

**SARSVL COUNSELLING SERVICE: GUIDANCE FOR REFERRERS**

We are a small voluntary sector organisation that offers specialist, trauma-informed counselling to women where the main cause of distress is the experience of sexual violence or abuse.

We currently experience extremely high demand for our counselling services, and have written this referral guidance to assist women who self-refer and professionals who wish to signpost women to the service. This guidance lists factors that might impact upon whether we can accept a referral and whether we might be the best service for a woman.

It is important to be aware that currently the maximum length of counselling contract we can offer is twenty weeks. There is also likely to be a wait of 6-12 months before we can offer an assessment appointment.

This guidance has been developed to ensure that we are able to offer a safe and ethical service given our current capacity.

**If you are thinking of referring yourself please read the following guidance**

We might not be able to offer you a service if:

You have had an emergency admission to hospital in relation to your mental health in the last six months.

You have experienced an episode of psychosis in the last three months.

You have a diagnosis of Dissociative Identity Disorder.

You regularly and severely self-harm and need access to mental health crisis services and/or medical interventions as a result.

You are actively suicidal and have tried to end your life in the last three months.

Your main difficulty is with substance misuse, and you are currently using substances regularly and/or are dependent on alcohol/drugs to manage your mood.

You currently pose a high risk of violence to others.

Your main issue is an eating disorder where a more appropriate service might be provided by Connect: The Yorkshire Centre for Eating Disorders.

If you have any questions about this guidance, please feel free to ring us and have a chat with the Counselling Service Manager, Katie Whitehouse, about your referral on 0113 243 9102 or email katiewhitehouse@sarsvl.org.uk.

Please provide a phone number and your availability so she can contact you back.

**Guidance for professionals wishing to signpost survivors to the counselling service**

Where a woman is currently supported by Secondary Care Mental Health Services we request that that these services **continue to support the woman until and potentially beyond the assessment appointment.**

Where a woman is currently supported by Secondary Care Mental Health Services, it may be more appropriate for therapeutic support to be provided by NHS Psychology/Psychological Services. We ask that a discussion about these options is undertaken with our service **prior to a referral being made.**

We might be unable to offer a service to women who:

Have had an emergency admission to hospital in relation to their mental health in the last six months.

Have experienced an episode of psychosis or mania in the last 3 months.

Have a diagnosis of Dissociative Identity Disorder.

Who regularly and severely self-harm and require access to mental health crisis services and/or medical interventions as a result.

Are actively suicidal and who have tried to end their life in the three months.

Whose primary difficulty is with substance misuse, and who are currently using substances regularly

Who currently pose a high risk of violence to others.

Whose primary issue is an eating disorder where a more appropriate service might be provided by Connect: The Yorkshire Centre for Eating Disorders.

If you have any questions about these criteria, please feel free to ring us and have a discussion with the Counselling Service Manager, Katie Whitehouse, about the woman you are supporting to refer on 01132439102 or email katiewhitehouse@sarsvl.org.uk.

Please provide a phone number and availability for a discussion, in order for her to contact you back.