



# Newsletter – Spring 2017

St Barnabas Counselling Centre

## Dear friends

**Counselling** - Counselling can restore to the lost and lonely a sense of belonging to the human race. I have seen this happen time and time again with our clients many of whom have never really engaged with society at all. A damaging or abusive childhood can make it very difficult to develop life-skills that promote good lasting relationships. Counselling can provide a spring-board to enable people to reach out to others in a way they have never felt able to do before.

**The pressures on charities like ours** - We have 27 counsellors and a volunteer reception team at St B's. Many of them earn their living in private practice or other jobs and offer their time free to St Barnabas. Without their generosity we could not do what we do. Demands on the Centre only get greater. GPs routinely refer their patients to us because the NHS waiting list is so long. We rely entirely upon voluntary contributions as we receive no money from any external source.

We have also seen an increase in the number of corporate clients. These are funded by their employers who offer access to counselling as a benefit to their employees.

**Why it's all worthwhile** - Given all the pressures on a charitable counselling service like ours, why do we all do it? Why do counsellors give their time and forego earnings

to work here as volunteers? Certainly the sense of community and mutual support we all enjoy here is a large part of it. Whether it be through group supervision, through the monthly community meetings or free training sessions, counsellors have a sense of being professionally and personally supported. A recent annual survey of counsellors working here has confirmed this once again. We have a responsibility to continue to improve upon this support because our clients are presenting more and more complex problems.

The uncertainties that exist in society today with so many people feeling unheard and disenfranchised create challenges for all of us as we struggle to make sense of our world. Counselling can help this sense of disempowerment by creating a safe place to explore uncomfortable and self-limiting feelings. Being listened to, understood and accepted is a powerful way to turn negative experiences into positive insights.

Thank you for your much needed support; without you we would not be able to help so many people.

Warm wishes

*Cathy Austin*

Director of Counselling





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### Client feedback 2016

When they have finished counselling our clients are asked for feedback on their experience of coming to St B's. They are also asked to give one example of how life has improved through counselling.

To the right is a selection of what clients have recently told us.

Over the last 10 years we have continued to see more clients and have been able to offer more counselling sessions.

We also see people in the evenings and at weekends; and offer relationship counselling.

*“There was really nowhere else I could have gone to get the counselling I needed for an affordable amount of money.*

*I hope you continue to provide this wonderful place for people to come to.*

*Thank you for giving me somewhere to go when there was nowhere else to turn to.*

*It has become a safe space where I could work through my issues and get back on my feet again.*

*Your Centre is wonderful. The staff are warm and loving; the place itself is lovely. I had an excellent counsellor.*

*No words will ever convey the attention and dedication that I have been shown.*

*I would not be exaggerating if I were to say that you have saved, or helped to save, my life.*

*My counsellor was superb. I thought she was a lovely person whom I found very easy to talk to and open up to.*

*I was so desperate when I first came and unable to find a way through my problems. The counsellor was wonderful.*

*We could talk about anything...the space was safe.*

*I found my relationship with the counsellor built very quickly and my trust was gained early on and therefore I felt I could share things very easily and felt very secure.*

*Of great value was the unlimited number of sessions on offer despite undeniable pressure on the system.*

*My anxiety is manageable; I can function better in my job and have been able to form a healthy, happy relationship.”*

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