

Support currently available to LGBT+ people in Bradford District and Craven – May 2020

Counselling and Wellbeing Services



Hi, My name is Christine and I am the Counselling Co-ordinator / Wellbeing Facilitator at Yorkshire MESMAC. I manage the counselling service which basically involves me dealing with referrals, carrying out an initial assessment then matching the client to the most appropriate counsellor from our bank of self-employed counsellors based in Bradford (and Leeds/Wakefield where we also are funded to offer this service). Clients are generally eligible for between 6 – 8 free sessions, the initial contact with a counsellor being arranged by myself as a means of breaking down the barriers often associated with accessing support and finding the right person to speak to. Our service is primarily aimed at LGBTQ+ people and the wider community who may be living with/affected by HIV in addition to commercial sex workers and the female partners of MSM (men who have sex with men).

I am also responsible for facilitating Rainbow Wellbeing support sessions and Therapeutic workshops aimed at LGBTQ+ people and the common issues they face particularly in regard to their sexuality and gender identity.

Our support is generally face to face (F2F) but as you will see below during the lockdown period of the COVID-19 situation we aim to provide continuity of services through adapting our support to be available through on-line secure web based platforms and the telephone. Don't hesitate to contact me on 077719 31 327 or email c.blessing@mesmac.co.uk should you have any questions. My pronouns are she/her.

COUNSELLING SERVICE *(please note below that no F2F counselling is taking place during the lockdown period of C19 – continuity of service is provided through telephone and web based sessions.)*

WHO? (Eligibility Criteria in Bradford)

Gay, Bi, Questioning men and MSM – issues around sexuality and sexual health. We can also support sex workers.

Female partners of MSM

Anyone living with or affected by (e.g. partner, family) HIV+, issues around diagnosis, medication / prognosis, stigma, relationships etc

Lesbian, Bi, Questioning women and Trans+ individuals (any age) currently have additional funding (IAPT) – support around issues impacting on mental health (e.g. sexuality and aging, gender identity, **not crisis MH or complex MH issues**)

WHAT (i.e. provision)

YM provide up to **6 - 8 Free sessions** a year *(further sessions / cost can be negotiated privately between a client and a counsellor)*

Male and Female counsellors available, flexible times / days

Primarily eclectic approach (*with signposting to support groups / specialist agencies where and when necessary*)

WHERE

Counselling would generally take place at the Bradford Mesmac office or outlying areas. Clients could also generally see a counsellor in Leeds or Wakefield if this was preferable. However, during the lockdown period of Covid 19 counselling is taking place via **telephone** and through **web based (secure)** platforms

HOW (referral process)

On-line referral (*preferable*) through YM website – from staff or client

Assessment by Counselling Co-ordinator

Process takes up to 2 weeks (generally) from submitting referral to counsellor contact / appointment made

Contact:

www.mesmac.co.uk/find-help/individual-support/counselling/bradford

Counselling Co-ordinator – 07771 931 327

SUPPORT GROUPS (please note below that no F2F groups are taking place during the lockdown period of C19 – continuity of service is provided through weekly web based sessions.

Generally we would provide monthly support groups – 2.5 hours (initial mental health ‘check-in’ facilitated through 2 counselling / therapy trained YM staff supported through co-counselling / peer mentoring from community peer mentors (trained). Followed by ‘therapeutic’ session as appropriate to attending group participants and issues discussed . This generally includes self-awareness exercises, teaching self-help techniques, guided therapeutic work, mindfulness – principles and practice).

LGBT+ Rainbow Wellbeing – 4th Thursday each month 6.00 – 8.30pm

We also generally run the LGBT+ Rainbow Wellbeing support group in Skipton (Dyneley Barn) – 4th Wednesday of the month 4.00-6.00pm. Wellbeing days (Saturday) are periodically scheduled at Dyneley Barn, Skipton – contact details below for dates.

During the C19 lockdown period we are running a weekly support group via Zoom. This is held every Thursday evening 6.15pm-7.45pm. New participants can gain access through:

Contact:

Counselling Co-ordinator – 07771 931 327 c.blessing@mesmac.co.uk

THERAPEUTIC WORKSHOPS (currently have additional funding through IAPT but please note below that no F2F workshops are taking place during the lockdown period of C19 – continuity of service is provided web based workshops.

