



Information for Parents/Carers

If your son or daughter is coming to Youth Talk the following information may be helpful: Some young people urgently want their parents to help them to access the service, others, depending on age and reasons for coming, may be too fearful to involve mum or dad at the outset or may just want to retain their privacy.

Why was Youth Talk set up?

Youth Talk was set up by a local GP who saw an unmet need in the community. She created an early intervention service for young people who are growing up through adolescence into young adult hood struggling with distress and disturbance that could be helped by a counselling service that is easy to access and designed to meet the specific needs of young people.

Young people can refer themselves

Youth Talk was created to provide an 'Open Door' to any young person aged 13 – 25, living, going to school or work in the district. Uniquely, this means they can ask for help directly. It could mean that your son or daughter seeks help without you knowing about it. Young people must refer themselves for the service because it is crucial to the success of the work that they have opted into the process and do not feel 'sent' by someone else.

A confidential and private service.

Our professional counselling service is a confidential one-to-one talking therapy. Young people may share with others what happens in their sessions, but the counsellor and the agency cannot. This can make caring parents feel excluded, but confidentiality is vital for the effectiveness of the work.

What are the reasons for coming to Youth Talk?

Some young people need help with life experiences such as bereavement and loss, the separation and divorce of parents and their relationship struggles at school. Timely intervention can prevent the deterioration of distress into mental ill health. Other young people with symptoms such as self-harming and suicidal thoughts may need to work with the underlying issues, and this can take time. Early intervention makes a difference.

Weekly sessions:

If you are bringing your son or daughter for their appointment, please be aware that there is no dedicated waiting room at the centre. Parents may wish to visit the nearby town centre and return after 50 minutes or arrange to meet at the entrance to the centre.

How long will the counselling continue?

Young people are offered 4 assessment sessions to establish whether the counselling is an appropriate intervention. The number of sessions in total could be as many as 44 (about a year). This is based on individual need. Research shows that the work can have a lasting effect, changing harmful patterns of self-harm and poor self-worth.

Why can't parents talk to counsellors?

For the success of the work the counsellor is not able to connect with you or share any aspect of the sessions. Young people need to feel 'safe' to talk and have a sense of trust in the process.

In order to create a working alliance, the young person needs to meet with someone they have no previous relationship with or knowledge of in a different context.

Safety: There is a strict confidentiality code of practice. This agreement is the same in all forms of counselling and psychotherapy. If the young person is at risk of significant harm (or likely to harm others) it is the duty of the counsellor to break confidentiality and contact the appropriate agency.

Your role as parent remains pivotal. Any support that you can give – even if it means not seeking any information at the present time will be invaluable.

Active listening: this means attending carefully to what your son/daughter is saying, asking for clarifications but withholding judgement. This can be fulfilling for both parties. If your son or daughter tells you things that alarm you it can be helpful to talk with a professional – perhaps your GP or a reputable helpline such as Young Minds ‘Parent-line’.

Where there is a tendency to reticence in a young person this may not last indefinitely. It is often a great relief to them when they can begin to talk to their parents. If you think that family therapy would be useful you can ask your GP for a referral to CAMHS or seek a private therapist.

How can we help parents?

Our reception team are sympathetic to the needs of parents and able to talk about things in general and advise on forms of parent support in the community. They will be able to talk with you about any service you may find useful to access whilst your son/daughter is attending Youth Talk.

Some Agencies that offer support:

Young Minds for parents/carers – www.youngminds.org.uk/parentshelpline - 0808 802 5544

Family lives – www.familylives.org.uk - 0207 553 3080

Royal College of Psychiatrists – www.rcspsych.ac.uk/mentalhealth/parents-and-young-people

Your GP – your doctor can make a family referral to the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Private practitioners in the locality. We supply a list of practitioners or search the BACP website.

The Counselling Team

All Youth Talk counsellors or psychotherapists are qualified professionals registered and accredited with a nationally recognised body such as BACP or UKCP. They come from a range of professional backgrounds including Education, Health, Public & Social Services and agencies specialising in the development and needs of young people. Youth Talk abides by the Values and Ethical standards of BACP – The British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (www.bacp.org.uk)

Funding for this Community Service

Our service is designed to be accessible to any young person aged 13 -25 so there is no charge for the counselling they receive at the point of contact. Youth Talk is a registered charity (1063572) with a board of trustees and a management team who work constantly to raise funds to make a professional talking therapy available to any young person who seeks help. If you are able to make a contribution to the health of a young person in this community please see our website for ways to donate – www.youthtalk.org.uk – Thank you.

Lower Ground Floor, Dagnall House, 2 Lower Dagnall Street, St. Albans, Herts AL3 4PA 01727 868684