

Women's Therapy Centre



Young Women's Project



Autumn Newsletter
September 2013

welcome...



Young women:

Interested in our project? Call Kerri on 07988 676713 or visit womenstherapycentre.co.uk for more information.

Psychotherapy by women, for women since 1976

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Hello and welcome to the Autumn 2013 edition of the Women's Therapy Centre newsletter, dedicated to our community development work with young women.

The Women's Therapy Centre welcomes a new Chief Executive. Monika Schwartz joined us in August from Nafsiyat Intercultural Therapy Centre—see page 3 to learn more about her.

If you've ever wondered what exactly group therapy is and how it can be of benefit, be sure to check out our interview with senior staff psychotherapist Sara Scott on page 7, who also talks about why some women may be reluctant to join groups.

Since it was founded in 1976, the Women's Therapy Centre has been committed to providing psychotherapy services to all women regardless of age, background or ability to pay.

We would like to say thank you to our funders - John Lyon's Charity for our work with women aged 18 to 25 in their boroughs of benefit and the Big Lottery Fund for our services for mothers under 30 in Islington. Their support enables us to continue to reach women who may not otherwise have access to psychotherapy services.

More information about the young women's project can be found in our FAQ section on page 6. And we close with an interview on page 9 with one of our partners, Sally Teasdale from Masbro Children's Centre in Shepherd's Bush.

Best wishes and see you next time,

Maria Moore
Social media & administration intern

Cover artwork: Claire Duffy, illustrator clairduffy@aol.com

The young women's project is open to:

- Women aged 18-25 who live in: Barnet, Brent, Camden, City of London, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Kensington & Chelsea & Westminster
- Mothers under 30 living in Islington

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newsfromthecentre...

wtc welcomes new chief executive

Monika Schwartz has come to the Women's Therapy Centre from Nafsiyat Intercultural Therapy Centre, where she was Chief Executive, working therapeutically with people from diverse linguistic and cultural communities. She is professionally trained in social work, counselling, conflict resolution, research and health service management. She is also a Public Governor for Islington on the Camden & Islington NHS Trust Board of Governors.

psycho-education group for refugee women

Psycho-education groups are an opportunity for women to meet with each other to talk through their issues & share their experiences. Talking to other people who are going through similar experiences can really help them find solutions or better ways of coping with any difficulties they may be having. The group would also be an opportunity to think about the things they do well and the strengths and resources that they have as women and how those strengths can be used to help them through stressful times. This group will run at **CARIS Haringey from mid-October**. For more information, please contact our Refugee & Asylum Seeker Community Development Therapist, Njomeza on n.kartallozi@womenstherapycentre.co.uk

free reflective practice sessions for community organisation staff

WTC regularly runs **FREE** reflective practice groups for workers in community organisations; for example, those who work with refugee and asylum seeking women or those who have experienced domestic violence etc. These sessions are offered to professionals interested in developing their understanding of the psychological experiences and needs of the women they work with, and the consequent demands on teams and individual staff members. For more information, and dates of upcoming sessions, please contact enquiries@womenstherapycentre.co.uk



The Women's Therapy Centre: run by women, for women since 1976

We are looking for people to join the Young Mothers' Project Steering Group in Islington

- ⇒ Do you work with young mothers in Islington?
- ⇒ Can you share your experiences & understanding of the needs of young mothers?
- ⇒ Do you have ideas about how to meet those needs?
- ⇒ Will you be willing to help support the project by reaching out to new communities, promoting the work to others?
- ⇒ Can you spare one hour every three months?

If you've answered **YES** to these questions, then you could be just the person we're looking for to join our steering group! For more information, contact Kerri on kerriparke@womentstherapycentre.co.uk

"I feel I am less isolated than before and more comfortable talking to the people in my life about my problems." - Client



intheheadlines...

Charles Saatchi and Male Violence Against Women

Photographs that appeared to show Charles Saatchi attacking his wife, Nigella Lawson, in public in June sent a shockwave through the press and the public. The upsetting images brought to light the prevalence of domestic violence, and responses highlighted how common victim blaming still is. Domestic violence is an issue that cuts through all classes and can affect anyone. A new United Nations report has found that over one third of women worldwide are affected by violence, in many of these cases, by a partner, although the majority of these type of incidents are not reported to the police.

