



spark of genius  
every second counts



CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

# Clinical Psychology Service Overview - Spark of Genius

Spark Of Genius employs its own dedicated Consultant Clinical Psychologist offering timely, tailored, psychological formulation based systemic support with individual therapeutic intervention for the young person provided where clinically appropriate. Our stepped care service model has been informed using relevant clinical, professional and government guidelines as a framework and is summarised below -

## Stepped Care Model

- In our matched stepped care model, it is recognised that although most young people residing in residential services present with highly complex and enduring needs, often they will have an array of different levels of need.
- It is common for more straightforward needs to be addressed prior to more complex work, or some difficulties may be secondary to the primary problem.
- In addition, behavioural management or high frequency supportive interventions are often carried out primarily by residential care staff.
- Case formulation therefore considers not only what interventions are appropriate, but how they are to be sequenced, taking into account any factors which may impact on the young person's ability to respond positively.

Stepped Care Model - Psychological Service		
Formulation & Assessment	Highly Specialist	Individual formulation based intervention, for which no existing therapeutic package exists or motivational or developmental issues impede engagement - Equine, Art, Play based approaches.
	Specialist	Tailored approaches for complex needs - 3 Phase Trauma Approach, CBT for ASD, Relax Kids
	High Intensity	Systemic or individual psychotherapeutic intervention
	Low intensity	Information Provision, Psycho-education, Guided Self Help, Generic Emotion Management, Relaxation, Coping Strategies, Wellbeing
Psychologically Informed Care Culture Staff Consultation / Systemic Intervention		

***How do we implement an effective stepped care model of psychological intervention?***

***The clinical psychologist provides -***

- Staff consultation to assess the level of appropriate intervention
- Relevant psychological therapy resources for joint working where appropriate.
- Individual psychological therapy where case formulation indicates this is appropriate
- Systemic intervention / team consultation where formulation indicates that this is required
- Advice regarding referral to CAMHS for medical / diagnostic/ specialist service where appropriate



## ***How do we implement an effective stepped care model of psychological intervention?***

- The clinical psychologist provides -
- Staff consultation to assess the level of appropriate intervention
- Relevant psychological therapy resources for joint working where appropriate.
- Individual psychological therapy where case formulation indicates this is appropriate
- Systemic intervention / team consultation where formulation indicates that this is required
- Advice regarding referral to CAMHS for medical / diagnostic/ specialist service where appropriate

## **Staff Consultation**

The attitudes and challenging behaviours of complex young people can arouse powerful feelings in staff teams, which can impact on engagement, staff morale and therapeutic effectiveness. It is important for staff not to be drawn into collusive or abusive 're-enactments' and to be aware of the ways in which the client's psychopathology can be re-enacted within the whole team. Reflective supervision is essential to address this.

A psychological formulation is an understanding of why certain presentations occur. This understanding is the lynchpin that holds psychological theory and practice together. Team formulation, supervision and training are in keeping with clinical psychologists wider remit to work at team, service and organisational level.

Our psychologist supports staff to formulate emotional and behavioural issues from a neuropsychology of attachment and developmental trauma perspective. This understanding facilitates greater attunement between the staff team and the psychological needs of the young person, allowing development of more secure relationships which underpins improved emotional and psychological functioning.

## ***How is this carried out within Spark of Genius?***

- Psychology formulation 'as an event' is recorded in formal correspondence format and shared with directors, service managers, staff teams and wider professionals involved.
- Psychological formulation 'as a process' forms basis for discussion at staff consultation meetings. A summary and monthly update of the discussion and case progression is shared with directors, managers and staff teams

# Staff Training

All front line staff should be made aware of the underlying reasons for challenging behaviours. They should be given training in basic psychological models and advised of the aims of the psychological interventions available with the service so that they can reinforce the skills learned in psychological therapy. Special attention should be given to equipping staff with the skills necessary to feel confident in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of service users

## ***How do we do this?***

Key principles of attachment, developmental psychology and neuropsychological functioning and how these are related to interpersonal trauma underpin the learning outcomes of our staff training package. Training is delivered using a reflective, experiential learning approach. A mix of slides, videos, practical exercises and case examples are employed to ensure that different learning styles are catered for and that the focus is on practical application of what has been taught.

The content of our training has been adapted from a training package that received a 'highly commended' award at the Apex Independent Healthcare Awards in 2013, and was recognised as 'best practice' by the Forensic Network Peer Review process.

