



Northumberland,
Tyne and Wear
NHS Foundation Trust

Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT)

Patient Information Leaflet



Caring | Discovering | Growing | **Together**

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Introduction

If you have been offered an appointment for Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) with the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust CAT Service, this leaflet will tell you about what your treatment will involve. Your therapy may be slightly different from what is described here.

Please read this leaflet carefully and ask your therapist about anything you are not sure about. If you need support with reading or writing, please let us know so we can find the best ways to help you.

Directions to the CAT Service

Sessions are held at Benfield House, Walkergate Park, Newcastle NE6 4PF and also at Sycamore, Hopewood Park, Ryhope, Sunderland SR2 0NB. See below for directions.

- **Benfield House, Newcastle**

The CAT Service is located at Benfield House on the Walkergate Hospital site, Benfield Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. If you have an appointment please come to Reception at the main entrance of the building. **This site is Pay and Display parking.** Disabled parking and access is available.

Benfield House is 10 minutes walk up Benfield Road from Walkergate Metro Station. Enter the Walkergate Park Hospital site and follow the road/pathway straight ahead to the top of the site. Benfield House is the last building on the right. Car parking is available next to Benfield House itself.

- **Sycamore, Hopewood Park, Ryhope, Sunderland SR2 0NB**

The nearest bus stop is very close to Hopewood Park, situated just before the foot bridge. Contact Nexus Traveline for further travel information: 0871 200 22 33, www.traveline.info

The following buses run regularly from Park Lane, Sunderland.

60 (Parkside) Go Northeast

61 (Murton) Go Northeast

23/23A (Hartlepool) Arriva

31 (Darlington) Arriva

31A (Middlesbrough) Arriva

At the roundabout near the red bus stops take the road toward the hospital site. On the left up the road is the Ambulance Station (red brick building). The next building on the left is Sycamore.

If travelling by car, car parking is available in Sycamore which is the next building on the left hand side as you travel up to Ryhope.

There is a small amount of **Pay and Display parking.** There is more parking further up the road on the left which is also **Pay and Display.**

What is Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) and who is it for?

Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) is a psychological therapy, or a “talking treatment”, which is used to treat people who have mental health problems or difficulties in their relationships. It is a safe first therapy, particularly for people who present with more than one problem, or who may feel very differently about themselves and other people at different times.

How does CAT work?

Early experiences and important events in our adult lives have all helped to shape the kind of people we are. From these experiences we develop patterns of dealing with situations and relationships, and learn how to manage ourselves. We all try to cope with our lives as best we can, even if things have been very difficult for us.

However, sometimes our old ways of coping don't work so well for us anymore, and we start to have problems, or symptoms. We may start to feel depressed, anxious, angry or worthless. Some of us may suffer from strong mood swings or have difficulties with eating, or with relationships. Some people may self-harm or feel suicidal. It can seem as if we are “stuck”, or “going round in circles”, and it can be hard to change long-standing patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving.

CAT works by trying to find out what our unhelpful patterns are and which of them might be causing the problems which have brought us to therapy. Once we can recognise these, we have a chance to change these patterns, to give ourselves wider choices and to learn to do things differently.

CAT is not like many medical treatments, where all you have to do is follow instructions. With CAT, you will be taking an active part in getting better. You and your therapist will work together to recognise patterns and make the changes you yourself want.

How long will my CAT therapy take?

A CAT therapy normally lasts for a set number of sessions, usually between 16 and 24. You and your therapist will agree on the exact number in the first few weeks of treatment. The sessions last for about 50 minutes, and are usually held weekly, at a time to suit both of you. You may lose booked sessions if you do not attend, unless the absence has been agreed in advance (for example, holidays) or if you are ill.

What's it like starting CAT?

You will meet with a CAT therapist for an initial “assessment” session, which is to ensure that CAT is an appropriate treatment for you. You will need to tell your therapist the main things which are troubling you and which you want to change. Your own ideas about your problems will often be right. While you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to, the more open and honest you are the better. Other psychological treatments are available and you may wish to discuss these with your therapist at assessment.

Your therapist will want to hear something about your earlier life, as well as how things are for you now. You may be given some questionnaires to fill in to help us understand your difficulties better. Usually you meet one-to-one with your therapist, but some people may be offered sessions with their partner. Please ask if you are interested in this.

Once we have agreed that it is right for you to start treatment with CAT, you will spend more time telling your therapist about your problems, and also about the people who have been most important to you in your life so far. Try to give yourself some free time after sessions to think about what has been said. Do try to share with your therapist any worries you may have about therapy.

Helping yourself in between your sessions

Although the relationship with your therapist is important, it is not the only thing which will help you get better. The therapist will suggest you do some tasks between sessions to help yourself understand and change things more quickly. For example you will probably be given the “Psychotherapy File” questionnaire to fill in. This is to get you thinking about your problems in a new and helpful way, and there are no right or wrong answers.