Sources: guardian.co.uk, un.org, womensaid.org.uk

Student Mental Health

A recent survey revealed that after joining university, students are more anxious and more likely to develop depression. An alarming 92% of students surveyed identified themselves as having a feeling of mental distress, yet only 20% would consider seeking help from a university counselling service. The state of student mental health is often ignored but certain organisations have recently been highlighting the seriousness of this issue. Student Minds encourages students to listen to and talk about mental health and provide training to run peer support groups at universities. In October, Mind and NUS will collaborate to facilitate discussion on improving mental health provision in post-16 education sectors. Sources: studentminds.org.uk, nusconnect.org.uk, mind.org.uk

Don't Call Me Crazy—Mental Health on TV

In June, BBC Three launched 'It's A Mad World' - a season of programmes exploring mental health issues affecting young people - with 'Don't Call Me Crazy' a three-part documentary looking at the lives of teenagers at the McGuinness Unit in Manchester, one of the largest teenage mental health inpatient units in the country. While most viewers welcomed the show for raising awareness and challenging mental health stigma, it also raised some questions about whether filming the lives of vulnerable young adults was a breach of confidence which may have a potentially negative impact on their recovery. Sources: BBC, Huffington Post

If you have been affected by any of the themes mentioned above and would like to find out about the services we offer, please call us on 020 7263 7860

To read about how the Women's Therapy Centre is working to tackle issues like these, turn to page 7.

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youngwomen'sproject

The young women's project is a mental wellbeing project for young women and young mothers funded by John Lyon's Charity and the Big Lottery Fund respectively. We offer a range of services aimed at making therapy accessible to those who may not ordinarily **take time out** for themselves:

Information & taster sessions

- Give women the opportunity to explore their feelings and fears about using mental health services and offer some insight into psychotherapy and its benefits
- Help people understand that anyone can go to therapy for any reason, however seemingly big or small
- Include talking and interactive elements such as role play based around a topic e.g. stress or self-esteem

Support groups

- Six-week groups focus on addressing women's difficulties and ways of coping in more detail
- Consist of members that all share similar issues.
- Focus on specific difficulties but also clients' own strengths, resources and coping skills with the goal of enhancing their own health and wellness on a long term basis

Reflective practice sessions

- Provide staff members or volunteers with a safe space to learn about the emotional and psychological impact of their work
- Enable staff to explore their own responses to issues and situations that arise at work
- Encourage staff to identify how more supportive structures can be developed in the workplace



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Long term group and individual psychotherapy for women who have attended a psycho-education group. Psychotherapy sets out to understand the underlying causes of a wide range of difficulties, which may sometimes be linked to a particular past experience. For more information please email: appointments@womenstherapycentre.co.uk.

Who is eligible?

- **Women aged 18-25** who live in: Barnet, Brent, Camden, City of London, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Kensington & Chelsea, & Westminster
- **Mothers under 30** living in Islington

Need to know

How much do the sessions cost?

Information and taster sessions and the support group are **FREE** of charge. Longer term therapy is charged on a sliding scale, according to your ability to pay. Our minimum fee is £5 per session.

What about the kids? How will I get there?

We provide help with childcare and travel costs.

Read on for more!

Want to know more? Visit www.womenstherapycentre.co.uk

10 Manor Gardens, London N7 6JS

enquiries@womenstherapycentre.co.uk



youngwomen's project FAQ

Opening up about how you feel can be daunting. If you're still not sure, we've answered some common worries and doubts that people often have before they come to a session...

What can I talk about?

What you talk about is **entirely up to you**. You might find that you're having trouble forming or keeping relationships, have low self-esteem, feel a bit lost, feel anxious all the time or are a bit depressed or unhappy with your life. You might have been in an abusive relationship, had someone close to you die or lost your job. Basically, if life isn't going how you want it to, or if you would like something in your life to be different, come and talk about it.

Who comes to the sessions?

