St. Joseph's Hospice Psychological Therapies Service
INFORMATION FOR PLACEMENTS & VOLUNTEERING

St Joseph’s Hospice Psychological Therapies Team comprises of two services: The Patient and Family Counselling Service and The Bereavement Service.

Patient and Family Counselling Service Clients

The Patient and Family Counselling Service offer psychological support to individual patients and their family members / carers who have been affected by the patient’s illness. Patients may be seen on inpatient wards, in the Day Hospice or in therapeutic rooms within the hospice and are also sometimes seen at home. We offer pre and post bereavement and psychological support which may often include work with children. Child focussed work may include consultation with families to help support children and their families to prepare for an impending death and the subsequent grief which follows.

We also offer specialist community bereavement support to bereaved children in the surrounding boroughs of Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets. Children may have experienced any cause of death, including death by murder or suicide.

Bereavement Service Clients

The Bereavement Service has two streams of clients: half of our clients are bereaved relatives or friends of patients who have died under the care of St. Joseph’s Hospice. Occasionally they are relatives of people who have died in other hospices. Sometimes the counselling begins pre-bereavement. The other half of our clients are bereaved Hackney residents between the ages of 18-50 where there could be any cause of death, including death by suicide and the death of children.

Client Work

Much of the work of the Psychological Therapies Service is complicated grief work with clients who have complex needs. For this reason all volunteers need to have prior counselling experience.

The number of clients seen and the duration of the placement will be agreed with our Service, however due to the nature of the work undertaken where possible we require a minimum commitment of 12 months from volunteers.

Client-work is not time-limited. Clients can be seen for as long as they need to, to work with their illness or adjust sufficiently to their bereavement, although work cannot be extended into general counselling or therapy and we hold this remit strictly. The duration of the counselling is monitored and reviewed with the client and in supervision.

The Bereavement Service mostly supports clients one-to-one in a counselling room at the hospice. Occasionally clients are supported by telephone. The service also provides bereavement support in groups.

The Patient and Family Counselling Service support individual adults and children, couples, groups and families. Clients are seen in a variety of settings other than the Hospice which may include children’s schools or patient’s homes.

Assessment and Allocation

Most hospice clients who attend the Bereavement Service self-refer after receiving information from our service. The service will already have background information from staff involved in the care of the patient and family. Hackney clients either self-refer or are referred by external health or social care professionals.
Clients who attend the Patient and Family Counselling Service can be referred via a number of avenues including self-referral and referrals from Hospice staff. Bereaved children within the community can self-refer but are more likely to be referred via school, GPs, social services, and other community, health or welfare agencies.

The Bereavement Service assesses clients via an initial structured telephone assessment of clients’ needs. Sometimes clients are also assessed by a bereavement coordinator face-to-face. The Patient and Family Counselling Service follow referrals with an initial telephone call to obtain information from clients and possibly referrers, thereafter undertaking a structured face to face assessment. Hospice clients may be initially met by a member of the Patient and Family Counselling Service team to ascertain the nature of the work; this may be followed by a more formal assessment of needs.

Clients are allocated to volunteers/staff on the basis of complexity and/or volunteer availability. Where appropriate volunteers are provided with written information leaflets to give to clients detailing policy on confidentiality, missed appointments, case notes etc. Consent forms for taping sessions and for using material for training purposes are also available.

Induction and Training
Around 170 active volunteers work at St. Joseph’s and every year we recruit more. The Psychological Therapies Service has around 30 volunteers / students on placement.

All volunteers are given an induction to the Psychological Therapies Service policies and procedures and an introduction to working with bereavement and grief. This is usually delivered over 4 day long sessions over 4 weeks. Thereafter volunteers are required to attend quarterly volunteers’ training workshops on Saturdays 10:00-4:00.

Case Notes.
Clients files are not allowed to leave the Hospice however if students need case notes for training purposes, they may photocopy notes removing all forms of identification to preserve confidentiality. Consent forms for audio and video recording of sessions for material purposes are also available.

Supervision
All volunteers are required to attend regular supervision. Supervision will take place either during office hours or in the evening. The frequency of supervision depends on stage of training, experience & number of clients. Most volunteers are supervised in-house by qualified and experienced accredited counsellors / psychotherapists / arts (psycho)-therapists, registered with appropriate governing bodies such as UKCP, BACP & HPC. By agreement volunteers may also receive external supervision at their own cost.

Expenses
Volunteers can claim travel expenses for travelling to and from the hospice to see clients and to attend supervision, meetings and training. Volunteers are also entitled to free drinks from the hospice café and to a free meal from the hospice restaurant.

Equal Opportunities
The Hospice is an Equal Opportunities employer. Its equal opportunities policy towards patients, their families and staff is contained within its Mission Statement. Part of our mission is ‘to treat every individual as unique, whom we value without distinction and whose culture and beliefs we respect.’