The Bower House, 32 Coventry Road, Market
Harborough, Leicestershire. LE16 9BZ
01858 469257
bowerhouse.chessck.co.uk

Bower House Church Together Report
May 2025

As always, it's a joy to report on the work of the Bower House.

The Team

This year's 'Away Day' took place in April at the Methodist church and pivoted around the theme of creativity.
Some of our counsellors (and members of the Governing Body) ran parts of the day and it was wonderful to experience the richness of what was offered, as well as spend time fellowshipping together. The 'bring and share' lunch was delicious too!

We continue to be sought by trainees for placements and have facilitated many student visits and interviews in the last few months. Our interview process includes a set of questions pertaining to self, counselling practice, supervision, confidentiality and Safeguarding, as well as a skills session to help us gain a clear sense of the counsellor's 'in the room' practice. We have taken on two new trainees to be inducted in June but taking on new students remains a balancing act; there are still a limited number of 'student suitable' clients coming into the service for counselling. (These are clients without significant risk and/or trauma.) Please pray for this issue. We would really like to offer more students a placement opportunity in the coming months but need appropriate clients to be able to do this.

We have had the pleasure of inducting another two support workers to join our wonderful existing team. Unexpected illness and a hospital visit has slowed the induction process for one, but our other new starter recently took the plunge to 'go solo' in the house for the first time. We continue to welcome people that are interested in applying for this pivotal role, without which, the house simply could not function. Support workers are often the first point of contact for clients – the warm welcome they offer can make all the difference to someone who has made those first, tentative steps to access support.

Fundraising and Community

As we receive no funding from the government or NHS, although local GPs and medical professionals sign-post to us, we rely on the amazing generosity of local churches and the contributions of our clients to cover our running costs. It remains extremely important to us that there is no financial barrier to accessing counselling support at the Bower House. In order to mitigate the short-fall that occurs when clients cannot afford to donate, we are committed to fundraising and the Bower House family and friends in the local community have afforded us wonderful support over the last year.
We've had coffee mornings, a theatre Gala Night and stalls at the Harborough Carnival and the Scarecrow Festival in Lubenham. One of our team organised a 'Time and Talents' fundraiser based on the parable of the talents. A £5 stake was provided and people were asked to creatively 'grow' this amount. There were cake sales, coffee mornings, jewellery making, ebay sales and a silent auction, resulting in a grand total of £1911 and a tremendous amount of fun! In March this year, we also held a

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concert (in memory of one of our founding members, Sarah Ray Smyth). It was a resounding success with over £1800 raised.

More importantly, all of these events allow us to connect with the local community, ensuring people know that we are here if ever they have need of us.

CPD Events

CPD is an important part of developing as a therapist and we are committed to offering quality CPD opportunities to our counsellors.
Lynne Findlay (specialist Safeguarding trainer, social worker and therapist) delivered online Safeguarding awareness training via zoom in April but our most recent CPD training focus has been on Neurodivergence. We wanted to respond to the noticeable rise in clients with ASD, ADHD or both conditions. On Feb 22nd Sara Kedge, a trainer and coach who specialises in neurodivergence, delivered a morning's training, followed by a second event at the beginning of May that built on the understanding gained in the previous training. Helen Heather, a former teacher and specialist neurodivergence therapist, focused on practical considerations for working with neurodivergence in the counselling room. We had excellent take up from Bower House counsellors and those from other organisations for both events. We are planning a CPD event on Trauma in the autumn.

Initial assessments are a very important part of the counselling journey, for both the client and The Bower House; when clients refer themselves for therapy, the assessment is the first opportunity they have to unpack their unique history and story. We speak about their therapeutic goals and expectations, as well as checking out any risk, so it's important we work safely and to the client's best interests.

We recently wrote some initial assessment training and delivered it to qualified counsellors on our team looking to develop their skills. We introduced an updated initial assessment form, talked through the process and discussed important considerations.
Since this session, we have written Initial Assessments scenarios and offered 'practice' sessions to new starters. Willing support worker volunteers played the part of clients, enabling counsellors to receive feedback, gain confidence and become more familiar with the paperwork before conducting assessments with real clients.

Clients/Waiting List

Our first Decider Skills course for clients ran from February to March. This is a CBT skills based course delivered over two sessions to help clients whilst they wait for their 1:1 counselling sessions. Two of our Decider Skills trained support workers, delivered the program and had excellent feedback from the those that attended. We propose to run the program again in the Autumn.

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Clients waiting for allocation currently stands at around 30, with almost half of these clients looking for late afternoon or evening appointments. When we informed counsellors of this emerging pattern, some of our volunteer counsellors moved their times in the house to meet this need. As ever, we are incredibly thankful for the flexibility and heart of our team.

We want to thank the Churches Together for all the prayers and wonderful support that the Bower House receives. It remains a tremendous privilege to work alongside so many committed and faithful people in the Christian community in Market Harborough.

Every blessing,
Cara and Loraine.