





## Dental Anxiety Management Service (DAMS)

### What is the Dental Anxiety Management Service (DAMS)?

The DAMS provide support for people who are very anxious about visiting the dentist.

We offer a number of different ways of helping people who are anxious about visiting the dentist or having dental treatment. This includes Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based techniques as applied to dentistry.

The service is provided by trained dental nurses and a health psychologist. We work alongside other member of the dental team, including dentists, nurses and dental therapists who are trained to meet the needs of patients who are anxious about visiting the dentist.

### How can the service help me?

The team will work with you to identify your priorities for changing how you feel about attending the dentist. Many patients want help with:

- Feeling less anxious about going into the dental surgery
- Feeling less anxious about receiving a dental injection
- Having dental treatment
- Taking children to the dentist

### What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and how does it apply to dental anxiety?

One of the ways we will help people who are fearful of going to the dentist, is using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques.

Using CBT-techniques for dentistry, we will help you to identify problems and search for solutions. It helps you link your thinking patterns, beliefs, physical reactions, emotions and behaviours.

You could be given self-help assignments, for example, practicing relaxation skills, or learning about dental equipment. These can help you learn to manage your dental fear.

CBT-techniques have been shown to be very useful for people with dental anxiety. It will help you develop positive coping skills such as:

- Achieving goals by breaking them down into small steps
- Replacing your unhelpful thought patterns with helpful thoughts
- Improving your belief in your ability to cope
- Learning how to control your anxiety levels

### How does the service work?

If you would like support to help with your fear of the dentist, please speak to one of our dentists or nurses who can make a referral.

We will review the referral and make an initial assessment appointment. This will be in a separate room, away from the dental clinic room.

### What happens at my first appointment?

Your first appointment will take about one hour. We will ask you about your concerns and how you usually cope with dental treatment. We will also ask about how you feel when you think about visiting the dentist or actually go to the dentist.

After the assessment, we will decide whether a series of further appointments are likely to be helpful.

### How many appointments will I need?

This varies from person to person and will be discussed with you at your assessment. You can stop your appointments at any time, but we hope this will be after your anxiety has improved.

In the long term, if you feel that you need more help with your dental anxiety, or feel that the level of anxiety is increasing again, you could be referred back to the service.