

**HiT Counselling Report Haringey NHS CCG 3rd Quarter/Autumn Term 2020**

***Introduction***

HiT’s CCG project got off to a positive start last Autumn term and HiT counsellors are now successfully embedded in the 6 schools Haringey schools, 3 primary and 3 secondary, reporting good supportive working relationships with each school’s pastoral staff.

Referrals are being made for students with difficulties that are appropriate for a (maximum) of a term’s sessions, and suitable space for the work is being provided.

***Service delivery***

Our service delivery has been consistent with Haringey NHS CCG’s contract demands.

1. **28** children from a range of ethnic backgrounds have received significant 1:1 counselling during the term. This figure excludes work at The Willow where there was a late start. **13** children have attended a drop – in service at Tiverton School.

In the main students have been consistent in attendance and engaged well in sessions. At the primary schools the children have also been making sense of their experience through creative mediums and putting into practice strategies to support their emotional regulation and/or self-care.

1. **18** parents have received support from counsellors.
2. **10** members of staff have also accessed support.

***Reasons for clinical intervention***

Students’ issues have ranged from *low mood* and *anxiety* to those around *bereavement*, *disability*, *self-harm*, *bullying*, *low self-esteem*, *friendship*, and *parental divorce*.

*COVID19* and *lockdown* has had a major impact on students’ emotional well-being and learning, with many reporting feeling isolated. Low mood and anxiety have worsened considerably across the schools.

***Challenges to service during the pandemic***

1. Maintaining stringent hygienic conditions has been a priority in the counselling rooms. These have included ensuring proper ventilation, maintaining social distance whilst keeping eye contact with students, wearing appropriate PPE to enable students to see the counsellor’s face, use of hand sanitiser and sanitising the room between sessions. In primary schools separating toys out for different children has also been a priority.
2. Possible new lockdown restrictions led counsellors to prepare for working remotely going forward in the Spring term. Communication with the schools is ongoing for setting this up. All counsellors have been recruited internally from HiT and have previous experience of working remotely from the last lockdown. Some counsellors have been working remotely with self – isolating students and also when they were self - isolating and the students were at school. They are all very adaptable in managing seamless transition to remote working as needed.

***Counsellor case feedback***

Positive examples include

* A 18 year old girl referred for self - harm and suicidal ideation. *“You’re the first counsellor that’s been able to listen to me. I’ve had 4 or 5 counsellors since age 13.”* No self- harm or suicidal ideation for past 2 months.
* A 16 – 17 year old girl referred for PTSD symptoms including poor sleep due to Mum’s attempted suicide 2 years ago. Considerable grief expressed and sleep improved.
* Other clients have noticed personal change, *“I’ve gone deeper inside myself”,* or have been getting *“a different perspective.” “I see light now in my darkness”.*
* Some students in just a few sessions have been helped to identify overwhelming and debilitating negative thought patterns in their responses to COVID. For example, one boy in year 11 gained more understanding of why he didn’t feel able to come out of his room for months during the last lockdown, and why he felt too anxious to engage with his schoolwork. With some psycho - education and reflection, he was better able to understand his faulty thinking that had led to this behaviour.
* A Year 13’s father died during the last lockdown. She returned to school in September but felt overwhelmed and unable to attend her lessons. Following her 1st counselling session, in which she expressed a lot of grief, she felt more able to go to her classes and access her learning.
* A Year 13 student with social anxiety and debilitating insomnia says he now feels more able to make eye contact with his peers and is now reporting sleeping about 6 hours a night. He is more hopeful of improvements to come, where before he felt despair.
* Students have expressed that they do not experience panic attacks any longer.
* Feedback from staff includes a reduction or cessation of high level of anxiety.
* A teacher following a student’s 4th therapy session ..

*“I do not know what you have done, but (he) focuses on learning now and he is far less disruptive in class”.*

* There has been an improvement in the way that students have related to their significant others. Their confidence has increased, they have expressed a positive outlook to the future, and became more assertive.

* With a lot of work a drop – in session has been started as a new service for Tiverton. So far, the reception of the service has been positive.

***Future reporting***

This initial qualitative report does not include SDQ and CORS scores.

A more quantitative evaluation of students’ progress will be included for 4th Quarter/Spring Term 2021.

**John**

*January 10th, 2021*

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