Anybody can come to the sessions as long as they meet the criteria explained earlier. The sessions aren't only for "particular kinds of people", but for **anybody** who thinks they could do with someone to talk to about the difficulties in their lives. You will probably find that most of the women there are just like you.

How can the support group help me?

It can come as a massive relief that other people go through the same difficulties as you. Sharing problems and finding out about how others have dealt with their difficulties can give you **encouragement** to work with issues that previously seemed impossible. Individuals often find that group members are able to offer useful feedback and insight to each other. This process of giving and receiving allows individuals in the group to experience relating in a way which can be helpful in everyday settings.

Will people think I'm a bad mother?

Everyone has their good days and bad days. If you're having more bad than good, it might be helpful to talk to someone about it. Many people use counselling as a positive tool to help them through difficult times. Not doing something about it might be worse for your child, as you will probably simply continue to feel overwhelmed and unable to cope. Needing help or support is nothing to be ashamed of; it's actually a sign of your **strength and determination** to be the best mother you can be.

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Will the sessions make any difference?

You'll be surprised at the difference talking about your problems can have on your life! A lot of people bury their feelings or pretend they're not there because they are too painful to deal with. But just because we don't talk about them or acknowledge them, doesn't mean they go away. What tends to happen is that they stay buried and eat away at us slowly, and have an impact on the rest of our lives. Coming to the sessions won't mean that you won't feel unhappy ever again, but they will hopefully help you to find **better ways of coping** with difficult feelings and to notice the signs when things aren't going well for you in the future, so you can know when to take action to do something about it.

"It can come as a massive relief that other people go through the same difficulties as you"

How do I even know if I need to talk?

It can be hard to know when you need to talk to someone, but there are some things you can look out for. If you feel like you can't do it alone, or you feel trapped, like there's nowhere to turn, finding someone to talk to can help you feel **less isolated** and can give you hope that things can be different. You might be worrying all the time without ever finding any answers and speaking to someone can help you look at your problem from a perspective you may never have considered before. If your sleep or eating habits are affected, you may find that your job, relationships and your everyday life are difficult to manage too.

What about confidentiality?

This can sometimes be a concern for those thinking about attending a group. The therapist will ensure that this is discussed thoroughly in the first session and that 'ground rules' are agreed by the group before any work starts. Experience shows that, since each member expects their own issues of confidentiality to be **respected**, those of others are also invariably respected.

Q&A Sara Scott: wtc senior staff psychotherapist



Sara talks to us about the benefits of group therapy, why some women are reluctant to join groups, and what happens if group members don't like each other

Can you tell us what group therapy is, and what the benefits of it are?

Group therapy is useful for those who are interested in engaging in a longer-term process of personal development, as it is a specialised approach to understanding and treating problems. It is generally thought that the root of most of the difficulties that develop between people in relationships, involve unhealthy patterns of relating, which were learned, directly or indirectly, in our families of origin – our first group experience. It makes sense then, that change and growth – even resolution of the problem – occurs in a new group setting where these old, problematic patterns can be made clear and explored.

So, how does it differ from 1-1 therapy?

A group provides a greater sense of belonging, and people say that the opportunity to share concerns with others is the thing they liked the most. People often feel alone in their distress and learning that others share similar problems is of great importance. Groups also offer the possibility of give and take, as group members can be helped by both being supported by members in the group but also by using their own experience to help others.

Can you tell us what happens in a typical group session?

There are usually up to eight members in a group, who sit with the therapist, in a circle around a table all facing each other. The sessions last for 90 minutes, at the same place and at the same time,

every week. There is no set agenda and group members are encouraged to talk about whatever comes into their mind, past and present, including what is happening in the group. People do not have turns but talk when they feel they having something which they want to contribute to the group either about themselves or in response to what someone else is saying.

Some young women might be reluctant to come to a group—why do you think that is?

Talking to a group of strangers is not something we normally do and many young women may be fearful that others might not be sympathetic to their difficulties and even reject them. Some young women may feel that they have to solve all their problems by themselves or feel they have enough worries of their own and don't feel they want to listen to other people's struggles, because that's what they've been taught, or simply what they're used to. Once people join a group they often find these concerns disappear as they come to understand the benefit of sharing their worries or painful experiences with others who are in a similar position.

