



## long-term therapies for people living with long-term conditions

### SELF HELP- ACTION WHILE WE AWAIT A CURE

#### THE WAY IT USED TO BE

When our older members think back to the time they received their diagnosis they often comment: *I waited for ages for the diagnosis and when it came there were no suggestions as to what I should do.*

*The best advice was limited to what not to do, like: 'Don't over tire yourself' and 'Don't worry'.*

#### THE WAY IT IS NOW

Thankfully now MS Therapy Centres throughout the UK give people information about MS and help the person with MS, their families and carers to cope. They also provide therapies which can improve quality of life.

#### IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Our members tell us that one of the things they value most is the friendliness of the Centre here in Inverness. This is largely thanks to the staff, both professional and voluntary. Of course, we all have a great deal in common so starting conversations or striking up friendships is easy. No one stands on ceremony - ideas and experiences are shared. Many members find the best therapy of all is sitting round the table with a cup of tea or coffee and chatting to one another. New members soon find that our premises can become a home from home.

Come as often as you like and stay as long as you like. We are here for you whether you want to use our therapies or just drop in for a cup of coffee and a chat. It is up to you. Our facilities are for you - so make use of them! You will always be made welcome.

#### COUNSELLING

First diagnosis can bring a real sense of relief when, at last, worrying symptoms have a name. However, unspoken non-medical anxieties often remain which a trained counsellor may be able to resolve.

The need for counselling is perhaps most apparent at, or soon after diagnosis and there are other times when adjustments to changed circumstances are more easily made with a little expert help.

'Counselling' can range from a sympathetic listening ear, to medical advice on a condition, probing hidden fears and concerns and providing the individual with the means to confront and deal with them right up to a complete programme of psychotherapy.

For the Centre, counselling means offering space to sort things out, confidentially and in private, away from the home situation. Individuals may need different levels of support at different times, and these may cover the entire range of help from relatively simple reassurance to extended therapy.

It is difficult to generalise but we believe our MS counselling concentrates on meeting the need for helpful and honest information.

Counselling individuals with MS is a vital part of coping even though such help may be needed only occasionally. At the same time, it is also important for partners, parents, children or any other person close to the person with MS who may also need help. It should not always be assumed that the 'problem' lies primarily with the person who has MS.

Can we help anyone in your circle? We have the expertise in the Centre.

#### WHAT IS THE CHANCE OF A CURE?

Our crystal ball is no better than yours - but these days there has got to be a terrific amount of optimism about the future. The last couple of years have seen great innovation, particularly in the area of drug development.

Beta-Interferon is licensed for use in the UK. Although initially it was very rarely prescribed due to the high cost of treatment, the Government has now made a deal with the manufacturer which means that people who are in the right category can get treatment. The effectiveness of the drug will be monitored, and if it is not proving: fully effective, the cost to the NHS' will be reduced. The time-scale and further details will be released by the Health Minister. The scheme means that companies involved have agreed terms for the supply of Beta-Interferon, Avonex, Copaxone and Rebif. It is expected that up to 1600 patients could benefit.

Cannabis trials funded by the Medical Research Council are underway. If these trials are successful it could mean the legalisation of cannabis for medical use. The Health Secretary has stated the Government's willingness to legalise it for medical use if the trials show it can be of "clear benefit".

An MS Nurse Service is based in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

There can be no doubt there is a momentum in MS research. A cliché it may be, but hopefully "it is only a matter of time".

And while that time passes - what are you going to do? Will you be experiencing HBO for the first time? Perhaps returning to physiotherapy, and really keeping up with the exercises!!!

All these opportunities and more exist for you at your local MS Therapy Centre today. We look forward to seeing you.