After a few sessions your therapist will write you a personal CAT letter outlining what you have discovered together about your problems, the patterns that are keeping them going, and how they have come about. It is important that you understand and agree with what is in the letter, as it will be used during the rest of your sessions, so take time over reading it. Please discuss with your therapist anything in the letter that you don't understand or don't agree with, as the letter can be changed.

It is never a good idea just to accept what your therapist says if you don't agree yourself. However some things in the letter may be difficult to accept, but true. If you would like to show the letter to other people you are close to, this may be helpful, but make sure you discuss this with your therapist first.

What happens after I get my CAT letter?

You and your therapist will be spending the rest of your time on learning to recognise the unhelpful patterns when they occur, and working out how you can do things differently. Keeping a diary about when the patterns occur in everyday life is a very good way to start doing this. After a while you may be able to predict when a difficult pattern is going to arise. Drawing out the patterns on paper can also be helpful.

Outside of sessions you will also be trying out new ways of doing things. In this respect, CAT is just like life in general – the more you put in, the more you are likely to get out of it. CAT can help you learn how to be your own “therapist”, and you may like the CAT self-help book, “Change for The Better” by Elizabeth Wilde McCormick, to help you further on your way.

Ending your CAT therapy

In the last few sessions you will probably be thinking more about the ending of your therapy and how you feel about it. Many people's problems have been with them for a long time and it can seem as if you would like more time to sort them out. If you have had some difficult endings in your earlier life, coming to the end of your CAT sessions may remind you of these. You and your therapist will talk about this. The more you are able to tell your therapist about any mixed feelings you have about the ending, the easier it tends to become.

Your therapist will write you another letter looking back at the work you have done together, and to help you think about the future. You will be invited to write your own letter, describing the progress you think you have made and what you think you will need to keep doing once the therapy is ended. We may ask you to fill in some more questionnaires, to see how much your therapy has helped you.

How will I feel after CAT ends?

CAT therapy is an effective way for many people to start overcoming their problems and changing their lives. You should not expect to feel entirely better after therapy has ended, but most people who improve during their CAT sessions find that they go on improving afterwards. Keep on putting into practice what you have learnt as often as you can. You will be able to talk about your progress at a follow-up session. At this meeting there will be a chance to talk about the best way to manage any further needs you have.

More information about CAT

CAT has been developed for NHS patients for over 30 years in London, other parts of Britain, and Europe. It is used in outpatient settings, in primary care, day hospitals, in-patient wards, social work departments and private practice. It is being researched in these settings. CAT has been offered in this Trust since 1994. Most people treated with CAT in the Trust have made improvements with their problems.

Useful resources

- **Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy – www.acat.me.uk**
This website has a very useful introduction to CAT which anyone can access, plus information on how to find an accredited CAT therapist.
- **Self Help Book** Change for the Better, Elizabeth Wilde McCormick (2017, 5th Edition), Published by Sage, London.

Useful contacts

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) – provide a free, confidential NHS advice and support service.

North of Tyne – Freephone 0800 032 02 02 (9am – 4.30pm)

South of Tyne – Freephone 0800 328 4397 (9am – 5pm)

References

A full list of references is available on request by emailing pic@ntw.nhs.uk

What if I have a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint about the service?

If you want to make a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint you can:

- talk to the people directly involved in your care
- ask a member of staff for a feedback form, or complete a form on the Trust website www.ntw.nhs.uk (click on the 'Contact Us' tab)
- telephone the Complaints Department Tel: 0191 245 6672
- email complaints@ntw.nhs.uk Please note that information sent to the Trust via email is sent at your own risk
- We are always looking at ways to improve services. Your feedback allows us to monitor the quality of our services and act upon issues that you bring to our attention. You can provide feedback in the following ways:
 - the quickest way for you to do this is to complete our short online survey at www.ntw.nhs.uk/poy
 - complete a Points of You survey, available on wards, reception areas or from staff.
 - some areas of the Trust have electronic feedback touch screens, staff can help you to use these.

Contact details

Sessions are held at Benfield House, Newcastle and also at Sycamore, Hopewood Park, Ryhope, Sunderland.

Please contact us at:
Cognitive Analytic Therapy Service
Centre for Specialist Psychological Therapies
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
Benfield House
Walkergate Park
Benfield Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE6 4PF
Tel: 0191 287 6100
Email: cspt@ntw.nhs.uk

Please note that information sent to the Trust via email is sent at your own risk.



Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre. If you would like to tell us what you think about this leaflet please get in touch.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, larger print, easy read, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre Tel: 0191 246 7288

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