So what would you say to a young woman who was considering joining a group?

I would say that I understand that she may feel anxious about joining a group, and feeling safe enough to feel able open up and share her experiences may take time. Lots of people find this daunting but it is something everyone joining the group will be going through so knows what it feels like. In my experience, when a new group member does feel they want to begin to talk about themselves, they can experience it as a relief and find out that others may have struggled with similar concerns and have found a way to overcome it. It takes time and you just need to pace yourself.

What sort of problems will the people in the group have?

I will be running this group for young women, aged 18-30. I expect that the women in the group will come with a number of issues often concerning family, relation-



ships, work, social concerns, anxiety, loss, bereavement, depression or a wish to have a more fulfilling life.

Are people expected to talk a lot in the group?

Well, I do think that the more you involve yourself in the group, the more you'll get out of it. However, involvement in the group doesn't equal time spent talking. You may find it helpful to silently consider your own thoughts and feelings in the group setting. Contributing your own thoughts and feelings as you are willing and able to, certainly helps to deepen the experience of others who might benefit from your input. Bottom line though: the amount of time that one person spends talking does not equate with benefit gained from the group experience.

What happens if there are a couple of people in the group who don't like each other?

It is not necessary, or sometimes even preferable, that you like everyone in the group. In fact, I think that you are likely to learn the most about yourself from the person you have the strongest reaction to. Joining a group is useful because it provides opportunities to learn with and from other people, to understand your own patterns of thought and behaviour, as well as other people's and to perceive how group members react to one another. We live and interact with people every day and often there are things that other people are experiencing or grappling with that can be beneficial to share with others. In group therapy, you learn that perhaps you're not as different as you think or that you're not alone. You'll meet and interact with people, and the whole group learns to work on shared problems, which is one of the most beneficial aspects of this kind of therapy.

Will there be ground rules for the group?

I always ask group members to attend regularly and



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to let the group know if they need to miss a session. Groups work most effectively if they start promptly, so I also encourage people to be on time. It's important that everyone in the group recognises and respects that what's shared in the group stays in the group, and members are asked not to meet outside the group to maintain confidentiality. Keeping the group feeling like a safe place for all who attend is very important but if people do meet outside then they are encouraged to discuss it in the group sessions.

How often will the group meet and how long will it last?

The group will meet for 90 minutes once a week for one year.

For more information about the young women's therapy group call 020 7263 7860 or email enquiries@womenstherapycentre.co.uk



Manor Gardens



Interview: Sally Teasdale, Masbro Children's Centre



Sally is a Senior Family Outreach Worker at the Masbro Children's Centre. She talks to us about their partnership with the Women's Therapy Centre...

How did the partnership with the WTC come about?

When Kerri contacted me we were in the process of setting up a young parents group with another agency, so at first it was the three of us working on that and Kerri helped us as a one off. Then we continued to work together to set up a support group for parents under 24. She is now also offering reflective practice sessions to think about the impact of working with this client group.

Can you tell us a bit about the work?

We're aiming to engage teen and young parents under the age of 24 by providing a support group and lunch. After lunch there is a crèche available for two hours and a session with Kerri. The content of these sessions varies according to what the members of the

group want, and will hopefully lead to long-term support for members.

What have been the main benefits of working with the WTC?

The fact that we can now offer one-to-one sessions for group members means that we can offer support for sensitive subjects, which is great. Working with the WTC has been really flexible and positive and it's great working with Kerri and having another creative mind, who has a lot of experience running workshops, on board.

What would you say to someone considering partnership work with us?

I'd be very, very positive! Our partnership with the WTC has been easy, accommodating, flexible and altogether very positive.

