



## **Support and Counselling for Families and Individuals in Okehampton Guidance for Agency Referrals**

Okehampton Support and Counselling for Families and Individuals is funded by Okehampton United Charities. The aim of the programme is to work alongside families and individuals living in Okehampton and Okehampton Hamlets who would not otherwise have access to support or counselling. It is not intended to replace any statutory or non-statutory service in Okehampton. It is not an emergency service, in crisis please contact the appropriate emergency service.

*We are happy provide a similar service outside this area. Please contact us for a service quote.*

### **Family and Individual Support**

The types of issues we will address include:

- Parenting advice and guidance
- Communication skills
- Stress management
- Lack of motivation
- Wellbeing
- Loneliness

We will do this by offering a combination of coaching, mentoring and appropriate signposting. We may also offer groups and workshops where there is an issue shared by several clients. We will offer face-to-face and/or planned telephone support. Our approach will include:

#### *Coaching*

Coaching is usually time limited and focuses on unleashing potential and developing specific competencies. A person could be at coping day to day but feeling that they have no reserves, or feel out of depth at work or home. The objective is to understand what great performance and motivation looks like and work towards this. The coach will also have relevant knowledge and will offer information where appropriate.

#### *Mentoring*

The mentoring relationship may be for longer than for coaching, where progress is measured not so much in developing specific competencies but in the successful completion of various life stages and transitions.

### *Partnership Working*

Where appropriate we will work with families and individuals alongside specialist organisations eg. Domestic violence, drug rehabilitation, mental health services etc. This may be pre, post and/or during their specialist intervention and would be negotiated between the family or individual, Community Links and the other organisation.

### *Signposting*

We have a detailed knowledge of other services in Okehampton and may be able to help with appropriate signposting to, and support for clients to access another service or community activity.

## **Counselling**

Issues to be addressed in counselling:

- Mild depression and anxiety
- Bereavement
- Mild phobias
- Significant communication difficulties
- Significant stress management issues

Issues that we will not address:

- Complex diagnosed mental health eg. Psychosis, schizophrenia, clinical depression, bi-polar
- Known violent behaviour
- Extreme post-traumatic stress disorder
- Extreme phobias
- Complex combinations of presentations
- Counselling for couples

Community Links will initially offer up to ten sessions to each client. Short term therapy may be a solution in itself or a first step to longer term work which would require a new referral. Counselling will be offered to adults over 25 years. Counselling for children and young people should be referred to Tor Support Services.

### **The benefits of integrating family and individual support with counselling**

Both approaches aim to increase a person's health and wellbeing. They engage with the process of enabling individuals to achieve their desired potential. This involves

- exploring the client's needs and motivations - where they are now or what is and is not working well for them,
- gaining an understanding of their hopes and aspirations - where or how they would like things to be,
- identifying skills and thought processes that have either hindered in the past, or can be harnessed to enable them to achieve a real and lasting change,
- working with the client to identify the most appropriate intervention.

There are a number of shared practitioner skills, tools and techniques that we will use:

- Practitioner competence – working within an area of personal competence.
- Questioning – to promote self-knowledge and insight, leading to the development of solutions and action.
- Support and encouragement – to be established through an effective working alliance and unconditional acceptance of the client.
- Creating a positive and non-judgemental environment – within which the individual can be open and honest, and where goal setting and realistic outcomes can be explored.
- Observation – through assessment or evaluation of the individual's realistic aspirations and progress.
- Creativity – deploying a range of tools or techniques to assist in the journey of self-awareness and action.
- Reality-based approach – to challenge the barriers and hindrances of the past and develop realistic personal competencies to move forward.

## **Referral**

### **Referral Criteria – Family and Individual Support**

- Families and individuals must consent to engaging with the service prior to referral.
- Families and individuals must consent to meeting the Service Coordinator.
- Our service is for universal early intervention and prevention and is therefore aimed at families and individuals at level 2 and below i.e. universal and one other service involvement.
- We do not take referrals for Family and Individual Support for families open to social care ie. Child in Need (CIN) or with a Child Protection Plan (CP). If a family we are supporting escalates to a statutory intervention we reserve the right to withdraw but will consider each case individually.
- We will consider referrals for Family and Individual Support for families with a straightforward Devon Assessment Framework (DAF) as long as the family is engaged with appropriate services, we are invited to attend TAC meetings, (where prior notice of the date has been given and agreed) and a clear role for the practitioner is identified.
- If possible please specify whether the referral is for Family and Individual Support or Counselling. We will also conduct our own assessment of needs and will only offer support if, in our assessment, it is appropriate. Our decision is final.

### **Referral Criteria – Counsellor**

- Families and individuals must consent to engaging with the service prior to referral.
- Families and individuals must consent to meeting the Service Coordinator.

- It is unlikely that we would engage with a client who is already accessing therapeutic support from another agency or individual as this could be detrimental to their progress.
- If possible please specify whether the referral is for Family and Individual Support or Counselling. We will also conduct our own assessment of needs and will only offer support if, in our assessment, it is appropriate. Our decision is final.
- Although this service is funded we would like to make it available to as many people as possible. If counselling is offered clients who are able will be asked to make a contribution to the cost of the sessions.

### **Referral Process**

- Please obtain permission from the family to complete the Referral Form before returning it together with a copy of the Devon Assessment Framework (DAF) if there is one.
- Once a referral is received we will acknowledge it within a fortnight. If the referral is unsuitable we will return it to the referrer with an explanation.
- Families and individuals will be contacted by the Service Coordinator to either make an appointment for an initial meeting, where information will be provided about the service offered and an assessment made, or to let them know they are on the waiting list. If we are not able to offer support straight away we will keep in contact with the client. (The referrer will be informed).
- If we are unable to make contact with the family we will return the referral to the referrer.

If the referral form is completed electronically please send to [familysupport@communitylinks-sw.co.uk](mailto:familysupport@communitylinks-sw.co.uk) password protected with the password in a separate email. Alternatively, you can send by Egress confidential emails or send a hard copy in an envelope marked confidential to:

Community Links Support, Community Centre, Okehampton College, Mill Road,  
Okehampton, EX20 1PW

Tel: 01837 650933

### **Safeguarding**

As described in the Community Links Safeguarding Policy - where any safeguarding concerns are identified the Support Worker or Counsellor will notify the parent/caregiver that the information will be shared with the Community Links Safeguarding Officer. This is with the exception of when it is considered that this openness would compromise the safety of either the Support Worker, counsellor, a member of the family or the wider public. Where this is the situation, the family will not be notified in advance.