



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 make sure that we are able to offer a safe and ethical service given our current capacity.

If you have any questions about the guidance below, please feel free to contact the office on info@sarsvl.org.uk or 0113 243 9102 for a discussion, we may then advise a call with our counselling manager if this is required.

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 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 on a regular basis.

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.

You currently pose a high risk of violence to others.

If you have a severe eating disorder (Body Mass Index of 17.5 or under and/or are purging on a daily basis).

If you are unsure about whether your experiences fall into any of these criteria, please feel free to contact the office on info@sarsvl.org.uk or 0113 243 9102 for more information, we may then advise a call with our counselling manager if this is required.

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 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 on a regular basis.

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.

Who have a severe eating disorder (Body Mass Index of 17.5 or under and/or are bingeing and and/or purging on a daily basis).

If you have any questions about these criteria, please feel free to contact the office on info@sarsvl.org.uk or 0113 243 9102 for a discussion, we may then advise a call with our counselling manager if this is required.