

Forest Hill School Counselling Service

Statistics report 2016 - 2017

Number of students seen: **103** (110, 97, 81)

Number of non-students seen (staff or parents): **11** (13, 11, 16)

(From here on all figures refer to the students seen for individual counselling)

CLIENTS BY YEAR GROUP:

Year 7	21
Year 8	24
Year 9	8
Year 10	14
Year 11	18
Year 12+	18

CLIENTS BY HOUSE:

Drake	19
Harvey	21
Reynolds	24
Shackleton	21

NUMBER OF SESSIONS ATTENDED by INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS (by Year group):

YEAR 7

1 - 3	9
4 - 7	7
8 - 14	3
15+	2
Total Sessions Offered	169
Total Sessions Attended	130
Total Sessions DNA	31
Total sessions not attended due to sickness, other absence from school, canx by student with warning	8

YEAR 8

1 - 3	10
4 - 7	4
8 - 14	6

15+	4
Total Sessions Offered	259
Total Sessions Attended	203
Total Sessions DNA	32
Total sessions not attended due to sickness, other absence from school, canx by student with warning	24

YEAR 9

1 - 3	5
4 - 7	0
8 – 14	2
15+	1
Total Sessions Offered	57
Total Sessions Attended	47
Total Sessions DNA	6
Total sessions not attended due to sickness, other absence from school, canx by student with warning	3

YEAR 10

1 - 3	6
4 - 7	5
8 – 14	2
15+	1
Total Sessions Offered	108
Total Sessions Attended	83
Total Sessions DNA	16
Total sessions not attended due to sickness, other absence from school, canx by student with warning	8

YEAR 11

1 - 3	10
4 - 7	4
8 – 14	3
15+	1
Total Sessions Offered	124
Total Sessions Attended	87
Total Sessions DNA	23
Total sessions not attended due to sickness, other absence from school, canx by student with warning	15

YEARS 12/13

1 - 3	10
4 - 7	5
8 – 14	1
15+	2
Total Sessions Offered	134
Total Sessions Attended	95
Total Sessions DNA	25
Total sessions not attended due to sickness, other absence from school, canx by student with warning	13

Referral Route:

SELF	36
STAFF	55
OTHER	12

Report:

As we are probably all aware, last year was a particularly challenging one for the school. Within the many changes and decisions the school was having to make, the counselling service remained sought after and busy – with again a relatively high number of students having contact with the service in some form or other. I did have to employ a waiting list at some points in the year, when need surpassed capacity, but I aimed to see students for an initial session within two weeks.

There were some areas of development that I was particularly pleased with; namely an increase in the number of students from Years 11 – 13, something I have always tried to improve on every year. Overall there was a much more even spread between students in Key Stage 3 and students in Key Stages 4 and 5, with the biggest decrease in numbers of students seen from Year 9.

Students came with a wide range of issues and challenges they wished to explore and talk about with me. Themes with older students revolved mostly around managing endings (particularly for those students leaving the school/college) and the pressure felt with upcoming end-of-year exams (whether A level or GCSE). For Year 7, the overriding theme continues to be around transitioning into the new world of Secondary School that can be both exciting but also challenging. I always feel that counselling is never just about one thing, although there might be one particular reason, incident or situation given, which prompts a referral. In looking back over last year, there were a larger number of students requesting counselling due to feeling anxious or depressed (among the many other concerns/issues raised); more often than not these two feelings can interplay in very unhelpful and confusing ways, which can sometimes feel overwhelming for a young person who is still in the thick of physical, psychological and emotional development.

While many students, particularly where a member of staff suggested it to them, came to counselling only once (mostly as a 'taster' to see whether it was right and comfortable for them), I had a good handful of students who I saw regularly throughout the whole year. Short term counselling, or even a 'one-off' session can sometimes be very helpful in themselves, acting as a brief holding space for students who might be experiencing a particular crisis or challenging situation.

I was again able to mark Mental Health Awareness Week within the school; with a brief message at Whole School Assembly, a workshop for staff about resilience and information sessions for Tutor Times. The theme this year was *'Surviving or Thriving'*, which I think on some level all of us can relate to personally. I like to use this week to both encourage dialogue within the community about mental health, to encourage listening, and through this engagement challenge the stigma that still exists around mental illness.

It is clear from the headlines that we have been seeing and hearing over the past two years that symptoms of depression and anxiety are increasing among children and young people from across the UK. There are different reasons given as to what this increase is about; the impact of social media in the lives of young people, the impact of living within austerity politics (the idea that we must do more with less), and perhaps, more positively, that discussions about mental health and illness are becoming more 'normalised' within society and people are speaking out. Whatever the reasons might be, it's important to keep in mind that children and young people are letting us know they are struggling, and to acknowledge that there is an area of need which requires our collective attention and thought.

The school has always demonstrated a commitment to the health and well-being of its students, and staff work tirelessly to support and nurture the many young minds they are in contact with each week. The counselling service is one part of that shared responsibility we all have to our students' well-being. Whether or not everyone accesses it, or for how long an individual uses it (1 session, 6 sessions, 25 sessions), knowing that there is a space there for them to explore whatever is worrying or troubling them with a person who will listen to them without judgement or conditions, can in and of itself feel containing.

As I said to students during Mental Health Awareness Week, mental health is like a moving feast; we can feel differently from one day to the next and move between feeling like we are surviving to feeling like we are thriving. Can we, within either of those states, continue to plant and harvest the seeds of connection, giving, learning and noticing? Resilience is an ordinary magic that exists within us all; it can be hard to see it or feel it within the midst of a storm, but it is there, helping us through, helping us grow and helping us find a way forward.

Colette Rhodes
September 2017