partners

Information Sheet

The impact on relationships

Adjusting to a neurological condition can put strain on your couple relationship. There may be changes in roles, identity, and sex and intimacy, that can lead to a disconnection – one partner feels they become a carer, and are increasingly frustrated and can experience stress and burnout, while the partner with the condition can feel a lack of independence, shame and reduced levels of personal control, and gradually withdraw.

You may see things from your own point of view, possibly at times from your partner's point of view and it can be a struggle to view the relationship and see what you might be creating together. This can leave both partners feeling stuck and unhappy.

You might have had differences earlier in your relationship history that might be exacerbated as a consequence of the neurological condition and contribute towards further distress, low mood, anxiety and anger. Alternatively, you may be preparing for the next transition in your life as a couple and need space to plan and manage this period.

What is this service and who is this service for?

This specialist couple neuropsychology service is for you and your partner to be seen together to begin to work in any one of these ways. It is based on a combination of two treatments: **neuropsychology** and **couple psychoanalytic psychotherapy**.

➤ **What is neuropsychology?**

This is a branch of clinical psychology specialising in brain-behaviour relationships and works to understand the impact of the neurological condition and ways to help manage cognitive difficulties, behavioural changes and psychological distress, to enable greater independence and improve quality of life and acceptance.

➤ **What is couple psychoanalytic psychotherapy?**

This style of psychotherapy focuses on the meaning of experiences and considers the underlying emotions behind particular states to play an important part in our experience of ourselves and of our relationships. It requires working at a deeper level, to understand underlying causes and why these might be problematic for you and your relationships, in order to bring about more long lasting change.

I have expertise in both these areas and combine them to offer a specialist service where your relationship can be understood in the context of a neurological condition. In jointly working together with you, I work towards helping you both adjust and accept the changes and live a meaningful life together.

How can this service help?

The aims of this service are to:

- ✓ Provide support and containment in helping you to make optimal adjustment,
- ✓ Improve communication and connection between you,
- ✓ Maximise the potential for engagement and activity,
- ✓ Develop your shared sense of couple identity and resilience

This service involves carefully thinking about the changes, for both partners, understanding the impact of living with a neurological illness on intimacy, developing communication and establishing how you both would like your relationship to be. For instance, helping you to strengthen your relationship's capacity to get through difficult times.

What will be involved in these sessions?

Understanding the impact of a condition for both partners is important and I draw on my specialist neuropsychology expertise to help you make sense of the cognitive, emotional and behavioural/personality changes. In creating space for you both, I specifically enable couples to develop understanding, communication and closeness.

Strengthening your *relationship resilience*, by improving your capacity to use your *relationship as a resource* during critical difficult times, is central to my work.

I also consider areas of potential for you both: how this period can be seen as an opportunity for change that you can creatively work out together. This requires carrying out tasks, from communication exercises to care-behaviour techniques, and therefore, homework is to be expected.

The initial assessment and subsequent sessions last for 1 hour.

How many sessions will I need?

We can use the first few weeks to decide whether a shorter or longer time span will be most helpful. If we decide to work longer-term then the contract will be open-ended and we will think about, and decide on an ending, as the work progresses. It is important to make a planned rather than a sudden ending.

Where will the assessment and treatment take place?

I am able to meet you for a psychological assessment and treatment at our Hobbs Centre in Winchester or, by special arrangement, in your own home.

Confidentiality

I am registered by and accountable to the following bodies: British Psychological Society (BPS) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and abide by a Code of Practice and Ethics required by these organisations.

Information obtained during your assessment and treatment is confidential. I keep very brief records about your appointments to help me work with you. Anyone who receives information from me, such as a supervisor, is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

We can discuss together where to send copies of your letters. If there is something that you do not want shared, please let me know. However, where I may be concerned about you or your partner's safety, I have a duty of care to break confidentiality and pass this information on. For example, if it was believed that you were at risk of harming yourself or others, indicated harm or abuse of children or vulnerable adults, or where a court of law has requested information.

What will the costs be for a couple neuropsychological assessment and treatment at Hobbs Rehabilitation?

My fees reflect my very considerable experience in working with couples and the fact that I combine expertise by bringing together a background in neuropsychology and neurorehabilitation with specialist psychotherapy qualification in couple psychotherapy.

- Initial assessment including letter writing are charged at: £160
- Follow-up treatment sessions are charged at: £125 per hour

Additional clinician travel costs:

Assessment and treatment sessions at Hobbs Winchester – no travel charges

Domiciliary assessments up to 10 miles from the practice incur these additional fees: Travel = 45p per mile from our Winchester base (Martyr Worthy) + £45 per hour