



Carers Support Service

Introduction

The Carers Support Service is a working partnership between Redcar and Cleveland Mind, Age UK and Carers Together. Redcar and Cleveland Mind provides a one-to-one person-centred, emotional and practical intervention service to aid carers with mild to moderate mental health concerns. Some of the issues we support with are:

- Anger issues
- Anxiety/ Stress
- Bereavement
- Confidence/Self esteem
- Depression
- Panic attacks
- Redundancy
- Self-harm
- Social isolation
- Suicidal feelings

Redcar and Cleveland Mind also offers small group support (including peer support) and training opportunities, which can aid in developing mental and emotional resilience as well as establishing a social support network.

1:1 Support

Referral and Assessment

From receiving a referral and creating a client folder on Apricot, our designated Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) from the Carers Support Service will contact the client within three-to-five working days to contact them to arrange an initial assessment appointment.

Within the assessment, the client discusses their current mental and emotional wellbeing concerns and there is an opportunity to talk about their caring responsibilities and what they are looking for from the service. The MHP communicates what the Carers Support Service offers clients (including a full Carers Assessment) as a whole. The MHP will offer to refer the client for the Full Carers Assessment (if they are yet to have one) while making the client aware a referral can be made at any time for either the assessment or to access the additional organisations involved in the Carers Support Service. Referrals are made using an inward referral process.

The assessment is also an opportunity to look what other agencies can offer the carer if needed and for example as follows:

- Carers Together who provide information and support for carers, individually and in groups including support plans, carers emergency card, training.
- Age UK Teesside Time Out Service who provide a sitting service giving carers a break (8 hours per month).
- Access Team who can provide full carer assessments to look at what support is on offer through RCBC.
- Benefits, including Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Pension Credit as well as allowances specific to carers' including Carers Allowance, Carers Credit.
- Beyond Housing who manage 'Homecall' to enable independent living and other Telecare providers including RCBC and Age UK
- Welfare rights Unit who provide free, independent, confidential advice and information about Social Security Benefits.
- Citizen's Advice Bureau who give free, confidential information and advice to assist people with money, legal, consumer and other problems.
- Adaction who support people with alcohol and drug misuse issues.
- Foundation Refuge/EVA Women's Aid for women fleeing domestic violence.
- Cruse Bereavement Care who provide free care and bereavement counselling to people suffering from grief.
- Transformation Challenge Team who will work with clients who are more chaotic or need additional support.
- Various counselling services including: Alliance, Insight, Open minds, Starfish.

Session Planning

At the start of session one (before the session begins the MHP will cover anything missed from the assessment), the client and MHP will review and sign the Client/MHP Service Agreement, which sets out boundaries and forms the basis of the therapeutic relationship. The remainder of session one will consist of identifying and agreeing goals with the client. The aim of goal setting is to help clients to gain/regain meaning in their life and take back control.

This session will include discussion with the client around possible methods of facilitating these goals. The goals and a brief outline of how they may be achieved will be recorded and agreed with the client in the 6/12 session plan. Methods can include:

- Actively listening to the client to create an empathic and congruent relationship, encouraging them to be open and discuss their feelings and needs
- Practical support in developing coping skills and strategies to suit own personal circumstances
- Connect Recovery College courses
- CBT style interventions

- Volunteer opportunities
- Educational opportunities
- Paid work opportunities
- Social activities
- Practical support (around housing, benefits, finances, legal issues etc.)
- Signposting where relevant (i.e. within the Carers Support Service and other agencies)
- Completing a Full Carers Assessment
- Identifying previous achievements
- Creating future opportunities to look forward to

It is important to keep the 6/12 session plan open and flexible with regular reviews that stay focussed on the client's goals.

The mental health support offered through the Carers Support Service is an open ended service, but we aim to complete support within 6/12 sessions (see the 6/12 session plan) as this encourages to reduce dependency on the MHP for support and feel empowered. The 6/12 sessions begin after the plan has been agreed in the first session. During these 6/12 sessions, the MHP will work with the client to achieve the goals identified.

Assessment Tools

The designated MHP for the Carers Support Service will use the following tools to evaluate the client's emotional and mental wellbeing and how this progresses throughout their working relationship. This is measured using:

- The Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS)
- The Recovery Star

Both of these tools are recognised in the field of Mental Health as reliable outcome measures.

Other Activities (Currently not running due to Covid-19 restrictions)

Redcar and Cleveland Mind host a variety of group activities as part of the Carers Support service, including:

- Peer support; for carers to come together and emotionally support each other around their own mental health difficulties, especially relating to their caring roles.
- Workshops; pop up sessions held in Something in Mind to develop coping strategies in a social environment. This includes yoga, art therapy and writing for wellbeing.
- Training; through our Tees Training Hub as well as additional training developed at Redcar and Cleveland Mind, including Improving Sleep.
- Community support; supporting carers getting involved in the community, including other groups run by the Carers Support Service, find other community activities and events or gain some volunteering

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