



PSYCHO-ONCOLOGY SERVICES

The recently established Psycho-Oncology service in Galway University Hospital Department comprises of Psychology, Medical Social Work and Nursing.

Psychological services within the psycho-oncology is provided by Dr. Natalie Hession, Principal Psychologist, who provides psychological assessment, intervention and therapy to patients on the emotional challenges that may arise at all stages of the cancer journey.

Psycho-oncology is a specialty in cancer care concerned with understanding and treating the psychological, emotional, quality-of-life and functional aspects of cancer, from prevention through bereavement.

It is normal for patients to feel distressed when diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. However, at least 25% of patients will develop depression and anxiety. It is known that psychological support and intervention at all levels can reduce psychological distress, improve the patient's quality of life, lead to a better functional and emotional outcome, and facilitate a return to daily activities.

Who can be referred?

Outpatients and inpatients affected by cancer who are currently on treatment or have previously received treatment at Galway University Hospital. Referrals are made through the medical team.

What difficulties can be addressed?

- Adjustment difficulties
- Anxiety and panic
- Depression or low mood
- Coping with investigations or treatment
- Coping with pain
- Relationship difficulties and family distress
- Body image issues
- Psychological issues related to dying



Research

Psychology within Psycho-oncology are involved in several research programmes. For example, the investigation of the effectiveness of 'Emotional Focused Therapy' with cancer patients and have published widely on this topic.