PARAGON

TOGETHER EMPOWERING CHANGE

YOU Counselling Centres

Educate, Empower, Change

Strategy for Engaging with Disadvantaged and Marginalised Males

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YOU COUNSELLING CENTRES

Sexual Trauma and Recovery (STAR) Counselling is part of The YOU Trust, YOU Counselling Centres, working with people who have experienced recent or non-recent rape, sexual abuse or sexual violence/crime. STAR Counselling is currently commissioned by the OPCC, Ministry or Justice and Portsmouth City Council.

We provide counselling, group therapy, retreats, and specialist recovery groups.

We are members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and Male Survivors Trust.

Alongside our values, the work of the Male Survivors Trust underpins all we do; our staff are trained to work with male survivors and are cognisant of the differences and the specific impact of sexual assault/rape on men.

PARAGON

Paragon is the domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking team within The YOU Trust. They work with men, women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse either as a survivor or as a person using harmful behaviours within their intimate relationship. Paragon is mainly commissioned by local authorities across a number of counties and delivers on additional work that is funded via donations and/or grants.

Paragon believes in a co-ordinated community approach and delivers free training across our communities to empower and upskill people to support those who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Paragon provides a range of personalised interventions.

Paragon are accredited with Safe Lives, Leading Lights.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure there is understanding and a consistent approach to engage with men, and especially those from disadvantaged or marginalised communities.

2. AIMS

It takes men on average 20 years to disclose, and then come forward to talk about their experience of sexual violence, and nearly half of male survivors of domestic abuse do not disclose at all.

Our goals and aims are to better reach male survivors who have not only experienced sexual violence and/or domestic abuse but also feel, and deem, they have been disadvantaged or marginalised and have (for example) protected characteristics under the Equality Act. This includes age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3. INTRODUCTION

We support all male groups and work with our colleagues and partners across Portsmouth, Hampshire, Southampton, Eastleigh the Isle of Wight and Dorset ensuring our message and service is inclusive of all communities and goes out to all groups.

We embrace equality, each individual is given the same resources or opportunities.

We embrace equity, recognising that each person has difference circumstances and will allocate resources and opportunities needed for them to reach their identified goals.

We see the people we work with as individuals, and understanding intersecting issues and intersectionality, and we are inclusive of offering support to males who have a history of unresolved personal sexual abuse and have also perpetrated sexual crimes.

We also have interventions for both survivors of domestic abuse and people using harmful behaviours within their own relationships.

When we are not able to meet the individual needs of the client we will offer referral to alternative organisations.

4. ASSESSMENT YOU COUNSELLING

Any prospective client approaching the service for support will be asked at their point of referral to disclose whether they have ever committed or been investigated for committing any sexual offence. If they answer yes, at this point or at any point during their sessions, we will ask for details of the offence, the year, sentence and whether the offence has been repeated. We will ask if there are any ongoing criminal investigations relating to the person and ask if there are any other offending behaviours.

This is to help us establish if they have been found guilty/charged with sexual offences including:

- Incest (only)
- Paedophilia (only)
- Both incest and paedophilia
- Online grooming of a child

- Atypical sexual interests, practices, or behaviours involving a child/children
- Rape or sexual offences of an adult person/people
- Stalking/coercive control of an adult
- Indecent exposure including cyber-flashing
- Performing a sex act in public i.e. masturbating

The above information enables us to take accountability, manage, monitor and maintain a safe and trauma informed working environment, inclusive and proportionate to the needs of all individuals accessing the service with compassion.

4.1 ASSESSMENT FOR PARAGON

Any client approaching the team for support will have an individual assessment, as a survivor or as a person using abusive behaviours. If a person identifies using abusive behaviours these are explored in context of victim retaliation with appropriate interventions identified within the team.

4.2 ALL TEAMS

YOU Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, section 13.4 states: Care or treatment for service users must not be provided in a way that: -

- Includes discrimination against a person on grounds of any protected characteristics
- Includes acts intended to control or restrain a person that are not necessary or proportionate
- Is degrading for a person
- Significantly disregards the wishes of the person in their own treatment
- Deprives a person of their liberty

Therefore, information gathered from the clients enables us to consider: -

- Whether any prospective client poses any risk to existing clients/or staff
- If we are able to offer the most appropriate intervention

If staff/client(s) are at risk, or we are not the most appropriate agency then we will discuss the reasons for our decision and signpost to alternative agencies.

