

## Background information

Our Charity was founded in 1975 in response to a local need for easily accessible support for individuals and families experiencing intolerable stress. Over the years the organisation has changed considerably but we remain responsive to need and flexible in our approach to service delivery – our strap line is 'For Whatever Life Throws At You'.

## Counselling

Due to Covid-19 we currently offer counselling services remotely through Zoom or by telephone. We are gradually returning to face to face counselling at our Altrincham Centre on Mayors Road, ensuring that our clients, counsellors and operational staff are safe and remain alert.

We usually offer counselling services from:

- our Altrincham Centre on Mayors Road (near Stamford Park),
- the Broomwood Community Wellbeing Centre in Timperley,
- the Old Trafford Well Being Centre (North Trafford)
- the Kath Locke Centre (North Trafford)

and to:

- service users of Homestart Salford and Trafford,
- Trafford Domestic Abuse service,
- the National Probation Service over 3 locations,
- the Cleanstart service in Trafford
- students in schools and colleges across Trafford, Stockport and the City of Manchester.

We provide counselling for children and young people between the ages of 5 and 17 years, adult individuals, couples, and families. We also have specialist counselling in the area of addictions, trauma and perinatal distress. .

We currently have over 45 counsellors, many of whom are volunteers and who see at least three clients a week and are supported by a team of 4 clinical supervisors. Our gradual return to face to face counselling is being completed largely by our volunteer counsellors who are in training, as they have been unable to work via Zoom throughout lockdown. We usually have a large team of reception volunteers and a small salaried staff providing administration and support services. Currently our volunteer receptionists are waiting patiently to return to the centre, and reception duties are being covered by our small reception team. We usually recruit counsellors annually: most are students on placement when they arrive, but we are proud that many stay on after qualification. However, we will not have a counsellor intake in 2020.

We strive to offer a high quality professional service to all our clients, and our counselling services are accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and covered by organisational professional indemnity insurance.

V2.0 05/08/2019

We receive no funding whatsoever from the government or from the NHS. On the one hand that means we are constantly worrying about funding, but on the really positive side it allows us to be flexible and responsive to need and completely focussed on pursuing 'what works?'

### Additional support

Based in our Altrincham Centre we facilitate a weekly drop in group for those affected by the addiction of family members, a Mindfulness group, a 'Friday Club' for older people at risk of isolation, and Friday 'Crafternoons' – for those interested in experimenting with art and craft techniques.

We also provide space for external support groups e.g. AA (Women only), ACOA, U3A and Smart Recovery.

### Training programme

#### Professional

We run a full training programme for counsellors and related professionals. We are continuously developing post qualification training pathways for both our newly qualified and experienced counsellors to further their learning and are always looking for ways in which we can add to their experience.

We also run a full training programme for reception staff to develop their skills.

#### Life skills

We offer courses for the general public such as assertiveness, self-esteem, parenting etc.

The majority of the courses above are run by our 'in-house' training team made up from our counsellors who either brought these skills in or have acquired them as part of their journey with us.

Where training is compulsory it is free – all other training is available to all our staff and volunteers at a heavily subsidised rate.

### Café in the Park

We have a community café within our Altrincham Centre. Due to Covid-19 our café is currently open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for takeaway only. Our café is usually open 7 days a week. The café provides a focal point for the local community to meet in and offers a varied, healthy and reasonably priced food and drink menu. Alongside a salaried Café Manager and part-time assistants, the café is staffed by volunteers. It has a contemporary and welcoming feel where local people can enjoy coffee or lunch and at the same time feel able to ask more about the Centre and the services we offer.....and even volunteer their time and experience!

There is a lounge area next to the café for local groups to meet in and we are developing services for local residents to complement and expand what we currently offer once it is safe – as well as providing extra customers for the café!