

APPTS Newsletter Issue 08



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

May 2020

WELCOME!

We hope everyone is staying safe and well during these unprecedented times and our thoughts are with those who this may have affected. In this issue we have a number of interesting articles and useful resources to share. APPTS members will be sharing their innovative work and good practice examples and there are a number of 'a day in the life of' articles from different professions. We also have an APPTS update and a short article on the annual forum last year.

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APPTS Update

Earlier this year, we thought it would be a good idea to put out an APPTS newsletter to update you all on developments within the network and share some stories. A lot has changed since we made these plans, but we still thought it would be helpful to produce the newsletter to keep in touch with you all.

Since the last APPTS newsletter, in September 2019 the network has gained 2 new members and accredited 6 services. At the last accreditation committee meeting held in January all 5 services presented at the meeting were accredited, which was very positive to see.

Since then, the APPTS project team has moved out of its usual location in the Royal College of Psychiatrists to work remotely, from our own homes. Like many other functions, and all the College's other Quality Networks, we have had to cancel all face to face review visits we had scheduled for the time being. This has affected five APPTS services and we apologise to you all for the change in plans, but APPTS are now offering the option to hold these visits virtually and have been in touch with these services with regards to this. Of course, none of us know just how long 'lockdown' life will go on, so we are waiting to see how things develop before we begin re-booking any face to face visits if a virtual visit is not possible or booking in any others. We certainly hope to be able to get out to see you all as soon as possible and to continue APPTS' important work in helping to peer-benchmark, improve and accredit your services. In the meantime, we remain available to you, so, if you have any questions, please do get in touch with us at: APPTS@rcspsych.ac.uk

An update from the Advisory Group: The BPS and its members are working hard to keep services going and to support peoples' wellbeing during these challenging times. The psychological knowledge that the BPS promotes every day has a huge part to play in responding to the pandemic, both in the acute phase and as we start to move forwards into the next phases of rebuilding, renewal and transformation. The BPS has formed a Covid-19 coordinating group chaired by BPS President David Murphy, which has very rapidly produced [relevant materials and guidance](#). Some of these are aimed at professionals, covering areas including potential redeployment, looking after staff wellbeing, conducting effective therapy using video software; others are for the general public. The BPS Covid-19 workstreams are: Adaptations; Behavioural Change and Disease Prevention; Bereavement and Care of Relatives; Community; Effects of Confinement; Rehabilitation; Staff Wellbeing; Working Differently. The BPS has converted its conferences and CPD event to digital formats and is also organising and delivering webinars on key topics, see www.bps.org.uk/events

During these difficult times, the Royal College of Psychiatrists is providing support in several different ways to all of us who are caring for people needing the help of mental health services. This includes working with NHS England and Improvement to update [guidance](#) for psychiatrists and other healthcare professionals working in mental health settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The College has also launched a series of [free webinars](#), offering a solution-focused approach with each one covering different aspects of COVID-19 care. Additionally, the College has recently launched the COVID-19 Mental Health Improvement Network. This includes a [discussion forum](#) for coming together with other services to share ideas and learning about how to adapt to overcome the challenges we currently face.

A Day in the Life of an Honorary Counsellor at The University of Sheffield Counselling Service - Rachael Mobbs

Once a week, every Thursday evening during term time I can be found at The University of Sheffield Counselling Service. A few moons ago I was a student at Sheffield University studying for a Literature Masters. It was this valuable time as a student that I realised that I wanted to become a counsellor. I am fascinated by stories and narrative. I am endlessly intrigued by the universe within each of us and how we make sense of it. For me, having the chance to give back to the university that gave me so much is truly fulfilling. My evening at USC starts very much the same each time. I always try to arrive a good half an hour before my first client slot. Mostly, this is because I walk everywhere, or



more accurately; I power-walk, stride and march everywhere. Sheffield is a brilliant city to walk in, even with its seven hills. I find this time of walking to the service a valuable way of preparing for my client work. Walking gives me a chance to release any tension I might be carrying and the opportunity to mentally prepare for a busy evening ahead. I then proceed to make myself a hot drink, this used to be coffee. However, I felt it slightly incongruent of me drinking coffee in the evening when inevitably the topics of self-care and sleep may arise with clients. These days, it's

