

There will be a chance for you to ask questions; however more personal and individual questions are best saved until you meet with a therapist on an individual basis.

We understand that many people, particularly when unwell, will find it difficult to stay focussed for the duration of the session. Therefore you will be given a break and refreshments will be provided. You will also be given handouts so that you are able to recap on the information at home.

It is common for people to feel anxious when attending this type of session. However, the facilitators are aware of this and will endeavour to support you throughout.

We understand that some people may find it difficult to attend; however, due to the importance of this in your treatment with the service, we urge you to make the necessary arrangements. If you are unable to attend the session please let us know so that we discuss with this with you.

**Please note** that if we do not hear from you we will assume that you are choosing to opt-out of the service and will discharge you from the waiting list.

## What happens after the session?

After you have attended the information session we ask everybody to make a start at implementing the skills learnt. Some people may feel that following the session they have all the information they require to make the lifestyle changes necessary to improve the symptoms, others may feel that they would like some help from us with this. We will ask you to let us know what you would like during the information session. If you choose to continue with the service, we will write to you as soon as possible to offer you an individual assessment appointment where you can meet with one of our therapists and together you can tailor a treatment plan.

Unfortunately there is sometimes a wait for this appointment, which is another reason why we feel that it is so important to attend the information session and begin your journey on the road to recovery.

## Further information

If you would like further information about the CFS/ME session, please contact the service on 01527 488 316. As we are a part-time service, we may be unable to answer, so please leave a message on our answer phone and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

# CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME/ME SERVICE

## The Information Session

Princess of Wales Community Hospital  
Stourbridge Road  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
B61 0BB

Tel: 01527 488316

## What is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME?

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) (also known as Myalgic Encephalopathy, ME) is the name given to a complex and disabling condition. It is characterised by extreme mental and physical fatigue, post-exertional malaise, non restorative sleep, and mood changes, among many more.

There remains to be confusion around the cause of the condition. However we do know that it affects the person as a whole and impacts on every aspect of a person's life; from social relationships, occupational activities, to health and psychological wellbeing.

We also know that by taking an approach that encompasses biological, social, and psychological factors, improvements in symptoms, wellbeing and quality of life are very possible.

## The CFS/ME Information Session

We cannot give hope that there is a cure for CFS/ME, however it is possible to learn skills to manage the symptoms and to improve the impact they have on your life.

Once a diagnosis of CFS/ME is given, it is important to start making small changes to

your lifestyle as soon as possible. We find that having an understanding of the condition and being given the tools to start making these initial lifestyle changes is fundamental to the journey to recovery.

Once per month we hold information sessions for this purpose. The sessions are run in Worcestershire by members of the CFS/ME Service, with specialist knowledge of the condition. This is a chance for you to meet members of our team, to understand what CFS/ME actually is, and to learn about the basic changes you can make to start improving your symptoms. It is also a chance for you to meet others with the diagnosis, as people often find that this helps to reduce the isolation they feel as a result of the symptoms.

The session is educational and delivered in the form of a teaching, where we will be taking you through the basic information required at this stage. Nobody will be expected to discuss their personal circumstances or issues within the session.

We often find that if family/friends have a better understanding of the condition and the things that they can do to help you; it may be easier for you to put the necessary changes into place. Therefore we welcome you to bring **one** family member or friend with you to the session. Unfortunately we cannot accommodate more than one person per patient. However, we understand that it is

sometimes difficult for these people to attend and so if you do not wish to bring anybody with you, then this is also not a problem.

## What happens in the session?

The session will last for two hours, and will usually have both men and women of all ages attending. Everybody that attends will either be newly referred to our service and will have a diagnosis of CFS/ME or a family or friend. Although everybody will have different experiences of the condition, most people find that they are able to identify with the other members and that all of this initial information is relevant to their life and condition.

The session will cover the following areas;

- What is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME?
- What can the CFS/ME service offer you?
- The role of sleep in CFS/ME and how to improve sleep hygiene.
- The role of activity/exercise, and the basics of pacing activity.
- The importance of relaxation in CFS/ME and how to make a start.
- How your family/friends can help to support you.