

Listening Ear Service - Carers

For the foreseeable future, due to COVID 19, the Centre for Health and Wellbeing's complementary therapy service will not be operational. However, recognising how difficult a time it is for Carers and other vulnerable clients the Centre has established a Listening Ear Service.

In providing this service therapists are telephoning clients providing reassurance and comfort as well as relaxation and mindfulness advice. Many Carers are socially isolated and indeed many have underlying health conditions resulting in increased isolation, loneliness and a fear of going outside even for basic needs.

Clients appreciate the phone call, appreciate that someone is thinking about them and in most cases want the therapist to call on a weekly basis. In conducting the conversations, it may be possible to identify unmet need, recent examples being: unable to buy food due to loss of income, need help getting shopping or a prescription, providing an electricity top up or a mobile phone top up to ensure the client can stay connected. When need is identified therapists contact the Centre Coordinator who can connect in with local community initiatives to provide volunteer support or we can purchase the required items e.g. a food parcel and have it delivered.

Instead of providing a one-hour complementary therapy, therapists telephone 4 clients during the hour, providing 15 minutes of reassurance and support on a weekly basis. For the majority of cases it is as simple as that – just checking in, hearing a friendly voice who cares about their wellbeing and that of their family. However, for others the financial and social vulnerabilities over the coming weeks and months could provide a severe additional stress on physical and mental wellbeing, which we know the weekly call from the therapist can help with. If the therapist is concerned about the physical or mental wellbeing or safety of the client, they will phone the Centre Coordinator who will immediately take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the client.

The Centre for Health and Wellbeing has a team of 10 complementary therapists and can provide the listening ear service across all areas of Belfast.