



Respond Services

For Autistic People and People with Learning Disabilities who have experienced trauma

For more information visit
www.respond.org.uk

RESPOND 
from hurting to healing

“ We all need to communicate, whether through words or non-verbally, especially when we are going through a bad time. Our therapists are trained to be attentive and help people find their own answers, without judging them. ”



About Respond

Respond is a national charity, since 1991 we have brought about positive change to enable autistic people and people with learning disabilities who have experienced abuse, violence or trauma to move on to live richer, more resilient lives.

Our mission is to ***reduce the impact of trauma in the lives of people with learning disabilities and autistic people, by developing trusting relationships, through psychotherapeutically informed services.***

We are a specialist organisation focused on providing support to both survivors and perpetrators and are therefore uniquely positioned to understand the dynamics associated with trauma and abuse. The individuals we support are often labelled complex or challenging. Often, they have suffered complex trauma that has gone unrecognised.

Through psychotherapy, advocacy, campaigning, consultancy and other support, we aim to bring about long-term, sustainable and meaningful change through the following strategic aims:

- Increase public understanding and knowledge of the psychodynamic trauma informed approach
- Provide a whole system approach when supporting children, young people and their families
- Improve the wellbeing and social integration for people moving out of long stay institutions into the community
- Reduce the risk of offending for those who may cause harm to themselves or others
- Reduce isolation, increase coping mechanisms and prevent further abuse.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Respond is committed to the furthering of human rights, equality, and positive social change through our therapeutic and advocacy work. We are committed to anti-racism and other forms of anti-discriminatory practice. We recognise that we need to continually keep this as a focus in our work and as an integral part of our organisational strategy. We seek to stand, as allies, with those who face social injustice, and we seek to become a campaigning voice for change in line with our charitable objectives. We collectively commit to challenging all discriminatory acts and to promote the wellbeing and rights of the people we support and our colleagues.

“ Psychotherapy is at the heart of our work at Respond and we pride ourselves on our ability to work with both the individual in treatment and with their network of supporters. ”

The services Respond offer:

Assessments

We provide assessments to increase understanding of a particular concern, and support those working with a client or family member to better understand what type of support might be needed. The assessment might include meeting with the referred client, carrying out a detailed formulation making use of relevant background information connected to the client's development and history. The therapist would also meet with any other people who may be relevant for the specific assessment. Recommendations would be made as result of this assessment.

Our Therapeutic Approach

All of our psychotherapy services use the Respond model, which is a psychodynamic systemic trauma informed approach. We work systemically offering case management alongside the therapy and with the clients' support network, offering consultation, workshops and support to both the families and professionals around the client.

Therapy is either in person at Respond's clinic or online, for weekly therapy over the course of a year, in the same space, with the same therapist, at the same time of the week.

Survivors Psychotherapy

People with learning disabilities and autistic people are far more likely to experience sexual violence, exploitation and domestic abuse. This may lead to them feeling angry, ashamed, violated and scared.

Therapists support the client to feel safe and communicate their experience in a way that works for them. Young people and adults who have attended psychotherapy learn to make better relationships, have increased resilience, improved emotional wellbeing and become more able to cope with life experiences.

Young people's services

We offer individual or group therapy within educational settings and within our clinic for young people with a learning disability and autistic people. We often work creatively within the therapy using movement, art, and play as well as offering talking therapies too.

Our school-based service allows ease of access to specialist therapists in a setting that our young clients know and feel safe in. The Young People's Service works closely with the Family Service. Parents of children in our Young People's Service will often be referred for their own psychotherapy to support their needs, which will also enable and support positive change.

Families Service

This service supports family members of people with learning disabilities and autistic people who have experienced loss, harm or institutional abuse, who may face many challenges including fighting to get the right support, understanding their child or family member, being let down and neglected by services.

Services include individual psychotherapy or groups in which families can meet and be supported by other families and better cope with their experiences. Families feel better understood, less isolated and more connected.

Advocacy Services

We provide pan London advocacy, and emotional support for young people and adults who have experienced sexual violence and/or sexual assault and domestic violence. They may have reported to the police already or be thinking about reporting but want some more information. The CouRAGEous service offers one-to-one support and advocacy to young women (14-24) with a learning disability, and autistic young women who have experienced any form of gender-based violence.

Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA)

The COSA service works with people with learning disabilities and autistic people who have committed sexual offences or are at risk of doing so, by providing an adapted Circle model to support them to live safely in the community. Often, those who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour do so as a result of isolation, stigmatisation and unsafe living conditions.

A COSA brings together a group of specially trained volunteers who help support and manage the risk of the person with the sexually harmful behaviour (“the core member”). They meet as a group weekly for a period of up to 18 months and work under the guidance and supervision of a professional circle coordinator who liaises between the “inner circle” and other external professionals (“outer circle”) also involved in the core member’s life (i.e. social worker, psychiatrist, probation officer).

Transforming Care

Our transforming care framework supports people who are subject to long-term hospital admissions to move back into the community in a supportive and respectful way.

The model incorporates relational and therapeutic support directly to the people we work with and a Circles of Support and Accountability framework (COSA). Respond supports and collaborates with professionals within the MDT throughout transition, from hospital to community and beyond, to ensure best possible outcomes for the people we work with.

Therapeutic Consultancy, Training and Supervision

Respond offers Therapeutic Consultancy to teams and individuals working with people with learning disabilities and autistic people who have experienced abuse or trauma, as well as those who may harm others. Consultancy can support both clinical thinking and containment to professionals and support staff.

Individuals, teams and organisations make use of therapeutic consultancy in a variety of ways; they may be struggling with a specific question or challenge, they may want guidance on trauma, psychosexual development or risk. Respond offers structure, space and specialist expertise to hold conversations which have been difficult to have so far. Following consultancy, individuals, teams and organisations feel clearer in their understanding, less impacted by trauma, more able to manage risks, and better able to find a way forward.

We also provide a three-tiered trauma training that aims to support organisations to become more trauma informed in their approach plus bespoke training, reflective practice for organisations and individual clinical supervision.

“ I am better informed about how trauma impacts individuals and their circle of support, with a better understanding to influence my work and understanding going forwards. I enjoyed taking time to reflect on how services can be shaped with Trauma informed Care. ”



For further information about our services and making referrals visit our website www.respond.org.uk



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