



Counselling, Support and Care for Young People and Families

Strategy for Addressing Accessibility Limitations

Registered Charity Number: 1045429
Registered company No.2954230

The Context

Teens in Crisis (TIC+) provides free access counselling for children and young people aged 9-21 and their families in Gloucestershire. The entire service is built around our vision that every young person in crisis has someone to talk to. We place our client's needs at the centre of our service delivery and design to ensure free, easy, equitable access without discrimination.

Data Collection and Evaluation

– Monitoring User Access

We collect demographic data on all clients who access the service including: gender, age, district, education, employment, ethnicity, disability. This data is reviewed every month to assess who is accessing the service, we also analyse attendance and drop-out rates. The service collects feedback forms from clients which monitors:

- The level of distress a young person is experiencing at multiple points through the counselling process (YP Core). This is an adapted tool which also measures salient risk factors.
- The quality of the counselling relationship (Session Rating Score)
- The overall Experience of Service with qualitative and quantitative feedback often includes suggestions for service improvements.

Outcome measures are monitored on a monthly basis to ensure the needs of the client are being met.

We recognise the challenges faced by clients within our target group. We look to address accessibility limitations in the following areas.

1. Inclusivity and Diversity

2. Knowledge of the service

3. Finance and affordability

4. Physical & Learning Disabilities

5. Location of Services

6. Client Choice

7. Client Contact

8. Counselling model

9. Referral/Collaboration with other appropriate agencies

10. Specialist statutory service referral

1. Inclusivity and diversity

Counsellor Recruitment

In accordance with our equal opportunities policy TIC+ welcomes applications from a diverse range of counsellors and does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity or disability.

In a recent staff survey 100% agreed TIC+ is dedicated to inclusivity and diversity.

In order to better represent the communities we serve we are committed to developing a strategy for increasing the numbers of male counsellors (currently 17% v a population of 50%) and BME and European counsellors (currently 4% v a population of 11%) Census 2011.

Team Induction and Continuing Professional Development

We provide CPD on diversity at induction and on an ongoing basis with all counselling and administrative staff. Ensuring best practice is followed when working with clients from diverse backgrounds and considering factors around service provision which may impact on clients' experience.

Client Representation

Gender: male clients make up a third of our client base whereas 51% of the population are boys under 21 years of age (Census 2011).

Ethnicity: 6% of our clients are from the BME and European communities versus approx. 11% across the county (Census 2011). This reflects the national situation where men and also certain BME and European cultures (Jackson et al, 2013) fail to seek support for mental health issues due to perceived stigma.

In order to address these under-representations we are planning to introduce a school and social media campaign across the county using media resources produced by boys for boys. We have also recently introduced an online counselling service which gives the opportunity for young people to access counselling in the privacy of their own homes and without the embarrassment of having to see someone face-to-face.

As a result of online surveys and focus groups conducted with over 550 young people we have identified the need to provide anonymous moderated forums offering peer support. This will increase the options available particularly for young people who would otherwise not be able, or willing to access the support they need due to perceived stigma, embarrassment etc.

We have also developed a preventative de-stress workshop for schools which aims to:

- de-stigmatise common mental health struggles,
- inform of common physical and emotional symptoms
- provide simple self-help strategies
- normalise reaching out for help.

70 such workshops have been delivered to Gloucestershire schools to date. We aim to continue to raise funds to increase this provision.

Asylum Seekers: Unfortunately we are not able to offer counselling to young asylum seekers who do not have a good enough grasp of the English language due to the cost of providing translators. However, we are able to signpost to a local voluntary sector agency who is able to offer such support. <http://www.garas.org.uk/Services.aspx>

District

We regularly analyse the numbers of referrals we receive according to district to ensure we are meeting the need of the whole county. Statistics show that the numbers of young people we attract by district is generally proportional to the population. However, we see proportionally greater numbers of young people from the areas of highest deprivation e.g. Gloucester and the Forest of Dean.

2. Knowledge of the service

TIC+ has been delivering services for children and young people for 25 years in Gloucestershire. We are therefore well known to education, health and social care professionals and to the voluntary and community sector agencies. This knowledge is aided by:

TIC+ website www.ticplus.org.uk

Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/teensincrisis1/>

Twitter https://twitter.com/TICplus_

We have entries in the following Gloucestershire based directories/websites:

- Health Watch Directory
- Gloucestershire Family Services Directory
- NHS Gloucestershire CCG Website 'On your mind'
- Gloucestershire Healthy Living & Learning (for schools and colleges)

GPs Gcare online information

Many young people will initially present with mental health and emotional wellbeing problems to their GP. In May 2017 TIC+ and CYPS developed an information document to help GPs decide which service is most appropriate.

<https://g-care.glos.nhs.uk/pathway/426/resource/11>

3. Finance and affordability

Our services are provided free of charge to all children, young people and parents who make a self-referral. We have never turned anyone away because of cost and will continue to raise funds to ensure this continues.

We also have a number of contracts and agreements with schools.

Additionally Gloucestershire NHS Children and Young People Service commission us to see young people referred to them but are deemed to require a counselling intervention.