mainly plain old peppermint. Sometimes I fall off the wagon and in the spirit of self-compassion - that's ok. After I have concluded my internal debate around the merits and vices of coffee I spend five to ten minutes meditating to help me arrive in the space and to ground myself in the here and now. The main art of making my evening at USC work for me and my clients is in what I call my 'tiny acts' of self-care. In one evening I see up to three clients back-to-back. Often, my next client is in the waiting room before my last client has left the building. This means that timings are often quite tight. Some evenings I can write all my notes between slots and some evenings I can't. My priority within these small windows is to prioritise what kind of therapist my clients will be meeting with. One who is rushing, or one who is rested? Ways in which I support myself include snacks of fruit and cake (another passion of mine) applying a nourishing hand cream or having a stretch before my next client. These little rituals help me stay present and often feel like the anchor for a successful evening of counselling. The reality is that this work is full of unexpected moments and unpredictable emotions. That's one of the things I love most about it; each session from one client to the next will hold a different texture and consist of a different melody. That's why I believe it's so important to create a rhythm in between these spaces that fills and sustains me, so I can fully be present for how my clients wish to express their stories.

A Day in the Life of the Admin Team at University Counselling Service/ SAMHS - Andre Nunn



At the University of Sheffield's Student Access to Mental Health Support (SAMHS) and Counselling Service (UCS), our hard-working administrative team are responsible for a range of tasks that support the service to ensure it runs smoothly.

"We support the service so that the service can support our students."

A normal day in the life of a member of the admin team is busy and varied; often with changing priorities and all sorts of weird and wonderful queries from students and clinicians. We do our best to be helpful and support the changing demands of the service, while also ensuring that we deliver our key tasks in an efficient and timely way.

A usual day looks like this:

8.30am: Open up. Our service is currently based across two sites and two receptions.

8.45am: Check for any cancelled appointments from overnight and reschedule. Check for staff sickness and reschedule appointments.

From 8.45am: Front-of-house reception: meeting and greeting clients and supporting them to complete CCAPS form (a specific clinical measure for the student population) in advance of their appointments. Our receptions are busy and students will attend for appointments and drop-in with queries; the admin team are trained to deal with a range of queries and questions and students who present in crisis. Our service is open late three evenings per week (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday); a member of the admin team will work on reception, meeting and greeting clients and supporting clinicians, until 7.15pm.

9:00am: Send appointment reminders to students (two days before appointment) Respond to queries in the inboxes (all day) Answer phone queries (all day)

10.30am: Process online registrations to invite students to attend a triage appointment Book students in for triage appointments as they make contact (all day) Send correspondence on behalf of clinicians as required including email correspondence, GP letters, special circumstances letters, DDSS Referrals and Big White Wall referrals

2pm: Send location reminders to inform students of the venue of their appointment (day before appointment)

4pm: Reception closes Regular tasks include: Room allocation/ coordinating availability for clinicians across two buildings Updating our bespoke case management system (Titanium) Supporting Service Evaluation and improvement including regular Focus Groups, 'Question of the Moment' in reception and Online Evaluations which students are invited to complete Booking in 'First Casework' appointments every 2 weeks (usually 30-40 appointments). These are for students who have been triaged recently and can involve a great deal of organisation and communication Stationery orders and finance as required We are fortunate that we have strong working relationships with our supportive clinical colleagues, which in turn helps us to provide a high level of administrative support.

"We are a team and we work better together!"



1 - Students at Pet Therapy in January 2020

In addition to day-to-day support, the admin team helps to coordinate hugely popular regular workshops for students. Our workshops include Pet Therapy, Pop-up Therapy, Mindfulness and Hypnosis, which are all free and open to any student to attend. We also help to coordinate the 'Annual Lecture' where a prolific guest speaker visits and presents to the department, University colleagues and students. This year, our guest speaker is Peter Fonagy. We are proud to support a dynamic and flexible service which supports the students of Sheffield through their studies and helps them to achieve their full potential.

A Day in the Role of a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner - Craig Sanderson



As with all healthcare services, the IAPT service is no exception in how busy it is on a daily basis. My role as a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) at Steps2Change, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, serves part of that service, assessing and treating patients suffering from depression and anxiety disorders at a step 2 level of care. My days are varied ranging from screening referrals, patient contact, supervision and clinical skills. Conducting initial assessments within IAPT takes 45 minutes and looks at identifying the main mental health problem and deciding on the most appropriate treatment option using NICE guidelines. As a PWP, I also treat patients at using Low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Guided Self Help. This can be in form of Guided Self Help groups, Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, telephone and face-to-face Guided Self Help. Part of the role I perform includes dealing with risk at each session and on occasions this will lead to safeguarding procedures being followed. For these occurrences we have an excellent safeguarding advice team who will help guide us through situations should we require further support. It is common place for us to liaise with General Practitioners but we also work across teams such as the police, crisis team and Social Services to name a few.

