



COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

A range of treatments, with something to help everyone

Contact Supportive Care on 01271 347225
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COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES AT NORTH DEVON HOSPICE

Complementary therapies are used alongside conventional medical care such as medications, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and surgery.

THE AIM:

- Reduce the side effects of treatments
- Improve physical and emotional wellbeing
- Aid in the body's recovery or balance
- Improve relaxation and sleep

WE CURRENTLY OFFER:

- Relaxing Massage
- Aromatherapy
- Reflexology
- Reiki
- Indian Head Massage
- Specialist Massage techniques such as Lymphoedema Massage, Myofascial Release and Scar Tissue Massage.

As with all hospice care, all these treatments are provided completely free of charge, and are available to patients and their carer.

Our complementary therapy team firstly work on relaxation, leading to the reduction of tension and increased circulation (this can also allow medications to reach their target more effectively). Therapies are also space for reflection, providing the setting for patients and carers to just be themselves in safety and comfort.



MASSAGE THERAPY

Massage can be used to relax, relieve muscle tension and pain, ease anxiety and to bring comfort by gentle human contact. Massage therapy can be given whilst seated or laying, with or without clothing, and can be the most adaptable therapy to your needs. We'll work with you to find the most comfortable ways to give massage therapy.

INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE

This therapy can be given over clothing, sat in a comfortable position. It involves a massage of the upper back, neck, shoulders and arms, as well as the head and face. It helps to ease away stress, tension, headaches, migraines and neck pain (often associated with using computers for prolonged periods of time).



REFLEXOLOGY

The theory behind reflexology is that all the systems and organs of the body are mapped or reflected on the feet, hands, ears and face. Applying light pressure using specific thumb, finger and hand techniques can bring a deep sense of relaxation and calm, while stimulating problem areas to aid symptoms such as constipation, pain, nausea and sickness.

AROMATHERAPY

Increases relaxation, boosts energy, reduces the effects of stress and restores balance to the mind, body and soul. Essential oils can be blended specifically for the individual patient and used for massage, reflexology and for inhalation to help improve your mood. Certain essential oils can also help with pain relief due to their anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties.

Some of the most popular essential oils include:

- Lavender – A relaxing scent, it's often used to help relieve stress and anxiety, while promoting good sleep. It is also an antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and a very good pain reliever
- Tea Tree - Commonly used for acne, insect bites, and skin conditions. It's also an antiseptic and antifungal
- Peppermint – Refreshing and light, used to ease head aches, migraines and other pain. An antiseptic antifungal for skin conditions.
- Lemon - A mood booster, refreshing and uplifting. Can also be used to relieve pain, insect bites and headaches.



SCAR TISSUE MASSAGE

Scarring is the body's natural healing process, after tissue is damaged through surgical cuts or injuries. Scar tissue can become raised and lumpy, but with massage can gradually get smoother and softer.

It can also help any itching and over-sensitivity of the scar. Scar tissue can continue to change for up to 2 years, so scar massage will help reduce the chance of long-term problems. Scar tissue massage takes place as part of a massage therapy, with the therapist using very gentle, light specific movements and techniques on the scar tissue. It can be very relaxing and changes in the tissues can be felt very quickly.

LYMPHOEDEMA MASSAGE

Lymphoedema is swelling that develops because of a build-up of lymph fluid in the body's tissues, sometimes caused by cancer or its treatments. Not everyone will develop lymphoedema, but surgery to remove lymph nodes – as well as radiotherapy to these nodes – can increase the risk of it developing.

One way of managing this is through Manual Lymph Drainage Massage, it is an extremely gentle massage of the affected area and surrounding tissue. The aim is to reduce the build-up of fluid, moisturise the skin, increase movement and ease any discomfort.

MYOFASCIAL RELEASE MASSAGE

Myofascial release is a form of massage therapy that can be used to ease pain caused by sensitivity and tightness in muscle tissues. The pain often occurs due to tightness of muscles and the thin tissues surrounding them, known as fascia.

Most myofascial release takes place during a massage therapy session. The therapist will begin massaging and stretching the areas that feel rigid with light manual pressure, the aim is to improve muscle function and reduce pain, giving the patient or carer a sense of calm and relaxation.

This therapy can:

- Reduce dull, aching muscular pain
- Aid muscular pain that worsens with movement
- Reduce presence of painful knots in muscles
- Aid mobility in affected areas
- Boost your mood
- Help your sleep pattern.



REIKI THERAPY

Reiki (pronounced ray-kee) is a Japanese word meaning 'Universal Energy'. It promotes deep relaxation and brings a sense of peace and wellbeing.

You lie or sit comfortably in a peaceful environment, while the practitioner places their hands gently on or over you in a series of positions around the body. Reiki practitioners are trained to detect and alleviate energy flow imbalances. Most people experience a warming, soothing and relaxing sensation.

It's a gentle and safe technique, that can be used on all ages.



WELLBEING DAYS

An all-day event held at the hospice once a month, offering patients and carers the opportunity to experience different complementary therapies in a relaxing and calm environment. You can enjoy a facial, manicure or pedicure - and there's also the opportunity to get specialist advice from our hair and wig team.

The day provides an informal atmosphere for patients and carers to come together, meet and share with others facing similar challenges, whilst enjoying different therapies. As with any hospice group tea and cake along with lunch is provided.

NORTH DEVON HOSPICE WEBSITE

northdevonhospice.org.uk/self-help-tools

Here you can find a raft of self-help tools, which includes videos and information on:

- Mindfulness
- Guided relaxation
- Tips on general wellbeing
- Essential Oils for wellbeing
- Self-Massage Techniques
- Tips to ease Breathlessness
- The Calming Hand technique of anxiety relief

This allows you to promote relaxation and wellbeing in your own home and at any time.

THE TEAM

The complementary therapy team offer services at both of our hospice sites; Deer Park in Barnstaple and The Long House in Holsworthy. All are qualified, experienced and chosen especially for their ability to work well with hospice patients and their loved ones.

Our volunteers provide time each week, to help people feel better in themselves, and we're so grateful for their professional expertise.

In addition, several members of our Hospice to Home and Bedded Unit teams are trained to provide certain therapies. If you're being supported either by the Hospice to Home team or in the Bedded Unit, please speak to them for more information.





**"THE THERAPIST WAS
THOUGHTFUL AND SO KIND,
IT WAS SO RELAXING. I FELT
SO MUCH BETTER WHEN I LEFT
THAN WHEN I ARRIVED
...I WAS ME AGAIN"**

**"THE TREATMENTS HAVE
BOUGHT SOME PEACE INTO
MY LIFE. TAUGHT ME WAYS
OF RELAXING AND CALMING
DOWN. A SMALL TIME OF
SLIGHT HAPPINESS IN A SAD
WORLD"**

**"WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY
LOST WITHOUT THIS
SUPPORT, KNOWING THE
TEAM ARE THERE FOR ME"**

**"LOVELY STAFF, GREAT
FACIALS, NOTHING COULD
BE IMPROVED ON THE
WELL-BEING DAYS. I FELT SO
SPECIAL AND CARED FOR"**

REFERENCES:

The Directory of Essential Oils by Wanda Sellar
www.nhs.gov/health/massage/therapy
www.healthline.com/health/myofasical-release
www.cuh.nhs/patient-information/scar-massage



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