Our fundraising, commissioned and grant funding means we will see approximately 2,000 children and young people free at the point of delivery across Gloucestershire during 2017/18.

4. Physical and learning disabilities

Clients' learning and physical disabilities are assessed upon referral. We have a wide range of venues in all the areas we cover that have disabled parking and access.

Clients with learning difficulties are allocated to counsellors with appropriate specialist training such as Asperger's, Autism etc.

The online service ensures counselling is available to those young people who might otherwise be unable to access face-to-face due to physical disabilities such as hearing impairment and brain injury. Approximately 10% of our online clients have a physical disability.

5. Location & availability of services

Location

TIC+ has a number of counselling rooms that we permanently rent across the county. To ensure every young person is able to easily access counselling TIC+ is also committed to providing a peripatetic face-to-face service and will travel to see the young person at their school or college or at a safe convenient venue near to where the young person lives.

Waiting Areas for Parents

All our locations offer a safe space for parents/carers to wait

Time of day

Face to face counselling is available between the hours of 9am and 9pm Monday to Friday. From client focus groups and online surveys we ascertained that young people wanted counselling on a Sunday in addition to weekday evenings. We therefore launched the online counselling service 5 nights a week Sunday – Thursday 4pm-9pm.

Office hours - Reception/Referral taking

In order to meet the needs of young people and parents and carers wishing to make an enquiry or referral outside of office hours we have extended our reception to 5 nights a week including a Sunday from 6pm – 9pm

Home Visits

By special arrangement, and adhering to our lone working policy our counsellors can provide home visits for young people with physical and psychological impairments preventing them from leaving the home, e.g. anxiety disorders, agoraphobia, etc.

6. Client choice – service delivery

Offering a person-centred service means we are dedicated to removing as many obstacles as we can that may cause young people to fail to engage and therefore not get the help they need. It also means we pro-actively involve them in making decisions regarding the service they are to receive. Each client is able to decide:

- Where they are seen e.g. school/college/near to their home etc.
- When they are seen e.g. during school/working hours or after school
- Which service they believe would be best for them e.g. face-to-face or online counselling
- Which gender counsellor they would prefer.

7. Client contact

From feedback we receive from young people and parents we know that many young people (and sometimes parents) find it too difficult to make a phone call to refer themselves or their child for counselling. We have therefore sought to overcome these obstacles this year by introducing a text based referral service that can be done by mobile phone via SMS or online via our website.

8. Counselling model

TIC+ counsellors provide a Humanistic/Integrative model of therapy (which when applied with children and young people is typically referred to as School Based Counselling, although the model is also suitable for young adults at work or college). This model is, the BACP recommended approach, and has at its heart, a relational way of working.

Humanistic/Integrative counselling with young people includes being open to the use of therapeutic practices from additional modalities (e.g., CBT and Solution-focused Therapy) where helpful and appropriate for the YP concerned and these are adopted in an informed, integrated and collaborative way. Creative methods and resources are typically used to help YP express, reflect upon, and make sense of their experiences.

These interventions will be adapted to suit the young person's age and stage of development. The ability to use self-help materials for a range of problems and the ability to use applied relaxation/mindfulness are illustrative of the kinds of practices that Humanistic/Integrative counsellors might draw on, and are indicative only.

We are unable to offer pure CBT, Play therapy or longer term family therapy. We therefore signpost children young people and their families to other agencies requesting such approaches. E.g. CYPS, Toucan, Gloucestershire Counselling Service

9. Referral/collaboration with other appropriate agencies

TIC+ has strong links with other charity and voluntary sector organisations and has a mutual signposting or direct referral partnership where another service is more appropriate or where joint working is required such as:

- HOPE Support Service (for young people coping with a family member with a life-threatening illness)
- Infobuzz (School exclusion, Young offenders, Transitions to adult mental health)
- GDASS (Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service)
- GRASAC (Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)
- RETHINK (Self-Harm Helpline)
- Winston's Wish (Bereavement Support)
- Young Carers' Gloucestershire
- Toucan Play Therapy (for the under 9's)
- GAY-GLOS (LGBT)
- Listening Post Counselling and Cotswold Counselling (for parents and carers requiring counselling support)
- Family Lives (for parenting support)
- Young Gloucestershire (Young parents and NEET education and support)
- CGL (Addictions)
- SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide)
- Independence trust (Mental Health support groups)

10. Specialist statutory service referral

Where a young person requires a specialist service counsellors will make referrals to specialist statutory agencies such as:

- NHS Together Trust Children and Young People Service
- Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service
- Eating Disorder Service - Brownhill Centre

For young people over the age of 18 we regularly refer in to adult mental health/recovery services e.g:

- NHS Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Teams
- NHS Together Adult Mental Health Services
- Gloucestershire Recovery in Psychosis (GRIP) team
- SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

References

Census 2011 and Census 2001 www.nomisweb.co.uk

Jackson, C., Pybis, J., Cooper, M., Hill, A., Cromarty, K. and Rogers, J. (2013) 'Users of secondary school-based counselling services and specialist CAMHS in wales: A comparison study', *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 14(4), pp. 315–325.

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