The service I work for places high importance on staff wellbeing. Despite the temptation to skip lunch breaks due to the busy nature of our job, we are encouraged to take time out and to engage with other staff members and refuel. This is so vital in a fast paced role and creates a friendly dynamic to work within.

Before you know it the day has gone, patient outcomes are completed and all notes present and correct. The best part of my job is how rewarding it is meaning I always arrive the next day with a smile on my face.

The University of Sheffield Student Access to Mental Health Support (SAMHS) Focus Group - Stuart Robinson

The University of Sheffield Student Access to Mental Health Support (SAMHS) service provides mental health support to students across its university. Accessed via an initial face to face Triage assessment appointment, each individual student's need is identified and recommendations made highlighting appropriate support - whether the University Counselling service (UCS), group work, wider support services within the University or signposting to NHS/ third sector provision.

SAMHS and University Counselling Service initially gained APPTS accredited in June 2015 with the most recent review process occurring a year last June (2018). Whilst the service was commended and individual student feedback highlighted a positive, it lacked a means of demonstrating wider engagement with service users nor how feedback influenced the design of services. The idea for developing a Focus Group arose from this. Initial discussion took place between the Head of Service, a SAMHS manager and therapist (acting as Focus Group facilitator) about designing a Focus Group. The process was to be supported by a dedicated admin staff member and we decided that the Focus Group would meet termly (3 x year) and, in line with University practice, the incentive of high street vouchers would be offered to group members at the end of the summer term 2020.

We initially advertised, within the service - via posters, electronic screen in our reception area and our website - for any interested student using the service, to leave their details with reception staff as well as the opportunity to speak up with the earmarked Focus Group facilitator. Interested students were contacted and informed of the initial meeting date (mid-November), scheduled for the end of the academic day for 1 and 1/2 hours, to avoid clashing with lectures. From an original 8 interested students, 6 attended, randomly varying in age, gender, ethnicity and incorporating undergraduate and post graduate students.



A written agreement was drawn up specifying –

Aims: taking into account service users' views regarding current processes and the development of the service practical issues: the provision of drinks and biscuits and the incentives of a £10 voucher per attendance. **Confidentiality:** emphasising that students were not expected to disclose their personal mental health issues, that the group was not itself deemed 'therapeutic' and the bound of confidentiality.

This was duly discussed and signed by all attendees. Group members willingly contributed, communicating meaningfully with each other and the group facilitators. Key issues which arose were the online registration process via the SAMHS website (difficulties doing this when not on University premises); ambiguity about how students are contacted by the service after initial registration; and understanding terminology ('Triage' for initial assessment) and the scaled CCAPS questionnaire at assessment and subsequent appointments.

As a result of the first Focus Group, a small working party was established comprising of SAMHS managers/ admin/ therapy staff, to consider these issues and devise timescales to implement appropriate change. To date, there have been amendments to the website, publicity about the Questionnaire and streamlining of the registration process - all of which will be fed back to students at the next Focus Group.

APPTS Annual Forum 2019

Last year the APPTS 5th Annual Forum took place on 13th November at The Bar Convent, York. You may have attended it and recall that the day was jam packed with speakers from APPTS member services from all across the country, as well as service user representatives.

The event was Chaired by Dr Esther Cohen-Tovee, our APPTS Project Board Co-Chair and Jo Hemmingfield, BPS service user representative and included presentations on a service model for people with complex psychological, physical and social needs; student mental health; implications of the NHS LTP and a great APPTS accreditation story from University of St Andrews and many more. The forum was well attended with around 40 people and the day was full of conversation and shared learning with a diverse range of services. The feedback received at the end of the day was also great.

"Thank you for a very enjoyable and interesting day" "Excellent, collegial day. Thank you" "Really enjoyed the event - looking forward to next year!" "A good experience meeting other clinicians and experts - so much learning" "It is good to discuss with other practices what they are currently doing"

Save the date! The Sixth APPTS Annual Forum is due to take place this year on Wednesday 11th November at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, London. Due to the College making the decision to cancel all face to face events for the rest of the year, we will plan to hold this event online. We have not yet opened proposals to speak but please do keep an eye out on your emails for this. We hope it will be a great event like last years and we will do our best to take on the feedback received last year to make this year's forum even better.

Contact Us

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