



Counselling and Family Support

Background

The Flynn's Barn counselling service provides telephone and online counselling for young people who are living with cancer (see criteria below).

There is also telephone and online support for family members (see criteria below).

Young people living with serious ill-health may experience isolation and worry about their mental health. Access to mental health services is often difficult and involves long waiting times. This can be stressful for young people and their families during an already challenging time.

Aims and Objectives

AIMS

To support and improve the mental health of young people who are living with cancer (*Counselling*).

To strengthen family support systems for families with a young person who is living with cancer during a time of crisis (*Family Support*).

OBJECTIVES

To provide counselling to young people up to the age of 25;

And to enable them to talk about the ways in which their mental health is being affected and find positive ways of coping (*Counselling*).

To provide psychological support, advice and signposting to young people and their families, relating to the challenges caused by illness and treatment, and to enable them to access relevant services (*Family Support*).

Recognising current pressures on mental health services, to respond to young people and families promptly and without long waiting times (*Counselling & Family Support*).

To understand further forms of support that young people living with underlying health conditions will benefit from during the longer-term adjustment following the COVID-19 pandemic (*Counselling & Family Support*).

To build a peer network of young people living with cancer who can make links and support each other (*Counselling & Family Support*).



Referral guidelines

Referrals are welcome from young people, families or professionals/organisations. Please contact us at referral@flynnesbarn.org or on 01768 800 686.

Criteria for Counselling

- For children and young people up to age 25 at the time of referral, who:
 - have a cancer diagnosis, or an associated condition treated by oncology services
 - have a close relative/friend who has a cancer diagnosis
- Based in the UK
- Choice of telephone or online platform (Zoom)
- Assessment, followed by 10 sessions (with scope to re-contract/extend where appropriate)
- 30-50 minute sessions
- Delivered by qualified counsellors/psychotherapists (BACP/UKCP registration or equivalent)

Criteria for Family Support

- For families with a young person living with cancer, or an associated condition treated by oncology services
- Both family therapy and more informal support (e.g. signposting) are available
- Based in the UK
- Choice of telephone or online platform (Zoom)
- Psychological support duration and content agreed in collaboration with family

Clinical standards

Flynn's Barn is registered with the Charity Commission (reg. no. 1177897). The Counselling and Family support project is run by Robin Ewart-Biggs (Systemic family therapist, UKCP registration 06158736), who has been a mental health practitioner since 1992, in the NHS and the voluntary sector, with extensive experience of both delivering and managing services. All sessional counsellors have enhanced DBS checks and are registered with BACP/UKCP or equivalent. Clinical governance policies and procedures are available on request.

Having begun as a pilot project, counselling and family support are now part of Flynn's Barn mainstream services, and are being evaluated to help shape future work.

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