



Counselling and Family Support Service

Background

Since 2020, Flynn's Barn has been running a telephone and online counselling service for young people living with cancer or other health conditions treated by oncology services. We also accept referrals for young people who have someone close to them with a diagnosis, and for family members caring for a young person with a diagnosis. Family support can involve signposting, counselling or family therapy.

Young people living with serious ill-health can experience isolation and mental health difficulties. Access to specialist mental health services is often difficult and can involve long waiting times, adding stress during an already challenging time.

Aims and Objectives

AIMS

To support and improve the mental health of young people living with cancer

To strengthen family support systems for families with a young person living with cancer

OBJECTIVES

- To enable people to talk about the ways in which their mental health is being affected and find positive ways of coping.
- 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.
- Recognising current pressures on mental health services, to respond to young people and families promptly and without long waiting times.
- To build a peer network of young people living with cancer who can make links and support each other.

Referral criteria & guidelines

Criteria

Counselling or family therapy for:

- Children and young people who have received a cancer diagnosis, or an associated condition treated by oncology services, before the age of 25
- Children and young people with a close relative/friend who has a cancer diagnosis
- Family members caring for a child or young person with cancer

Most child and adolescent referrals are secondary-school-age. However, we have supported younger children through online play therapy - please call to discuss referrals for younger children.



- Based in the UK
- Choice of telephone or online platform (Zoom)
- Languages: English, French
- Introductory/assessment meeting, 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)

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

Clinical standards

Flynn's Barn is a registered charity (reg. no. 1177897). The Counselling and Family Support service 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 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 during COVID-19, counselling and family support are now part of Flynn's Barn mainstream services, and are evaluated to help shape future work.

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