

Summary Report

Complementary Therapies

- (Additional activities to expand an existing funded project)

Support 4 Change

Healthwatch Doncaster

Engage, inform, influence

24/07/2017- 25/09/2017

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of activity

The additional activity of Complementary Therapies being available to the families affected by a loved one's substance misuse proved beneficial to help them decrease stress levels and help encourage relaxation.

1.2 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Pauline Pickering, the Complementary Therapist who offered the range of therapies to the Carers in the 'Support 4 Change' group.

2 What was the purpose of the activity/session?

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Complementary Therapies was to help encourage relaxation amongst group members seeking support to help deal with the stresses and strains of managing a loved one's substance misuse addiction. The sessions were available to members of the 'Support 4 Change' Charitable organisation. 'Support 4 Change' delivers weekly support group sessions to help support the wellbeing of families affected by a loved one's substance misuse.

2.2 What did you do?

I attended a Carers Event at Tickhill Road Hospital and during the Network Event, I was introduced to Pauline, who is a Complementary Therapist and works with Carers across Doncaster on a sessional basis. She came highly recommended for her professionalism and effectiveness.

We arranged for Pauline to attend our Monday evening sessions for a set period to deliver 2 x one hour therapy to members each Monday evening taking place during the S4C sessions in a separate therapeutic room for the time period above with the funding provided by Heathwatch .

2.3 Results of the activity/session(s)

After an Evaluation feedback process we discovered that the Therapeutic interventions provided by Pauline helped the members to feel more relaxed and rejuvenated and therefore enabling them to emotionally be more energised to cope with another week of a loved one's addiction. They all appreciated the value that this additional service had on them and their wellbeing.

Feedback from people who took part

Feedback was sought from all participants as to what benefit the Complementary Therapies had had on their wellbeing.

Some of the feedback included;

‘Thank you! Was a life saver and just what I needed!’

‘Helps to give me strength through difficult times’

‘Thank you. Wish we could have these more regularly’

Feedback from staff/volunteers who took part

The positives in being able to provide Complementary therapies to S4C group members is that the effects of dealing with a loved ones’ substance use can physically and mentally drain the resources that their relative has available. This then has a knock on effect in regard to the support they feel they have to offer their loved one through their addiction.

As a facilitator of Support 4 Change meetings, it was pleasing to be able to offer such a holistic service to the relatives of Substance users who were seeking support and help in their own right, albeit for a set period.

2.4 Conclusion

Given the nature of Addiction, it is not uncommon for the family members of a person with substance use problems to also fulfil a ‘caring’ role, adding another layer to the difficulties they face.

The high esteem in which carers of a relative with a disability or chronic health condition such as diabetes are held doesn’t always translate to substance use problems, which tend to be viewed through a moral lens.

The stigma faced by relatives dealing with a substance misuse loved one, can lead to isolation and stress and with S4C being able to provide a range of support, both physical and mental, enables the carer to form links and relationships with like-minded individuals who are going through a similar situation and extra services such as Complementary Therapies to help to increase physical and mental wellbeing. It is known that untreated mental health issues can lead to psychosomatic disorders in Family members themselves which then can impact and compound on the demand already on primary and secondary care services in Doncaster.