

# Complementary therapy & wellbeing

Complementary therapies are considered an integral part of St Helena holistic care.

Complementary therapies support the total care given, promoting comfort and support for both patients and their families, increasing relaxation and wellbeing. We also support those who use our bereavement service.

All treatments and therapies are provided by a team of fully qualified professional volunteer therapists, who have met the strict prerequisites to provide therapies at St Helena - you can be reassured you are in safe 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 Team Lead, where suitable treatments will be discussed and tailored to meet your individual needs.

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

If a patient is homebound, therapy may be offered in their home.

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

## We Currently Offer:

### 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. An aromatherapy diffuser can be used in therapy rooms and on IPU.

Aromatherapy is an especially effective treatment for stress-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.

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

## Gentle Indian Head Massage (IHM)

IHM is adapted to provide a gentle treatment, using massage techniques on the area of the scalp, neck, upper back, shoulder, upper arms and face. If appropriate, IHM can be given seated with support, or lying down comfortably.

IHM gives relief from neck and shoulder stiffness, improving mobility; relieving mental stress and emotional stress; and providing overall feelings of wellbeing and relaxation. Oils may be used to enhance treatment outcomes.

## 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 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, 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 visualisation 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, which will open up a gentle mindfulness reflective exercises and help you access 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.

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## 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 regularly for our referred patients.

## 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. To contact the Complementary Therapy team, please call 01206 848163

For further information, please refer to our website:

[sthelena.org.uk/what-we-offer/for-patients-and-families/complementary-therapies](https://sthelena.org.uk/what-we-offer/for-patients-and-families/complementary-therapies)

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

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Are the therapists qualified?

Yes. All our complementary therapists are fully qualified professionals who volunteer their time. Our social wellbeing volunteers are trained in-house to fulfil their role. All our volunteers have met the hospice's stringent safety and training requirements.

### How long do the treatments take?

Any booked appointments for treatments usually last about 45 minutes, but please allow an hour, to enable you to discuss your needs with the therapist. They can be adapted to be shorter if needed. Treatments on IPU and in the community tend to be shorter, depending on need.

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## 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 following a treatment. Please follow all the aftercare advice discussed with you and focus on the positive effects of the treatment.

## What is the general after-care advice I should follow after a treatment?

Over the next 12-24 hrs:

- Drink water or herbal tea, unless you are restricted for medical reasons
- Avoid caffeine drinks
- Eat a light meal
- Allow adequate time after your relaxing treatment to refocus your attention
- If you find you feel a little emotional, practice some mindfulness techniques, or focus on your breathing
- Leave any products on your skin, if applied, and avoid direct sunlight. If your skin feels itchy, please remove any products and apply a cool compress, and seek advice
- If you have any concerns related to your treatment, please contact the complementary therapy team, or if a patient and you have general health concerns, call your GP.

## How much do my treatments cost?

Our complementary therapy service is provided to you free of charge. However, these services are not free for us to provide. To ensure we can continue to offer this support to others — both now and in the future — we welcome voluntary contributions if you are in a position to give.

Whether it's a small thank-you or a 'pay-it-forward' gesture to help someone else benefit from care, every contribution helps sustain this service for patients, families, and those who are bereaved.

If you would like to contribute, you can:

- Use the QR code or visit this link:  
[insert link]
- Ask your therapist for a contribution envelope if you prefer to give in cash.

Your support makes a real difference — thank you.

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