If you're an organisation interested in working with us, contact Kerri at kerriparke@womenstherapycentre.co.uk or call us on 02072637860

Sources of help and information

Women's Aid

National domestic abuse charity & 24 hour helpline
0808 2000 247
www.womensaid.org.uk

National Debtline

Free debt advice line
0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Islington Law Centre

Offers free specialist legal advice to local people on low incomes
020 7288 7630
www.islingtonlaw.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

Advice on a wide range of issues including housing, debt, immigration, benefits and relationship breakdown
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Islington advice line: 020 7288 7676

North London Rape Crisis

Support and advice for women and girls who have experienced sexual abuse
Helpline: 0808 802 9999 12-2.30pm & 7-9.30pm daily; www.solacewomensaid.org
(For West London Rape Crisis call 020 7610 4345, www.wgn.org.uk)

beat

National eating disorders helpline
0845 634 1414
www.b-eat.co.uk

Mind

Information, advice and support on a range of mental health issues
0300 123 3393
www.mind.org.uk

Samaritans

Confidential 24 hour listening service
08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org



Contact Us...



Enquiries: 0207 263 7860 appointments@womenstherapycentre.co.uk

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Address: Women's Therapy Centre, 10 Manor Gardens, London, N7 6JS

Blog: <http://womenstherapycentre.wordpress.com>

Website: www.womenstherapycentre.co.uk

 **Twitter:** @WTC_London  **Facebook:** facebook.com/womenstherapycentre

How To Find Us...

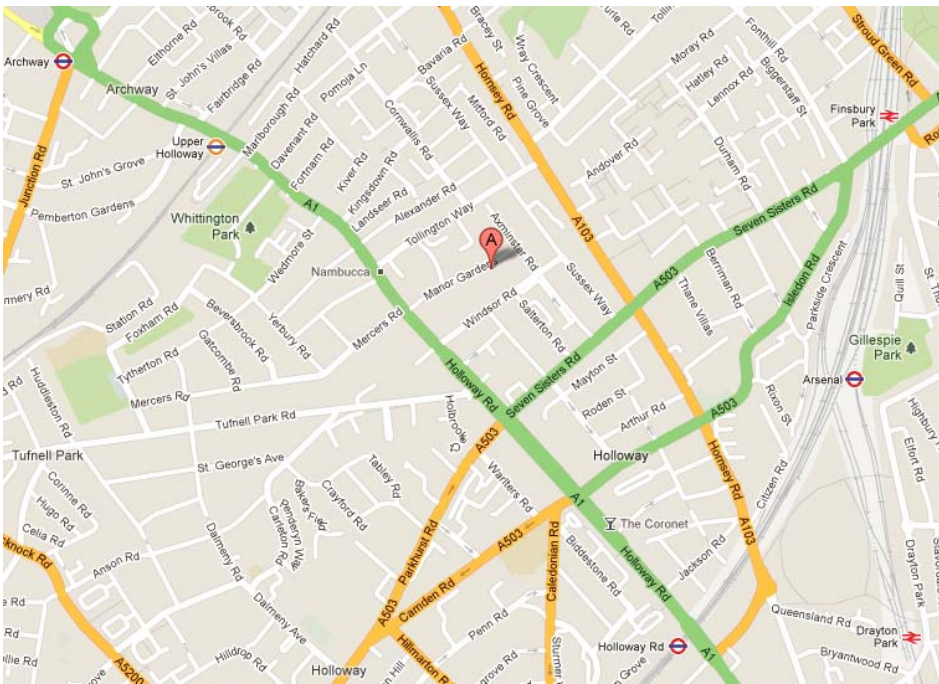


Image courtesy of Google Maps

We are located at 10 Manor Gardens off Holloway Road, between Archway and Holloway Road tube stations, and less than a 20 minute walk from Finsbury Park station.

Buses: 4, 17, 29, 43, 91, 253, 254, 259, 263, 271, 393

“It was a great opportunity for me to be able to talk about the issues I can't talk to anyone else about” - Client



Our services and referral information

- **Accept Consortium**

Women who live in Islington can access psychotherapy services through the Accept website. For more information including criteria and the referral process please visit www.accept-consortium.org.uk.

- **Private psychotherapy referral service**

An initial consultation with an experienced psychotherapist who can refer clients to an appropriate private psychotherapist based on their needs. Appointments are usually offered within a fortnight and evening times are usually available. Please call 020 7263 6200 or email appointments@womenstherapycentre.co.uk for more information or to book an appointment.



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