



Counselling and Therapeutic Services Strategy for Addressing Accessibility Limitations

Aims

My Sisters Place Counselling and Therapeutic Services is committed to offering free, confidential and an effective range of therapeutic services to women 16 years and who are or have experienced and or witnessed domestic violence or abuse throughout their lifespan. We place our client's needs at the center of our service delivery and design to ensure equitable access without discrimination.

My Sisters Place Counselling and Therapeutic Services

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MY SISTERS PLACE COUNSELLING AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING ACCESSIBILITY LIMITATIONS

My Sisters Place Counselling and Therapeutic Services is committed to offering inclusive, free, confidential and effective therapeutic services to women 16 years and over who are or have experienced and/or witnessed domestic violence or abuse as children/adult or both. We place our client's needs at the centre of our service delivery and design to ensure equitable access without discrimination.

This strategy recognises that in order to ensure the services remains accessible, responsive, adaptive and effective and reaches its target population it must endeavour to continually review all aspects of its service delivery, development and provision.

In recognition of this the service commits to an on-going accessibility review process which focuses on the following areas:-

- service promotion
- data collection, analysis and review
- monitoring inclusivity and diversity
- service provision

Service Promotion

Importance is placed on promoting awareness of the specialist nature of the service and therapy offered to individuals throughout the Teesside area to ensure that service's visibility remains high. The service recognises that individuals include clients who self-refer, are signposted by or are directly referred by other individuals or services can only access if they are aware of the service and services offered.

The service recognises that even though it has a strong reputation locally as a specialist provider of therapeutic services to women who have been impacted by domestic abuse there is a need to keep the service's profile current and consistently review. The services strategy is to continue to promote it services widely via:

- MSP website/promotional materials and publicity
- social media including Facebook and Twitter
- provide briefings to organisations
- engage in networking opportunities
- within the service to visitors/volunteers and staff.

We have entries in the following directories locally are a good source of information for clients wishing to access and provide on-line information regarding our service. The service will review these entries annually and update accordingly to ensure the range of services offered is up to date.

- [Cleveland Police Website](#)

<https://www.cleveland.police.uk/advice-information/DomesticAbuse/Support-Services.aspx>

- Middlesbrough Council Website

<https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/community-support-and-safety/domestic-abuse/im-victim-domestic-abuse-adult>

- Family Information Service- Middlesbrough

<http://fis.middlesbrough.gov.uk/kb5/middlesbrough/fsd/results.page?qt=my+sisters+place&term=&familychannelnew=0&sorttype=relevance>

We will undertake to keep our website up to date with changes on an on-going basis to actively promote the addition of services and actively promote new projects.

Data collection, analysis and review

We collate anonymous data, with consent, on all clients accessing the service, this includes information in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, employment status and geographical area. This data is reviewed on a monthly basis to provide a continuous picture of clients accessing the service and reported quarterly to the Chief Officer enabling us to identify and address any under representation.

Data collated using CORE NET is reviewed annually with summary reports produced including data analysis on demographics, severity of presenting issues, pre and post clinical profiles, clinical and reliable change to demonstrate therapeutic effectiveness, the rate of planned and unplanned endings and the number of clients accessing therapy and referral sources. This data is used to ensure that we are reaching our client group and is displayed within service, circulated to staff, placed on our website and details included in our annual report.

Attendance, cancellation and DNA' data rates are collated and analysed monthly, quarterly and overall annually to ensure that rates remain consistent. Effective monitoring enables us to act promptly and seek understanding and resolution regarding drops or increases in attendance or increase in DNA or cancellation rates and monitor reasons for cancellations that may require a review of services.

We collate and monitor data on waiting times from referral to 1st assessment and assessment to first therapy session to ensure we provide a timely and responsive service and to ensure waiting times for clients are kept low. This information will be published via our website and displayed in service.

Referral sources and number of referrals received as well as geographical data is monitored and reviewed quarterly to ensure that we meet the accessibility needs of Middlesbrough based clients. This also enables us to promote the service to referrers that are referring and provide them with accurate data regarding access and waiting times.

