



Lymffoedema Cymru
Lymphoedema Wales



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Emotional Wellbeing and Lymphoedema

How does lymphoedema affect people emotionally and psychologically?

Living with lymphoedema, similar to other long-term health conditions, can sometimes affect your emotional wellbeing in different ways. Low mood, changes in your role and identity, worrying about your condition, and self/body image concerns are often mentioned. Lymphoedema can also impact your social life, relationships and confidence as you try to navigate a 'new normal'.

As you might know, our emotional, physical, and social worlds can directly affect each other. Therefore, if your emotional wellbeing has been impacted, it may influence your physical health and how able you feel to self-manage your lymphoedema; thus creating a vicious cycle which can be hard to break away from. As a result, Lymphoedema Wales believe it is important to be aware and look after your emotional wellbeing. We have collated a list of resources in this leaflet, which may help you.

Where can I get more information about emotional wellbeing?

There are lots of websites where you can look for information about different areas of emotional wellbeing, like feeling anxious or sad. The websites also have some top tips for things to try, and some will detail organisations in your local area that may help you.

Health Board Specific Support

In Wales, each Health Board has its own website providing a range of local services and information for emotional wellbeing. Have a look at the one for your local area. Type the exact words into an internet browser like Google.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board:

www.abuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/community-services/mental-health/

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board:

www.bcuhb.nhs.wales/health-advice/mental-health-hub/

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board:

www.keepingmewell.com

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board:

www.ctmuhb.nhs.wales/wise-ctm/our-service/mental-wellbeing

Hywel Dda University Health Board:

www.hduhb.nhs.wales/healthcare/services-and-teams/iawn

Powys Teaching Health Board:

www.pthb.nhs.wales/services/adult-and-older-peoples-mental-health-services/well-being-mood/

Swansea Bay University Health Board:

www.sbuhb.nhs.wales/wellbeing/about-wellbeing/

National Information

There are also a variety of other websites which include lots of general information about all aspects of emotional and psychological wellbeing. To help you decide what is helpful for you at any given time have a look and see what interests you.

Mind



Mind are a national charity who share information, provide support and campaign for better mental health support in the UK. They aim to change minds, reducing stigma around mental health, and support and connect people who are emotionally struggling.

www.mind.org.uk

Reading Well



Reading Well is a programme that is funded by the Welsh Government and Arts Council England. Their aim is to provide helpful books about your health and wellbeing to all those who need it. These books are available in all 22 Welsh Library Authorities. On their website you can find links to books on mental health. So far, 2.6 million Reading Well books have been borrowed from libraries, and 91% of people surveyed found their book helpful.

<https://reading-well.org.uk/wales>



Melo:

Melo contains information, advice, and self-help resources to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

<https://www.melo.cymru/>

NHS self-help:



This is an NHS website that includes tips, guides, tools and activities around self-help to support your mental health.

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/>



Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership
NHS Trust

Avon and Wiltshire Self-help leaflets:

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership has created a library of self-help leaflets for a variety of concerns:

<https://www.selfhelpguides.nth.nhs.uk/awp/index.php>

Where can I get more support?

As well as all the services above, your GP is a good first point of call. They are aware of what support is available in your local area, and can refer you into the right place for your needs, even in a crisis.

Urgent support / helplines

If you feel you need to speak to someone urgently, or are feeling at a crisis point, as well as your GP, there also are many helplines you can call, for someone to listen to your needs and support you in a way forward.



NHS mental health helpline

NHS 111, option 2, is a helpline for anyone in Wales who needs to talk to someone urgently about their mental health, or are concerned about a loved one. This will place you in direct contact with a mental health professional in your area to discuss your concerns. Ring 111, press option 2



C.A.L.L.

C.A.L.L. is a mental health helpline for Wales, offering emotional support and information on mental health and related matters. Ring 0800 132 737 (or text "help" to 81066)

Samaritans

The Samaritans logo, which is the word 'SAMARITANS' in white capital letters on a green rectangular background.

Samaritans is a nationwide charity dedicated to helping anyone who is struggling to cope or who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. They can be used both for moments of emotional crisis, but also to prevent the crisis. Ring 116 123 or Welsh Language Line 0808 164 0123

PAPYRUS



Papyrus is a charity dedicated to prevention of suicide in young people. You can contact them if you, or a person you know, is a young person struggling with life. Ring 0800 068 4141 (or text them on 07860039967)

Additional services available

If your needs are not urgent, there are two services listed below that can help you in your next steps.

SilverCloud



SilverCloud is a website that provides a free 12-week supported online therapy via your smartphone, tablet, or computer. Anyone over the age of 16 can self-refer without the need to go through their GP. You will also be allocated a SilverCloud Supporter who will check-in with you online every fortnight to review your progress and provide feedback.

<https://nhs.wales.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>

Education Programmes for Patients (EPP)

Education Programmes for Patients (EPP Cymru) provide a range of self-management courses for people living with a long-term health condition/s, and carers. They work across all health boards in Wales. Their self-management courses support people to have the confidence, information and skills needed to help you manage a condition in partnership with your health and social care professionals. On the website below you can see what courses are available in your area.

www.phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/improvement-cymru/our-work/education-programmes-for-patients



Mind Cymru

Mind Cymru is part of Mind, a UK charity dedicated to providing mental health information, support, and services to anyone who needs them.
Call 0300 123 3393

Apps available to download

There are many apps you can download to your phone or tablet that can help support you to improve your wellbeing. These include apps that help you to manage your feelings, chart your mood, practice relaxing breathing or mindfulness and so much more. Some well-known ones are

- Calm,
- Headspace
- Thrive

There are many more, depending on what you are looking for. If you search under wellbeing in your app store, you will find a wealth of possibilities!

What should I do next?

Everyone is different, and the impact of lymphoedema on each person will also be unique, even if similar to others. What works best for someone else may be different to what works well for you.

If you require urgent support, please don't struggle on your own. Talk to someone close to you, or a professional, or ring one of the helplines above. There is always a way forwards, please reach out.

If your needs are not urgent, yet you have noticed your emotional wellbeing reducing, take a look at the resources above and see which are most useful to you.

If you still feel you would like support, Lymphoedema Wales Clinical Network now has a psychology team who can offer advice and support. You can reach them via your Lymphoedema therapist at your local clinic that you attend, just mention it at your next appointment, or contact them to ask for a psychology referral, and the team will then refer you.

Whatever you choose to do, please try to take small steps towards things you enjoy, that matter to you. The five ways to wellbeing is a good first step - pick one small thing within these five areas, and do things step by step. Remember to set yourself realistic goals - none of us are super human!

What can I do right now?

Five Ways to Wellbeing

1. Connect with other people

Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. They can:

- help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- provide emotional support and allow you to support others

2. Be physically active

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. Evidence also shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- raising your self-esteem
- helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood

3. Learn new skills

Research shows that learning new skills can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- helping you to build a sense of purpose
- helping you to connect with others

Even if you feel like you do not have enough time, or you may not need to learn new things, there are lots of different ways to bring learning into your life.

4. Give to others

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:

- creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- helping you connect with other people

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community.

5. Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness)

Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

Some people call this awareness “mindfulness”. Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges. This is available through apps on your phone, or You Tube if you search for mindfulness.

Remember too, as our physical, emotional and social wellbeing are so linked up, it's really important to get as much quality sleep as possible, eat as healthily as you can, and to have a good balance of rest and activity and social connection. All of these impact upon your mood and help you to increase your resilience.

Best of luck with your journey, and please get in touch with our Psychology team via your Lymphoedema local service, if you need any further information.



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