

## Being a student counsellor at Confide

I have been a student counsellor at Confide whilst completing a person-centred foundation degree in counselling at SCAT.

My first contact was attending a CPD day. I was the stranger in the room yet found many friendly people to talk to, from a wide variety of organisations and places. During the day several staff from Confide made a point of introducing themselves and making me welcome.

I was encouraged by the application form which asked for so much information. Here was an organisation that was being thorough; looking for round pegs for round holes. Gathering all the information was also a grounding experience, encouraging me to recognise all that I have done and experienced in my past.

I was interviewed by the counselling manager and the person who would be my supervisor, and later had a psychological assessment. Again, this organisation was checking that I had the resources to manage this work. Having passed these hurdles I completed a CRB (now DBS) check with the administrator and when that was returned had an induction with her about health & safety, expenses and other admin procedures. This was followed by an induction with the counselling manager about client work and record keeping. Now, (this had all taken quite a time) I could begin.

First I joined a supervision group. The four of us meet, with our supervisor, bi-weekly for 1 ½ hours. A variety of modalities are represented in the group enriches the experience. At times it is as though I am with people who speak a different language, the same ideas or similar concepts are called by different terms. This is very much a learning experience, learning to be in the group, to present my clients, to follow what is going on, clarify my thinking and gain greater insight into counselling concepts and theories. This regular social meeting compliments the on-my-own-ness of counselling clients.

My client work began ... I was eased in gently with one client and, when I felt ready, two and then three. To begin with the concentration of listening was draining but my stamina grew. Clients are assessed before they are allocated so I was given 'easy' ones to begin with, although there will always be a random factor in what actually comes out during the counselling process.

Confide looks after its counsellors. There is quality CPD and training, given by excellent speakers. We have an annual 'review and development' session with our supervisor identifying what we have been doing, strengths and needs. It is a vibrant organisation. Management Consultant, Margaret Wheatley contends that an effective system needs *identity*, self-knowledge from knowing its purpose; free-flowing *information* for creativity, and unstructured *relationships* which build trust (146). These are all present at Confide. Its staff are committed to providing a quality counselling service to those in need. It is developing and extending its services, adapting to the current changes in the delivery of the health service. Relationships are open, ideas can be developed, problems shared, the management are available and approachable. Counsellors have a three monthly meeting, on Saturday mornings, providing a forum to problem solve, debate and develop ideas. Minutes of these and other meetings are provided; information and opportunities flow freely.

This has been a good place to learn the craft of counselling. I have a never ending sense of wonder and privilege as the people I sit with, listen and respond to, so often turn

themselves around and engage with life once more. I found this a fulfilling placement and am continuing to work at Confide now that I have qualified.

Wheatley, M.J. (2006) *Leadership and the New Science* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. San Francisco: Berret-Koeler

Frances Butler. 7 Sept 2013