

Complementary therapy & wellbeing

Complementary therapies are an integral part of the holistic care provided at St Helena Hospice.

These therapies support overall care by promoting comfort, relaxation, and wellbeing for patients and their families, and are also available to those using our bereavement services.

All treatments are delivered by a team of fully qualified professional volunteer therapists who meet St Helena's strict prerequisites, so you can be confident that you are in safe and experienced hands.

Complementary Therapy & Wellbeing can:

- Promote relaxation
- Enhance overall wellbeing and quality of life
- Reduce anxiety, depression, stress and tension
- Relieve pain
- Ease symptoms such as muscle fatigue and tension
- Support digestive issues, including constipation
- Improve sleep patterns
- Provide emotional support and reduce psychological distress
- Stimulate circulation and memory
- Improve skin condition
- Reduce fears or phobias related to illness/grief

All new referrals are assessed by our qualified and experienced Complementary Therapy & Wellbeing Lead, where suitable treatments will be discussed and tailored to meet your individual needs.

We offer 4-6 sessions, after which further sessions are reviewed.

If required, therapy may be offered at the patient's home.

Treatments and wellbeing support are also available in our Inpatient Unit (IPU) for both patients and family members.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is the systematic and therapeutic use of plant-derived, aromatic essential oils in holistic treatments to promote physical and emotional wellbeing. It is used in combination with massage and other therapeutic techniques as part of a holistic treatment approach.

Aromastick inhalers can be made up for individuals to help manage several conditions, such as nausea, anxiety, poor sleep, breathing problems and more. Aromatherapy essential oils can be effectively blended for use in therapy rooms and on IPU.

Aromatherapy is an especially effective treatment for stress and sleep related problems and a variety of chronic conditions.

Massage

Massage is a therapy that uses a variety of techniques to provide relief from tension and tightness in muscles. It can ease specific areas of discomfort and pain.

An adapted therapeutic massage for palliative care is effective for emotional and mental stresses, as well as giving a sense of peace and tranquility.

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Gentle Indian Head Massage IHM)

IHM is adapted to provide a gentle and nurturing treatment, using massage techniques focused on the scalp, neck, upper back, shoulders, upper arms, and face. Where appropriate, IHM can be provided either seated with support or lying down comfortably.

IHM may help to relieve neck and shoulder stiffness, improve mobility, ease mental and emotional stress, and promote an overall sense of relaxation and wellbeing. Oils may be used to enhance the therapeutic benefits of the treatment.

The 'M' Technique

The 'M' technique® was created by Dr Jane Buckle. It uses very light stroking movements with the hands, performed in a set sequence at a set pressure and set pace.

It is different from conventional massage and may be suitable when the patient needs a very gentle touch. This therapy is profoundly relaxing and calming and proven to induce sleep and to help settle the patient.

Watch the video here:

<https://bit.ly/3RVG3vY> or by scanning the QR code:



Reflexology

Reflexology is a therapy based on the principle that there are zones and reflex areas in the feet and hands which correspond to all organs and systems of the body. By applying pressure to these reflex points in a systematic way, a practitioner can help in the management of stress; promote physiological changes in the body; and release tensions.

An adapted reflexology treatment for palliative care helps to alleviate physical and emotional symptoms by reducing stress and inducing relaxation, feelings of increased energy, and improving wellbeing. Reflexology Lymph Drainage techniques can also be used which may help reduce swelling in limbs and lymphoedema.

Holistic Facial Therapy

Holistic facial therapy combines the benefits and techniques of the relaxing effects of aromatherapy, massage, or facial reflexology.

Essential Oils and natural aromatherapy oils are blended and applied to improve the condition and texture of the skin. This relaxing treatment will aim to ease stress and increase a deep sense of wellbeing.

Reiki

Reiki means 'universal life energy' in Japanese.

It is an energy balance that uses techniques to channel Reiki energy to bring about deep relaxation on the physical, emotional, and thought processes of a person.

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It can be done over clothes, and the therapist may rest their hands on the body where discomfort is felt.

This therapy is helpful if the recipient is receptive to energy approaches.

The HEARTS Process

HEARTS is a mnemonic for therapeutic sensory approaches and consist of: Hands-on (using TOUCH), Empathy (which builds connection), Aromas (tapping into the senses and memory, or actual aromas), Relaxation (the fundamental aim of this therapeutic approach), Textures (sensory response to clothing, covers around the individual), & Sound (using the calming voice with memory evoked imagery, music, sounds around, to enhance the sensory and memory response).

All these approaches help a patient or carer/family member achieve a state of relaxation and calm/stillness in many situations and support them in a caring and gentle way quickly and as needed.

Research has shown HEARTS to be profoundly effective to deeply relax and bring calm to a stressful situation

Mindfulness & Wellbeing

Mindfulness, guided relaxation, or meditation is a valuable skill you can acquire to help the body's natural response to manage anxiety, stress, worry and sleeplessness.

Relaxation is the body's natural way of calming down, regulating breathing and settling the mind, and therefore has no side effect.

You can access sessions using the QR codes below, to gentle mindfulness reflective exercises and help you experience relaxation and wellbeing anytime you need:

Plan to set aside some time, choose a quiet place and listen to these guided relaxations:

- Relaxation from the feet
- Relaxation from the eyes
- Body meditation
- Relaxation – the journey
- Relaxation – the special place



Therapy Dogs

Our therapy dogs are registered with a UK-recognised pet therapy organisation. Together with their owners, they will provide companionship, emotional support and a comforting presence for patients, families, visitors and staff on IPU.

Look Good Feel Better (LGFB) Masterclass

The LGFB charity masterclasses are provided to patients with a cancer diagnosis. These workshops are an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation whilst being coached in skincare and makeup application, boosting patients' confidence and self-esteem. At St Helena our trained LGFB volunteers run sessions for our referred patients.

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IPU Social Wellbeing

Support on IPU is available for social wellbeing needs, which is provided by a team of St Helena trained volunteers. They provide companionship, wellbeing support and offer a listening-ear, including the 'M' Technique massage, HEARTS and any activities to support the patient and the family, e.g. coffee and cake morning, afternoon tea or visiting the chapel with a family member.

Complementary therapy & wellbeing for staff and volunteers

Discounted paid treatments can be offered for staff and volunteers as part of our wellbeing support. These are promoted internally when capacity allows or speak to our team for more information.

For further information, please refer to our website:
sthelena.org.uk/complementarytherapies

All treatments and support described in this leaflet are in line with St Helena's Policies and are subject to change.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long do the treatments take?

Booked treatment appointments usually last around 45 minutes; however, we ask that you allow up to one hour to include time to discuss your needs with the therapist. Treatments can be adapted to be shorter if required. Treatments provided within the Inpatient Unit (IPU) and in the community are often shorter, depending on individual need and circumstances.

How can I get the most from my therapy sessions?

Generally most people may feel very relaxed, as they release some stress and anxiety, and others experience more energy and mental clarity. Please follow all the aftercare advice discussed with you and focus on the positive effects of the treatment.

How much do my treatments cost?

Complementary therapy is provided free of charge. Donations are welcome, if you are able, and help support wellbeing for others.

Please ask your therapist or reception team for details. Thank you.

Our team is always here to help with any questions you may have.