3 ‘wellbeing’ workshops offered quarterly generally at various localities including YM Bradford office and Equity Partnership, **through Zoom during C19 lockdown period.**

Can be up to 3 consecutive sessions or one-off sessions, usually 2.5 hours, **may be shorter through Zoom.**

Include – Mindfulness (beginners and continuing), Trans+cending Transition (Trans+ specific), Dealing with Stress / Anxiety, Dealing with Seasonal Blues

Can be offered to specific LGBT+ groups (*e.g. BME women or men, Older LGBT – women or men, Young people etc*) and ‘tailored’ (*e.g’s include Assertiveness, Self-esteem / Confidence, Dealing with Guilt, Perfectionism*)

Structured and facilitated by 2 counselling / therapy trained YM staff supported through co-counselling / peer mentoring from community peer mentors (trained) – offering understanding through self-awareness exercises, self-help techniques, guided therapeutic work etc

For current details and Zoom schedule:

Contact: Counselling Co-ordinator – 07771 931 327

PEER MENTORING – Trans+ community

Trained Trans+ peer mentors available through Transmission group (*aged 18-64, representative of wide spectrum of Trans+ community*) available for practical support through shared lived experience. Help available with housing, benefits, name changes, etc Generally would take place at YM offices (*or elsewhere and on-line*), *continuity of services will be different during C19 lockdown*).

Contact: Peer Mentor Co-ordinator Tel: 07946 072565, FB page: Lisa Trans Mission, E-Mail:

lisa@uktransmission.org

Services for young LGBT+ people



Hi, I'm Liaqat Ali

I work on the Total Mens Health Project, which is aimed at 16-20 year old GBT+ Men. I've been involved with Yorkshire MESMAC for many years and served on the board of trustees as chair for 5 years. Away from MESMAC I am involved in running Leeds Pride.

Pronouns: he/him

M: 07710 099 027

E: l.ali@mesmac.co.uk



Hi. I'm Verity Smith

I have worked for MESMAC since 2018, previously working in and around sport and mental health as well as inclusion within sport. I enjoy being able to support and create an inclusive environment around mental health and sport through different projects and to see the change in people that come into our service.

Working with the younger LGBTQ+ community enables me to give something back and support and encourage positive change. Through the training I work on being able to see that people can learn and have a greater understanding to help further support their work and breaking down barriers to the LGBTQ+ community accessing further services.

Pronouns: he/him

M: 07900 740 269

E: v.smith@mesmac.co.uk

Ali and Verity deliver a health and wellbeing course to young LGBT+ men (from 16 to 20 years old) and they've shared this information about it:

We were doing this face to face with groups of around 10 participants, but with the current Covid 19 situation we are now offering a revised 4 session course online. Here are the details of what the course covers and we are looking to run it for groups of around 5 people and are completely flexible with regards to the days and times we run it. At the moment myself and Verity have the capacity to around 6 sessions a week each, so in theory we could have up to 60 participants a week for a 4 week period. We would love for you to promote the sessions and feel free to contact me for any further information.

What will we cover in the 4 sessions and what to expect.

The sessions are very relaxed and engaging, you won't be asked to do anything that you might not be comfortable with, for example we will not be asking you to share your mental health issues, but obviously if you feel comfortable and they are relevant it would be great to share your personal experiences.

Session 1 - Health & emotions

- What does 'healthy' look like?
- The Difference between Emotional and Physical Health
- The ups and downs in health that everyone experiences
- Assumptions we make about emotional health of other without knowing what's really going on
- How to talk about Emotional Health- for ourselves and others
- Recognising that our feelings are individual and unique

Session 2 - Managing stress & making choices

- We all have control over how we react to a challenge or stress
- Understanding the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- Use problem-solving skills
- How we react and cope is individual to each of us

Session 3 - Building resilience

- There are a range of coping strategies that can be helpful
- Understanding that everyone experiences difficult times and feelings
- Resilience is about working through challenging times.

Session 4 - Knowing where to turn

- Breaking barriers that may stop us receiving support and help
- What support is available
- Make a plan of what might work for you

Before the course starts I will need some information from participants. This information is for our internal use only (MESMAC and funders) and will not be shared externally.

This form is your personal information <https://forms.gle/yQFcMAufRvwScNaQ7>

This form is about how you have felt over the last week <https://forms.gle/koUJggb2Ec2FNofW7>

Other Bradford Mental Wellbeing Support Services

During COVID-19, the Healthy Minds website is being kept up to date with details of how to currently access a broad range of mental wellbeing services:

<https://www.healthyminds.services/>