

5) So, what next?

You know yourself best. If you are concerned about how you are feeling, or how you are coping, meeting with a psychologist could help.

"I was walking around for a year or so, just either drunk, half cut, or feeling sorry for myself. Until I gave myself that (laughing) kick up the backside... it was either the choice of going back down the same road and ending up in a park, sleeping, or sorting myself out... And I've taken the opportunity to use the help. Which I needed... And I just feel the change... like I said, I'm just happy."

(Daniel)

6) To meet with a psychologist...

Just call or write to Suzanne Elliott using the contact details below. Or, you can ask a professional to contact the Homeless Mental Health Service.

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Homeless Mental Health Service
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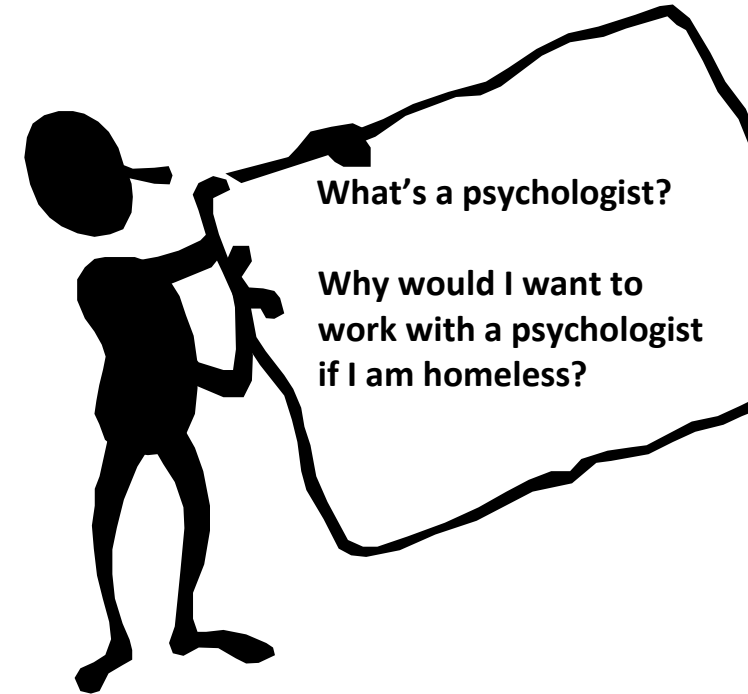
The quotes used in this leaflet are taken from an independent piece of research by Ellie Taylor that interviewed people who had used this service. Names have been changed to protect confidentiality. Please contact Suzanne Elliott for further information.

Thank you again to everyone who took part 😊

Speaking out ✂ Living peacefully ✂
Getting involved ✂ Upholding your human rights ✂
Doing things differently ✂ Standing up ✂
Building better relationships ✂ Connecting with spirituality ✂
Being kind to yourself ✂ Challenging unjustness ✂
Finding meaning ✂ Making positive changes ✂
Challenging inequalities of power ✂ Consciousness raising ✂
Letting go of blame ✂ Finding your community ✂
Sharing hurt ✂ Being empowered ✂ Resisting prejudice and discrimination ✂
Remembering who you are ✂ Releasing feelings ✂
Being compassionate ✂ Celebrating your uniqueness ✂
Finding connections with others ✂ Taking action ✂
Thinking about your environment ✂ Finding your place ✂
Supporting wellbeing ✂ Telling your story ✂
Overturning oppression ✂ Finding joy ✂
Taking part ✂ Respecting yourself ✂
Exposing secrets and denial ✂ Working together ✂
Understanding yourself ✂ Joining with others ✂
Making sense of what has happened ✂ Discovering yourself ✂
Forgiving ✂ Respecting others ✂
Celebrating strengths and achievements ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂

PSYCHOLOGY

Within the Homeless Mental Health Service



A leaflet based on the experiences of people who have used this service



Homeless Mental Health Service

1: Becoming and being homeless can be very difficult

People tell us that everyone experiences being homeless in different ways. We have also heard that:

a) Sometimes people feel 'stuck' and like they can't move forward.

"...people come into hostels...and then they get stuck. Then they are in a real deep crevice [a hole], they can't get out of." (Jon)

b) Sometimes people struggle to 'cope'.



"I was emotionally and physically wrecked...I realised quite quickly, you know, that there's a line between keeping it together and falling apart...I did fall apart." (Eve)

2: What is a psychologist?

Not many people know what a psychologist 'is'.

"I suppose people [need to] understand, and not to think 'oh God, oh, I have got to go and see a head shrink...or a quack' (laughing)...they are there for people that need the help, to talk to." (Ruby)

Psychologists listen to people's difficulties, so that they can understand how people would like their lives to be different. Psychologists then work with people to support them while they make these changes.

Psychologists do not tell people what to do. They also do not prescribe drugs, or admit people to hospital under the Mental Health Act.

3: How might a psychologist help?

Working with a psychologist often means meeting regularly, in a place that you can get to easily (e.g. a hostel). What you say is kept confidential (i.e. unless somebody is in danger).

"Well I was having appointments...at the doctor's surgery or down at the Dawn Centre, and she helped me get through it all. If it wasn't for [her], I don't know where I'd be. I think I would have done something stupid before, before, if I hadn't had [her] to talk to. It did really help..." (Mike)

People choose to talk to a psychologist for different reasons. This might be:

a) To talk about difficult experiences, or feelings.

"I don't really talk to lots of people about how I am feeling, they know that I suffer from depression, but not to like that extent." (Denise)

"So it's un-cluttering, you know, bad thoughts in my head that have prevented me from, doing so much good, for myself." (Eve)

b) To understand themselves better.

"Well, I needed to know, that somebody was there to listen to me and help me to understand my problems...And to understand why I wanted to get back on my feet, and help me get that way...I was able to get things off my chest, and now I'm moving forward." (Daniel)

c) To feel less hopeless about their future, decide what is important to them personally, and make some positive changes in their lives.

"I have surprised myself with the way I've bounced back, from it all, well I have had my house...a new start, New Year. Umm, I'm back into my hobbies, umm, putting down some roots, it's been a long twenty odd year journey." (Jon)

4: What might be difficult?



People tell us that deciding to see a psychologist is a difficult decision to make. For some people this is because to begin with trusting someone can be hard.

"...When I met her, I wouldn't open up to her, she's the first one that I ever opened up to as well...because I got hurt so much...I kind of built up a wall. And I was so tough, I was so angry, I wouldn't let anyone come near me." (Jen)

We understand this, and will work with you at your pace. You can choose what you talk about.