

## ACC CRISIS COUNSELLING SUPPORT SERVICE (CCSS) Volunteer Counsellors Information & Terms of Agreement

### Introduction & Summary Information

Thank you for thinking about volunteering to be part of the volunteer ACC Crisis Counselling Support Service (CCSS) for frontline NHS and people who have been bereaved in the time of the COVID 19 epidemic in the U.K. This is a new service, set up in April 2020, which is managed and administered by ACC (Association of Christian Counsellors) and delivered by counsellors from any of the professional counselling associations that have a PSA Accredited Register.

Although we do not yet know what demand there will be for this service, providing help and support to NHS staff and bereaved individuals families is something that may be greatly needed in the coming months and we are very grateful that you may be willing to be part of this endeavour.

### The ACC CCSS is intended to serve

- People working in the NHS who are directly impacted by COVID-19, including frontline medical staff, but also those in ancillary roles in an NHS setting (e.g. nursing assistants, cleaners, porters etc)
- Paramedics and anyone working within the ambulance services who is directly impacted by COVID-19
- Anyone who has been bereaved during this time – whether or not the bereavement is due to COVID-19 infection.

### What is the offer to client?

- Up to ten sessions of counselling for eligible clients on a no-fee basis
- Counselling delivered either on-line or by telephone which is fully accountable and subject to professional ethics and standards

### What support is there for volunteers?

- Each client referral will come through a case manager who will continue to be available to you as a liaison person (although not in a supervision role)

- All counsellors will work under an ‘umbrella’ client contract – with flexibility to accommodate local arrangement in relation to the finer details of making contact and scheduling sessions etc
- Provision of a CPD document and an on-line CPD resource library specifically designed to support counsellors volunteering for the CCSS
- Best endeavours provision by ACC of supervision and professional indemnity insurance for any counsellor who due to the situation with COVID-19 finds themselves without these. Please make it clear on the application form if you need either or both of these

### Who can Volunteer?

- ✓ Any qualified counsellor who is a **registered** (or accredited) counsellor with any of the professional counselling and psychotherapy membership bodies under the Professional Standard Authority’s (PSA) accredited register scheme or who is a counselling or clinical psychologist or an Art therapist registered with the HCPC
- ✓ Any student counsellor on a minimum level 4 diploma course who is in the second year of study, and who has at least 50 hours of supervised counselling practice. Student counsellors are welcome to volunteer to work with bereaved clients. However, for this work all students will need to supply us with a confirmation from their supervisor that they have 50+ hours of practice and are suitable for this role. Student counsellors also have to be student members of one of the counselling and psychotherapy membership bodies (as for qualified counsellors immediately above)

### Terms and Conditions

The help and support you provide will be undertaken in agreement with the following terms and conditions

#### Your Professional Commitments to the ACC CCSS

- You must retain your student or Registered Membership of either ACC or one or more of the counselling and psychotherapy professional membership bodies that hold a PSA Accredited Register, or be on the HCPC Register as a Counselling or Clinical Psychologist or Art therapist
- Your counselling will be given within the framework of your professional body’s Ethics and Practice standards, requirements and complaints process
- You will keep confidential records of client work undertaken under this scheme, complying with the ICO (Information Commissioner’s Office) and GDPR requirements, including respecting the client’s rights to access any personal information you hold and retain. The length of time you keep these records will comply with your professional bodies’ standards and your insurance agreement but will not be less than three years. [ACC require CCSS client records to be kept for three years after the final session to allow for the investigation of a complaint made against ACC.]

- You have either appropriate supervision and insurance to undertake this work or will notify us in the volunteer application form (downloadable from the website), that you require ACC's provision in securing either or both. You will alert the case manager if a client is mistakenly referred to you before you have had confirmation of these being provided.
- The work will be undertaken online or via the telephone, so you will have some experience of on-line and/or telephone counselling, or be willing to undertake self-directed training to acquire sufficient skills to commence working in this way.
- Counselling will be provided to clients for up to 10 sessions with an option for you to offer more on the same basis under the same contract (i.e. on a voluntary basis). This option will not be advertised or notified to the client or any referring organisation – it is entirely at your discretion.
- You will use the 'umbrella' contract provided for all volunteer counsellors in this scheme, adding your contact and professional membership details as requested and keeping a record of when the client consented to the contract together with any client specific arrangements in situations where obtaining the clients written consent is not possible
- You are willing for the clients you work with to be sent a feedback questionnaire on the service they received.

### **Your Commitments to Making the Process Work**

- There is an expectation that you will acknowledge referrals received within 24 hours and make a decision to take on or decline the client in the same time frame
- Where you have agreed to take on a client, the expectation is that you would contact the client within two to three days of receiving that referral to arrange the first appointment
- You will notify the case manager when you have ended with a client, letting us know for our records how many counselling sessions that you have provided
- You will notify the case manager if you are continuing beyond the initial ten sessions with a client
- You will keep us informed if your capacity to counsel changes ([office@acc-uk.org](mailto:office@acc-uk.org))
- You will be willing to complete any survey produced by ACC about your experience on the scheme

### **ACC's Commitments**

- We will keep the information you provide to us confidential to those administering and managing the scheme. We will provide your contact details to clients only after you have agreed to accept them. We will keep your information securely for three years after the scheme ends in order to assist with the investigation of any complaints.

If the above terms of agreement are acceptable to you, please would you complete the Registered Counsellor Volunteer Information Sheet or the Student Counsellor Volunteer Information Sheet (available on the Website) and return as soon as possible to [office@acc-uk.org](mailto:office@acc-uk.org).

Otherwise if you have questions or concerns please contact either

CCSS Co-Ordinator, Elaine Bennett [EBCCSS@acc-uk.org](mailto:EBCCSS@acc-uk.org)

Director of Counselling & Psychotherapy for ACC, Kathy Spooner [counselling@acc-uk.org](mailto:counselling@acc-uk.org).

Terms and Conditions first issued 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020  
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**THANK YOU – PLEASE KEEP FOR YOUR RECORD**