

# Living well with Severn Hospice – Complementary Therapies

Registered Charity 512394

## **What are complementary therapies?**

**You will probably have heard of them already; it's things like reflexology, massage, reiki and aromatherapy and at Severn Hospice we use them alongside conventional treatments such as medication.**

Our team of qualified therapists complement the medical team, helping alleviate symptoms such as anxiety or pain. Complementary therapies are not offered as 'alternative' methods of treatment and they do not help to reduce tumours or treat or cure cancer.

## **Why does Severn Hospice offer complementary therapy?**

Complementary therapies play an important role in supporting patients, aiding relaxation and giving a sense of comfort and pleasure. Many people find that they benefit greatly from receiving a treatment.

### **Therapies can help with:**

- Relaxation – patients feel soothed and comforted
- Reducing anxiety or feelings of depression
- Feelings of fatigue
- Reducing nausea and vomiting
- Reducing pain
- Improving sleep patterns
- Easing symptoms of breathlessness

**Therapies can provide emotional support which helps to improve quality of life and give a real sense of well-being, comfort and security.**

## **Who can receive the treatments?**

If you are being cared for by Severn Hospice you can receive complementary therapies, whether you are staying with us or just visiting for the day.

All treatments are free of charge and the number of treatments you are offered can vary depending on your circumstances. Your therapist will explain this to you when you first meet.

## Who provides the treatments?

The hospice has a team of team of therapists, all of whom are qualified, experienced and insured – so you know you're in safe hands.

## How can I be referred for complementary therapy?

You can be referred by any of the healthcare professionals involved in your care and you don't have to be staying at the hospice to receive complementary therapy.

## What happens when I have been referred?

Your therapist will use your first meeting as a chance for you both to get to know each other. This relaxing, informal session will enable your therapist to assess your needs and make sure your treatments are safe and tailored for you.

You will discover the range of therapies available and decide which might suit you best. Nothing will happen without your consent. Treatments will take place in our day services area, at your bedside or in a therapy room, depending on your personal circumstances.

## How long do the treatments last?

They are fairly short – usually ten to 30 minutes – and very gentle. During the treatment, you might wish to talk, rest and relax, or even fall asleep!

## What therapies are available?

**Reflexology** Reflexology is based on the principle that the entire body is 'mapped out' and reflected in the feet. By applying gentle pressure to the reflex points on the feet and stimulating the nerve endings, it is said we can cause a reaction elsewhere in the body.

A wonderfully relaxing treatment, reflexology can help to release tension and reduce stress as well as helping to relieve many other symptoms such as pain, fatigue, insomnia and anxiety.

You need only remove your shoes and socks for this treatment.

**Massage** The ancient art of touch – therapeutic, rhythmical, gentle – the kneading and manipulation of the soft tissues to relax, de-stress, ease away aches and pains. Massage can help the body to release our own natural painkillers and provide a sense of contentment, relaxing mind and body.

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**Aromatherapy** The use of fragrant essential oils which are extracted from plants, trees, flowers, shrubs and fruits, all of which have therapeutic properties — some uplifting, energising or stimulating, while others are relaxing, calming and comforting. Essential oils can be used in a massage where the oils are absorbed through the skin and at the same time the aromas are inhaled to stimulate both the senses of touch and smell.

Aromatherapy can be provided as an inhalation, helping to reduce symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, or nausea and enhance feelings of well-being, comfort and calm.

**Indian Head Massage** A therapy which involves gentle, but firm massage to the upper back, upper arms, neck, shoulders, head and face.

Performed over clothing, it can help to ease tension, particularly in the neck and shoulders, easing away anxieties, providing feelings of deep calm and inner peace.

**Reiki** Pronounced Ray-kee, and translated from Japanese as ‘universal energy’, Reiki is a simple therapy which can help to calm and soothe, providing great comfort. It is based on the principle that ‘universal energy’ is channelled through the therapist to the patient.

Performed over clothing, either sitting or lying down, the therapist places their hands on or just above your body.

Simply sit or lie back and enjoy the feelings of warmth and relaxation.

**Relaxation** Your therapist may offer to provide you with a guided relaxation. You may lie down or sit comfortably in a chair and listen to the sound of your therapist’s voice which will guide you into a state of relaxation.

Techniques can be learned and used on your own, helping to reduce anxiety and increase relaxation.

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