Session to session outcome measures completed by clients in therapy are monitored by practitioners on a weekly basis and by the Counselling and Therapeutic Services Manager on monthly basis who analyses the data to ensure that the clients therapeutic needs are being met and that the service is accessible and effective in terms of meeting psychological needs.

Annually the service will survey staff and practitioners and encourage feedback in relation to areas of improvement to ensure that its services meet the needs of its clients.

Clients who engage in therapy are offered the opportunity to feedback on the service they have received and what has been effective or hindering to inform service provision and highlight areas of improvement.

Monitoring inclusivity and diversity

Inclusivity and diversity are important for both clients accessing the service but equally in the practitioners providing therapeutic services.

In accordance with our equal opportunities policy we will continue to recruit a diverse range of volunteer therapists and clinical placements and do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or disability. We will continue to advertise opportunities via our web site and via our established connections with local training organisations.

We will continually monitor client data regarding age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity and disability from clients who have opted to provide that information. Data will be monitored quarterly to ensure that the service can respond with immediacy and be responsive in areas that are under-represented.

We are aware that due to funding limitations we are unable to provide therapy through interpreters and undertake to ensure that clients wishing to access therapy are informed of this limitation and provided with alternative signposting to organisations that can facilitate. The number of requests in this area still remains low however we undertake to review this annually to re-assess if we need to review our provision and if so will actively seek funding for training and provision of interpreters if required.

Service provision

MSP Counselling and Therapeutic Services offers free services at the point of delivery which is made possible by funding via charitable grants, MSP revenue generation and local authority funding. To enable and continue to provide a service that reaches its target population it is important that the service is able to secure external sources of revenue and increase its own revenue generation. Therefore the organisation will continue to:

- seek continued funding via charitable grants and statutory funding where possible.
- develop projects that incorporate the services experience and specialism with partnerships seeking to buy in that specialism that will generate income for the service to ensure the service continues.
- develop a fundraising strategy and employing a fundraising lead to drive the strategy forward.
- promote our 'small charity, big difference' to promote voluntary donations from current and past clients, other individuals who may want to contribute to support the work.

The service recognises the importance of improving and developing effective therapeutic services and will monitor and analyse its therapeutic outcomes data on a quarterly basis to ensure that the range of therapeutic services is meeting its client's needs. It will further review data on an annual basis to inform the improvement and development of therapeutic services.

Access for out of hours therapy will continue to be monitored for clients who wish to access sessions that fit in with work, study or around childcare. The service currently meets the needs of working women and those studying by offering one evening per week where sessions run until 7pm. The service has increased the number of practitioners to facilitate more evening sessions and will continue to monitor when late sessions are requested via its access request information sheet and review its provision annually if there is a need to increase the number of out of hours sessions offered.

The service recognises the importance of continuing focus on the quality of the services offered. This includes a commitment to maintaining BACP Accredited Service status and that

all practitioners adhere to and working within the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions in all aspects of its and their work. Those wishing to access services or refer will be aware of this commitments and membership status via our website, promotional materials, information displayed within our service and on all outgoing emails. Ensuring that those wishing to access or refer to services are aware of the commitment to standards and professionalism of the service works to.

Physical Access

In 2007 My Sisters Place commissioned an audit by the Cleveland Disability Forum regarding disabled access to the building which highlighted limitations to physical access. At that time due to the age, lease agreements and structural limitations the organisation was unable to undergo the necessary building works recommended in the report and had to develop an outreach service to address the limitation. In 2013 we secured the property next door to our main site and following 2 years of extensive fundraising to refurbish our site in 2015 the service was able to offer disability access. Access now includes:

- ramps, on both the front and side access to the building.
- door access to therapy rooms.
- access to parking permits that provide allocate parking directly outside the disabled
- access to ensure close parking and easy access to the building.
- full access toilet facilities.
- therapy sessions take place on the ground floor rooms that are accessible.
- checking lighting inside the building.
- keeping floors clear of trip hazards and physical barriers that may restrict room access.

We recognise that there are some limitations remaining and endeavour where possible to refer to the Cleveland women's' network mapping exercise which provided information regarding disability support in other services therefore enabling services to pool resources and provide access or signposting to other services should resources within the service not be available.

The service undertakes to continue to monitor and encourage feedback from clients to inform how well the service is doing in terms of physical accessibility.