

COUNSELLING CONNECTIONS.

The Counselling in Schools Service

September 2021



Introduction

Argyll and Bute Counselling in Schools service was formed early 2021. We provide counselling to children and young people aged 10-18 throughout the whole of Argyll and Bute. Our team is made up of Sandra, Child Health Manager and all-round authentic human, our fabulous Team Leader Gemma, and our wonderful Administrator Katie, top class master of everything Chulainn and eight experienced and marvellous children and young people's counsellors. We are lucky enough to have on our Counsellors Roll Call Deirdre, Fiona, Kara, Karen, Kathy, Jakki, Liz and Rachael.

We began in the midst of lockdown, therefore all of our therapeutic work with children and young people started online. As a team we worked together to support each other in the strange times we found ourselves in. We shared our skills and knowledge with each other and continue to do so. We are now able to work in a more blended way, incorporating both face to face counselling alongside online and telephone to ensure we are able to provide our service to children and young people, no matter where in Argyll and Bute they live.

In August we had our Team Away Day. This was our first 'in person' gathering since we formed as a team in January. It was such a life affirming day! We not only got the chance to finally meet our colleagues but also had the opportunity to engage in future planning for the service, sharing our ideas and suggestions with each other. Lots of cake was eaten and deeper connections with each other made.

We are currently in the process of recruiting more counsellors and are eager to see how we grow as a team. More updates to come in our next Newsletter!

Our impact so far

To date, the team have received over 200 referrals which are increasing daily. We have seen referrals from all high schools in Argyll and Bute and over 25 primary schools, which is just over one third.

Working with pupils across the area is a real privilege and has led us to receive some lovely feedback about their experience of counselling.

"Before counselling I was really struggling to cope with my anxiety. Counselling really helped with my anxiety and has completely changed my outlook on life and now I manage to cope better, I would fully recommend it to anyone struggling."

If you have any feedback, ideas, comments etc for the service we would love to hear from you (nhsh.counsellinginschools@nhs.scot)

Training Update

As a team we have been able to undertake some really great training during the last few months. We have all completed ASK training, which is suicide prevention training for professionals working with 4-14 year olds. We have also completed Seasons for Growth training, allowing us to work as companions alongside our colleagues in education.

Looking ahead we are soon to be completing DNA-V training as well as expanding our knowledge in working creatively. We really appreciate these opportunities to learn as a team and in turn utilise these skills when counselling the resilient children and young people that access our service.



Counsellor Profile – Kathy Black

What motivated you to become a therapist?

I wanted to work together with people in a way that helped them find their own solutions to any problems that they were going through.

What do you do for fun?

There are so many answers here!! Put on really loud music when no-one is at home and dance around the kitchen whilst doing housework. Run. Play tag with my son. Go on a swing. Sing really loudly in the car. Laugh with friends. Watch a comedy. Shout from the top of a hill when no one is around.

What was your first paid job and what did you learn from it?

My first paid job was in a summer school, peeling potatoes to put in a potato machine that cut them up. I learnt that I hated peeling potatoes and you need hundreds of potatoes to feed large groups of people!

My favourite quote

Again, there were so many to choose from, but I love this one:

*“IT’S YOUR ROAD AND YOURS ALONE,
OTHERS MAY WALK IT WITH YOU, BUT NO-
ONE CAN WALK IT FOR YOU”*

Benefits of counselling

We will listen to you, and your worries without judgement, in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. We will work together to find a solution to your difficulties. Whatever you say to us, will be kept confidential between us, except where there is risk involved. If there is risk, we may need to talk to other people, but will, where possible, speak to you before we do this.



Figure 1. *Counselling in Schools Team 2021* (Katie, Liz, Kathy, Rachael, Deirdre, Sandra, Karen, Kara, Jakki, Fiona, and Gemma).