All YOU staff and YOU volunteers receive mandatory and specialist training that covers the skills and knowledge required to;

- Recognise and respond to allegations or disclosures of abuse
- Intervene positively in situations where abuse is identified
- Promote safeguarding and contribute to the prevention and early intervention aspect of safeguarding work.
- Report abuse or suspected abuse in line with YOU safeguarding children and vulnerable adults' policy and local protocols

This strategy is specifically how we engage with disadvantaged and marginalised males in the areas we work in which includes both targeting through marketing and those already receiving counselling.

5. METHODS TO MEET OUR AIM – What we are doing:

We have created a service directory with all referring agencies and external agencies that includes groups of male dominated area services. Staff and counsellors will engage with events specific to men (i.e. International Men's Day). These will be systematically diarised with specific staff being enabled

to attend. The directory is updated bi-monthly as appropriate to include new groups, by the administration team.

The management teams are building on the relationships we hold with teams noted within their service directory. This includes referring agencies/local authority/NHS Hubs and community groups supporting and being run by men such as Men's Shed's and so on. We will contact/call/network, at least quarterly, to ensure we share information about the teams work and the male groups, along with sharing marketing and promotional materials.

YOU COUNSELLING CENTRES

YCC have set up a focus group of male clients which is running every fortnight and is a space for men to share and to discuss any improvements that are needed within the service as well as ensuring there is a consistent approach to working with other males.

Every quarter the YCC admin team will call a different cohort of male clients, using a developed questionnaire, asking how there can be improvements made to marketing and engagement, including developing a rapport to enable men to feel confident to come forward and be a part of a group.

After each counselling journey has finished (at 12 weeks) counsellors will gain feedback about whether men would like to continue with the support and be a part of the men's focus group.

Mid-way through counselling (at 6 weeks) counsellors will ask for feedback, using a developed questionnaire, about how men are experiencing counselling, including how they found access into the service, their thoughts about the location of the service, and discuss the opportunity to take part in any feedback reviews.

We are developing our website to include feedback and messages from the people we work with, this will include videos, blogs and vlogs, with other messages including leaflets. This will be tracked across our social media, the Hampshire SRASSAC site and share with partner agencies.

YOU COUNSELLING CENTRES AND PARAGON

We will share marketing materials, that are co-produced/developed with the input of the men we work with, with our partners working in the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Treetops, Solent NHS and Yellow Door and other rape crisis centres, and other domestic abuse teams. In addition, marketing materials are sent out to partners at least quarterly ensuring that the service remains in the forefront of other partner agencies and community groups.

We are part of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forums, and sit on Domestic Abuse Boards, Portsmouth and Hampshire Health Hub, and network with them on a regular basis to share practice and information about services ensuring the message goes across a number of different streams. We will promote our male services with them, asking how we can engage more effectively with their clients.

Our marketing materials will be both distributed and replaced every quarter, in community groups and places where males frequent – for example Men's Sheds/Universities/Sexual Health Clinics/toilets in clubs & pubs/gay clubs etc – all places are in our directory. We will build on connections in the BAME and disabilities communities in order to network/meet and distribute materials in a way that suits those groups and ensure we set up processes to continue with that.

The YOU Trust is diverse in its activities and works with many different community groups of people including people with mental health challenges, learning and physical disabilities, social prescribing, community health support etc. we will market the service within the Trust ensuring we continue to reach marginalised and disadvantaged males.

6. MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS:

The success of our strategy, and improvements to be made to the service, will be reviewed by the senior teams within YCC and Paragon, every quarter. They will use data collected in order to complete a quarterly report. The report and actions will be distributed to current clients, staff and partnering agencies and be available to the public on our website.

The following data will be used:

- The questionnaires use through a client's journey – these are 6 weekly (midway) and 12 weeks (end of counselling) for YCC, and initial, 6 weekly reviews and exit reviews for Paragon.
- Both engagement and feedback from males in groups such as space to share, recovery toolkit and focus groups.
- Numbers of males being reached through improved marketing to specifically target marginalised groups.
- Feedback gained about our marketing materials and where males found resources and how helpful this has been.
- Staff feedback attending useful relevant events and connections made.
- Relationships built and maintained to reach more marginalised groups.

7. STRATEGY REVIEW

This strategy will be reviewed by the management team, alongside feedback. Changes will be made according to its efficiency in meeting its aims and will be a working document.

Date of next review: November 2025