BOWERHOUSE
Making a positive difference

The Bower House, 32 Coventry Road, Market
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CTH Forum –Bower House Report
January/February 2025

Since the last Churches Together report, the team have been busy both with clinical work and fundraising.

We held our Christmas coffee morning in late November. Despite high winds, very wet weather and the resulting low footfall, we managed to raise over £800. In January we hosted a Gala evening at Harborough Theatre. Oscar Wilde's 'An Ideal Husband', proved both entertaining and popular, raising over £1200 for the Bower House. Our latest, upcoming event will take place on March 1st and holds a special place in our hearts. A former Bower House support worker, assisted by a small team, has returned to organise a classical Concert in tribute to Sarah Ray Smyth, one of the Bower Houses' founding members who died unexpectedly last year. We are sure it will be a wonderful event.

The counselling landscape has shifted in recent years. COVID made it necessary for both qualified and student counsellors to work online and so new areas of training (for remote work) were developed. More training providers rose up to meet the demand for mental health support whilst placements felt the squeeze of the cost of living crisis.
This has led to a number of placements closing or reducing their capacity to take on students. We continue to provide student placements (and have recently taken on two new students who are awaiting induction) but are always mindful of the need to pace our intake in order to best support those that join us.
In our last update we noted how our waiting list has fewer 'student suitable' clients. After writing to GPs to communicate this need, the situation has improved but your continued prayers for student suitable clients is appreciated.

The Bower House waiting list fluctuates up and down in the course of a year, but we are aware that some clients (due to their limited availability) may be waiting for counselling for some weeks. In order to address this, we looked at intervention possibilities and found the Decider Life Skills. The Life Skills are 12 Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) skills designed to be taught to groups and individuals using a fun, creative and interactive style. We have decided to use some of these skills to create a short four week psychoeducation programme that can be offered to waiting clients. This is not group therapy and will not replace the 1:1 counselling offered, but we hope it will provide clients with skills they can draw on to support their mental health whilst they wait. Two of our team have trained and we are pleased to say that the first group will begin at the end of February. We are excited to see how the course will be received.

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Neurodivergence seems to be a noticeable, reoccurring theme amongst those referring themselves for counselling. Some clients have been given a diagnosis and others are on the referral pathways awaiting assessment. To address this area of need, we've arranged some specialist CPD due to take place at the end of February with Sara Kedge. Sara is a published author and award winning DEI Design Thinking Strategist, Coach and Neurodiversity Trainer who carries the collective experience of the neurodivergent community to those she trains.
We've had excellent take up for this CPD from the Bower House community and other local counsellors and hope that it will give people what they need to further enhance their practice.

Helping counsellors to further develop their skills after qualification is important to us. It benefits the counsellors and the service. We recently updated our Initial assessments forms and took the opportunity to create some initial assessment training at the same time. This area of the work holds significance, as it facilitates our understanding of the client's needs as they enter the service and enables us to assess any risk.
We will be training up some of our counsellors (who have gained a years post qualification experience) in the hope that they will develop new skills and start to offer initial assessments within the service.

Our team show continual commitment and care for our clients. It is humbling to work alongside them and see God's love being expressed in all they do. A number of them (or their close family members) are facing health challenges at the moment and so we would appreciate your prayers for health, strength and protection.

Thank you for your support. We feel your prayers and really appreciate them. Please know that we pray for you and the work you do too. If anyone ever feels that they would like to join our bi-weekly prayer meetings in the house, please get in touch. It would be great to see you.

Every blessing,
Cara and Loraine