



# HNG STRESS PROJECT

## COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY & COUNSELLING

### IMPACT REPORT 2019

#### Ani's experience of counselling



"When I started my counselling I was in a very vulnerable place and with low self-esteem. I was feeling lonely in London, a new city for me, without many friends and no family.

Over the course of my sessions I began to feel more empowered and confident. The low-cost meant it was accessible to me and from my first assessment with Carol, the Stress Project Manager, I felt listened to and that I would be placed with a therapist who understood my situation.

My counsellor, with her empathy, acceptance, respect and knowledge supported me to heal my traumas and cope with difficulties. I learnt tools to self-soothe and to practice self-kindness.

I'm in a much better place now and am more mindful of my body tension. My mental health and processes of recovery have improved greatly. It's enabled me to be positive about my future and experience less anxiety and worry.

Most importantly, I feel more in control of my life, with a high self worth and it's helped me hugely to get back to work.

Established by Holloway Neighbourhood Group in 1994, the Stress Project provides a range of low-cost therapies and wellbeing activities for people experiencing stress related illnesses or mental health problems.

Our services are needed now more than ever - one in ten adults in Islington are currently experiencing mental health problems and the borough has the highest rates of people with serious mental health issues in London.

Our low-cost courses of Counselling and Complementary Therapies provide support for people experiencing mild to moderate depression and anxiety. Our holistic approach offers a range of therapies to attend to both body and mind. We support our clients to self-care in order to improve their wellbeing.

**"I have noticed improvement in my symptoms of fibromyalgia. I am less tense and my muscles seem more relaxed in general. There is also a definite improvement in my mental health."**



Our therapists are all volunteers. We are enormously grateful for their services through which we are able to offer low-cost therapies for people on low income. We support our volunteers with training, experience and fulfilment of their clinical hours, meaning when they leave us they are fully accredited and qualified. Over 1000 volunteer therapists have given their time to us in the last 20 years. Many stay for long periods of time and some go onto private practice or paid employment.

Other services we offer include twice weekly Drop-in support sessions, Mindfulness and Art-for-Wellbeing classes and therapeutic gardening.

#### OUTPUTS 2019

126 people received low-cost counselling  
68 people accessed low-cost complementary therapies

85% said that there was an improvement in both their physical and mental health

44% reported increased mobility  
35% feel less pain  
53% said that they get out more  
71% are more confident  
82% feel more positive about life

26 volunteer therapists provided one-to-one therapy



**"My therapy sessions have helped me immensely to cope with my pain and have given me a much more positive outlook on life in general."**

We deliver high quality services specifically for those who experience poor mental health. The impact of our service is multi-faceted - our clients, volunteers, our referrers and the local community all benefit. Most of the people accessing our services are referred to us by GP's, psychiatrists and NHS mental health crisis service providers. We have excellent working relationships with referrers who know that our therapeutic interventions provide a recovery model for those who are most vulnerable.

#### My experience as a volunteer



"I had a really great experience as a student counsellor on placement at the Stress Project. I was well supported in terms of supervision, CPD training, and was provided with a proper administrative structure with regards to clients, rooms and bookings/cancellations. I felt very fortunate to have had access to a wide group of clients and gained a wide breadth of experience in different types of counselling.

Carol, the Stress Project Manager and my clinical manager, was very supportive and with her help I was able to complete my training in Counselling for Depression with a certificate as a practitioner. I was also able to complete and pass my application for accreditation with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Carol was my proposer for the accreditation.

I enjoyed my time as a student counsellor so much that I stayed on after I qualified. I was able to take part in a Stress Project scheme that supports newly qualified counsellors moving to private practice - so the impact the Stress Project has had on my career has been invaluable.

All in all, I was at the Stress Project for nearly 3 and a half years and I have recommended it to other students and counsellors."

#### OUTCOMES 2019

We measure the impact of our counselling and complementary therapy using a nationally recognised clinical assessment tool called CORE.

Clients complete a questionnaire at the beginning and again at the end of their course of therapy. The data collected helps us to measure the impact of our therapies on the recovery rate of our clients over the course of their therapy.

#### RESULTS

77% of people had a reliable improvement in their CORE score. This means that the change was big enough so as to exclude that which might be expected by chance alone.

68% of people reported to be in recovery at the end of their treatment. This means that their levels of distress have moved from the clinical to the non-clinical population. This compares favourably with IAPT's\* national recovery rate of 52%.

This demonstrates that the Stress Project delivers effective interventions and has good therapeutic outcomes.

\* IAPT stands for Improving Access to Psychological Therapy and is an NHS service designed to offer short-term psychological therapies to people suffering from anxiety and depression.

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Holloway Neighbourhood Group - December 2019