

Guidance for Counsellors Volunteering for the ACC's Crisis Counselling Support Service

Introduction

Thank for volunteering for ACC's Crisis Counselling Support Service (CCSS) for NHS staff and people bereaved during the Covid-19 situation. The following draws together the key information that counsellors need to help them prepare for receiving their first clients.

Overview of how the Scheme will Work

1. ACC will manage and administer the CCSS which will be overseen by a co-ordinator and facilitated by case managers. The co-ordinator and case managers are experienced counsellors and/or supervisors and have volunteered for these roles.
2. Potential clients will self-refer by completing a form which they can download from ACC's website and send through to a central email address. Anyone who does not have access to a PC or email can telephone ACC. The scheme co-ordinator will assign a case manager for each prospective client. The case manager will ring any potential client who have not been able to email us and complete a referral form on their behalf.
3. ACC may also have agreements with 'gateway' organisations who will provide information about the service to people who are eligible for it together with the referral form.
4. The case manager will do a very high-level match between the details provided on the referral form and the details provided to ACC by the counsellors volunteering for the scheme. They will select and contact a counsellor initially to see whether the counsellor knows the client and, if they do not, the case manager will provide the counsellor with the referral information for the counsellor to determine if they are able to accept the client. Location will be a factor in the selection – as it may be possible at some point in the future for the counsellor and the client to meet face to face although there is no obligation to do so.¹
5. If the counsellor accepts the client, the case manager will contact the prospective client providing them with the counsellor's preferences with regard to making initial contact with the client.
6. The counsellor will need to establish appropriate ways in which the ACC CCSS contract and addendum (available for download on the CCSS volunteer section on the front page of ACC's website) will be discussed and agreed with the client taking into account any limitations that apply for clients who don't have access to a P.C. In cases where there a client is unable to sign and return a contact then the counsellor

¹ This will need careful consideration on behalf of the counsellor and discussion and re-contracting with the client. The ACC CCSS service is set up for on-line or telephone counselling – so the client will not have an expectation of having face-to-face counselling.

must take a record of the date the contract was discussed, and any limitations and/or agreements made.

7. ACC have a safeguarding policy which is available alongside other information for volunteers on ACC's website. All counsellors who volunteer for the scheme must agree to comply with this policy. As is set out in the policy ACC will assist you in fulfilling your safeguarding responsibilities.
8. The counsellor can otherwise conduct the counselling as they would any other client referral, using for example their own preferred assessment and record keeping processes (there is a requirement to keep records, please see previous terms and conditions). As per normal practice the counsellor should seek support for the counselling process from their supervisor and/or professional membership body for any ethical issues that arise in the course of the counselling.
9. The case manager will continue to be available to the counsellor to field any queries or concerns they have. The counsellor is expected to tell the case manager when they have arranged the first session with a prospective client, when the counselling ends and how many sessions they had with that client.
10. At the conclusion of the client's counselling the case manager will send the client a feedback questionnaire. Counsellors will also be provided with a means of giving feedback at the end of the ACC CCSS scheme itself or where they choose to end their involvement with it.

Key Commitments for Counsellors

Responding to referral information within one working day

For the scheme to work we need counsellors to respond to referrals from case managers within a working day. The case manager will first share the name of the prospective client to check that they are not known to you, and then will provide the information provided on the form. We need a speedy turnaround so that we can approach another counsellor, if necessary, within the timeframe that we have committed to prospective clients which is seven days.

Providing Timely Information to Case Managers

To keep track of how the scheme is working and of counsellors' availability, case managers need counsellors to tell them when they have made contact with the client, when counselling begins and ends and how many sessions were conducted.

No Recording Rule

No counselling sessions conducted under the ACC CCSS can be electronically recorded for any reason. Nor can client material be used in a case study.

Confidentiality

It is vital that you commit to keeping confidential clients' personal information and sensitive personal information that may be sent to you by ACC via E Mail.

If you decline a referral, please make sure that you delete all referral information that you have received.

Concerns and Complaints

In all cases we ask that clients let their case manager know about any concerns or complaints they have about the counsellor or ACC.

Clients can raise concerns or complain directly to ACC using our organisational complaints process about the management and administration of the scheme.

Clients can raise concerns or complain about a counsellor using the counsellors professional membership body complaints processes.

ACC reserve the right to remove any volunteer counsellor from the scheme in the event of a concern or complaint being made against them, whether or not a formal complaint is made by the client to their professional body. ACC under a professional duty of candour will make the counsellors professional body know if there is evidence of a serious breach of the counsellor's code/s of ethics and practice. Please see also the safeguarding policy.

Key Contacts:

For general questions, queries and concerns please contact

ACC CCSS Scheme Coordinator: Elaine Bennett EBCCSS@acc-uk.org

For escalation of any issues about your experience of the scheme:

Chair of ACC: Sue Monckton Rickett: chair@acc-uk.org

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SIMPLIFIED DIAGRAM OF HOW THE REFERRAL PROCESS WILL WORK

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Overview of ACC' Crisis Counselling Support Service for Volunteer Counsellors