## ***Specific training topics provided are outlined below -***

The Faulty Walnut	How trauma and neglect affects neuropsychological functioning
Seeking Safety	Applying the three phase trauma recovery model in residential care settings
The Secure Base	The attachment relationship as the foundation of trauma recovery
Calming the Meerkat	Practical approaches to managing trauma related stress and anxiety
Feeling Mirror	Emotional containment skills - developing your practice

## Systemic Intervention

We are currently implementing a service wide package of interventions aimed at addressing core areas of emotional wellbeing. The package integrates standard evidence based approaches including elements of; mindfulness, anxiety management, CBT, self compassion, yoga and emotional expression and regulation through play. These are delivered through a variety of resources and child centred play activities, delivered by staff through consultation with the psychology service. This package allows young people who are unable to engage in traditional clinic based psychotherapeutic intervention to access a range of activities that teach skills in emotion regulation and self care.



## ***Individual Psychotherapy***

Psychotherapy with young people must always sit within a wider context of team consultation. When young people are able to engage in clinic based sessions our psychologist works integratively drawing on a range of treatment models including CBT, compassionate mind therapy, mentalisation based work and art and play therapy informed approaches. The provision of individual psychological therapy is conceived of in five broad stages.

- Assessment

Psychological and emotional difficulties are identified initially at staff team consultation stage. Interventions may be developed or tailored in order to meet the identified needs.

- Engagement

During the beginning stages of developing therapeutic engagement, trust should be considered the foundation on which the success of the psychotherapy relies. Dedicated time is allocated to this phase during which the young person's preferred learning style can be discovered. A collaborative and non threatening atmosphere is established in which the young person can begin to feel safe with the level of emotional vulnerability often involved in the therapeutic process.

Experiential therapies using child centred, creative, play focussed approaches are often most useful as direct engagement with traditional 'talking therapy' or emotion management work is often experienced as too threatening.



Sequencing and pacing of intervention will be key areas of consideration and it may be necessary to re-evaluate suitability or timing of the therapy at this stage. This is not viewed as a failure in any sense, it is simply a part of the therapeutic process.

Education for other professional groups is also important during this phase. At this stage, well intentioned but poorly timed efforts to assist engagement can undermine the subtle shifts in progress that are not always apparent to the whole team.

- Implementation

The body of the therapeutic work will blend seamlessly with the other phases. Effective delivery of the therapy follows the psychological models and principles identified as most appropriate in assessment and engagement phase.

- Responsivity

This is the process by which it is ensured that the young person can make good use of the therapy and where necessary it is adapted to suit individual need. This is particularly important in complex trauma cases.

- Review and Reformulation

Consolidation of therapeutic gains, review of progress made and re-formulation of needs are all key parts of the therapeutic process. In residential settings where young people's needs are complex and enduring, the outcome may not always be positive in terms of reduction in risk or behavioural change however secondary gains may be present. Firstly the care team may be better enlightened to the extent of the difficulty and adjustments can be made to approaches and expectations. Secondly, young people may have made therapeutic gains which improve quality of emotional functioning in the absence of direct behavioural change. For example anxiety reduction may not translate into improved school attendance.



# Trauma Informed Practice

Only relatively recently have significant works been published on trauma treatment. Expert clinicians now agree that therapy dealing with complex trauma should be based on a phase-oriented approach as many survivors of severe childhood abuse require a lengthy period to develop and improve fundamental emotional and relational skills.

All psychological assessment, formulation, treatment and systemic work within this service is based on best practice evidence in relation to a three phase treatment approach to trauma –

1. Establish emotional and physical safety (measured in skill acquisition not time)
2. Processing meaning in relation to self and experiences
3. Reconnection with life, relationships and authentic self



## Specialist Psychotherapeutic Service

The psychology service also offers a specialist Equine Assisted Psychotherapy service. This approach sits within the experiential therapy framework, and is similar to art and play therapy although has certain unique advantages. Damaged trust and compromised capacity to build pro-social, reciprocal relationships is frequently a feature of complex trauma presentations. An appropriately contained, attachment based therapeutic relationship with a horse provides rich therapeutic opportunity to address these issues that are frequently inaccessible or too highly defended to work with in a traditional clinic setting.

In 2015, this unique service won the Innovative Practice Award at the Apex Independent Healthcare Awards and formed part of the team that won the Laing Buisson Mental Health Hospital of the Year Award.

## Professional Connections

Our Clinical Psychologist is registered with the Healthcare Professions Council (<http://www.hpc-uk.org/check/>) and maintains professional links to a number of clinical psychology colleagues, both in the NHS and private sector including Mr Tommy Mackay, a specialist in Autism Spectrum Disorders in young people.



## Referral Process at Spark of Genius

Careful matching of placements at the point of referral is fundamental to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all young people within each of our services. Consideration of group dynamics and individual needs of each young person allows us to assess the best resource for optimum placement success.

If you wish to find out more about any of our services, please do not hesitate to contact our Administration Team who will direct you to the appropriate person:

**Tel: 0141 587 2710**

**Fax 0141 587 2711**

**Email: [admin@sparkofgenius.com](mailto:admin@sparkofgenius.com)**

**[www.sparkofgenius.com](http://www.sparkofgenius.com)**

