



Stephen's Place Children's Centre Therapeutic Service

Professionals Leaflet

Statistics on the impact of domestic abuse on children:

Research has shown that women face double the risk of domestic violence if there are children in the household (Walby and Allen, 2004). Every child is different and unique and, therefore, domestic abuse can impact on children in a number of ways. For example, some children may witness the emotional or physical abuse, overhear conflict or violence, be sensitive to the changing atmosphere around them, feel responsible for the abuse, feel a need to protect the victim of the abuse, witness the consequences of the abuse (such as bruises or broken objects), be a victim of the abuse themselves, or be neglected emotionally or physically.

It has also been found that most children are aware of the abuse of their parent as in **75% to 90% of incidents** of domestic abuse children are in the same or the next room (Hughes, 1992; Abrahams, 1994) and in 25% of cases of domestic violence the perpetrator has also been violent towards children in the home (NCH, 1994). Children do not have to directly witness the abuse for it to have an impact on them. Watching the abuse, hearing the abuse, being abused directly or later learning that a parent has been abused can often threaten a child's sense of stability or security.

Children who live with domestic violence also appear to be at an increased risk of behavioural problems and emotional trauma, and mental health difficulties in adult life (Kolbo, et al., 1996; Morley and Mullender, 1994; Hester et al., 2000, 2007). In some cases, therapy can be helpful in starting to address some of these behaviours and feelings.

Some parents and carers who notice a change in their children may delay seeking help for their children, as they may be worried that they will be blamed for their children's behaviour. Feeling responsible for a child's distress or problems is a normal part of caring. Having the commitment to start addressing the difficulty is a significant part of helping your child. The purpose of providing therapy is not to substitute a parent or a carer's role, nor is it there to judge parenting abilities.

The Centre:

Stephen's Place Children's Centre is a part of the Domestic Violence Intervention project (DVIP) and it offers a range of services to children and their families. At Stephen's Place Children's Centre we offer a specialist therapeutic service for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. We are able to offer this free therapeutic service to children and young people aged between 3 and 17 years who live in the boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow, Ealing and Wandsworth. Therapy is by appointment only, we do not offer a drop-in service. Therapy appointments are offered between 10 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday at Stephen's Place Children's Centre and at offsite venues in Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow, Ealing, and Wandsworth.

If you are interested in referring a child who does not live within these boroughs then spot purchasing of therapy sessions may be available. Please contact Stephen's Place Children's Centre for quotes around spot purchasing.

The venue is bright, warm and child-centred with themed rooms offering a wide variety of play equipment and materials. The therapeutic service at Stephen's Place is flexible and it considers the needs of the child as a whole. Therapy is semi long-term, which means that a child or young person could be seen on a weekly basis for up to five months. This gives the child time to build a trusting relationship with the therapist. The therapy is tailored to the needs and the age of the child. For younger children, play therapy is used to explore the child's feelings (as play is a natural communication for children of a younger age). For older children/young people, a range of exploratory therapeutic techniques are utilised, including the creative arts.

The weekly therapy sessions last 50 minutes and before a child or young person can start therapy, an assessment needs to be completed with their main parent/carer. This is so we can make sure that therapy is a suitable option to meet the child/ young person's needs at that point in time.

Purpose of therapy:

Research consistently shows that the impact of domestic abuse on a child who has lived with domestic violence is on par with the impact on children who have been directly abused. The therapy service at Stephen's Place is there to offer children and young people a safe, consistent, confidential space to be able to work through their difficult experiences and often muddled feelings. It also provides a source of support for children who are currently going through life changes. Rather than having to explain what is troubling them, children may use play and young people may use creative arts and/or talking to communicate. This helps to ensure that children and young people are going at their own pace and communicating at their own level, without feeling interrogated or threatened.

Confidentiality:

We aim to provide children with a certain level of confidentiality, so the contents of sessions are not disclosed. The parameters of confidentiality are negotiated at the start of therapy and are reviewed on an ongoing basis. During the assessment session the parent/carer will have

the opportunity to discuss our confidentiality policy to make sure that they fully understand how it works before they consent to therapy taking place.

Staff:

The specialist therapeutic service is delivered by a team of psychologists. All of our psychologists:

- Have an awareness of and are trained in domestic abuse issues relating to clinical practice.
- Receive regular one to one specialist clinical supervision.
- Are fully CRB checked.
- Are members of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and/or the Health Professionals Council (HPC) and are bound by a strict code of ethics.

Referrals:

The therapeutic service is open to children and young people aged between 3 and 17 years who have been affected by domestic abuse. Referrals are accepted from a variety of sources including professionals, parents and self referrals. To refer, please feel free to download the referral form from this website and fax, email or post it back to the therapy team at Stephen's Place Children's Centre. Referrals must be word processed.

Please note that in order for therapy to be suitable it is important for children to have a stable environment. Therefore, it is unlikely that a referral will be accepted if the perpetrator of the abuse is still in the home or if other factors affecting the stability of a child are ongoing

Stephen's Place Children's Centre will also be delivering groupwork for children who live within the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and who have been impacted by domestic abuse. Please contact a member of the therapy team for more information or if you would like to refer a child.

Location:

We operate out of our site in Hammersmith (Nearest tube stations are Ravenscourt Park and Hammersmith). We also operate from outreach sites in Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow, Ealing and Wandsworth.

Contact us:

**Stephen's Place Children's Centre
Children's Therapeutic Services
1a Ravenscourt Road
Hammersmith
W6 0UH
Phone: 020 8748 8298
Fax: 020 8741 8029**



Directions

Stephen's Place is easily accessible - situated by Ravenscourt Park Tube in Hammersmith, W6 (ten minutes walk from Hammersmith Tube).

Transport

Buses: The bus routes are 27, 190, 266, 267, 391.

Tubes: The tubes are Ravenscourt Park on the District Line and Hammersmith on the Hammersmith & City, Piccadilly and District lines.