

**The Stress Project**

**Counselling Placement** **Application Pack**

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6. **About the Stress Project**

The Stress Project is a therapy centre based in Holloway, North London. The centre focuses on low-cost mental health therapeutic services such as Counselling, Mindfulness and Complementary Therapies. It is part of Holloway Neighbourhood Group - a small, local charity that works extremely hard to provide the best services possible in partnership with local people.

The Stress Project was founded in 1995 and has four beautiful therapy rooms used for counselling and complementary therapies and an entire ground floor space and garden - which is used as a multipurpose group room for up to 20 people.

**The Stress Project currently offers the following services:**

**The Counselling Placement Programme**:

The Stress Project provides voluntary counselling placements and low-cost clinical supervision. Access to free training is available to all volunteers in the counselling placement programme.

**The referral-based Counselling Programme:** offers short-term therapy up to 26 weeks.

**Self-referral-based Counselling Programme:** offers long-term therapy provided by a team of qualified therapists who hire space with us.

**Referral & Self-referral Complementary Therapies**: such as Acupuncture and Massage

**Weekly Groups and Classes: Offers a range of free services such as** Mindfulness class; Well-being group; Ear acupuncture; Mind & Body Yoga; Creative Craft and Therapeutic Gardening sessions.

**Mindfulness courses:** offers **in-person and online 9-week** Mindfulness courses.

In addition to our centre-based therapy services, we provide a **Community** **Outreach Programme.**

The therapists at Stress Project work in a humanistic and holistic way incorporating the nature of mind, body, & spirit – and share a commitment to keeping the energy flowing through mindful attention to our environment and to each other.

1. **About the Placement & The Recruitment Process**

**Hours:** A regular three-hour slot fromMonday to Friday 9.30 am to 5 pm

**Location:** The Stress Project, 2 Shelburne Road, N7 6QT

*Joining the Team – Placements for trainees and qualified counsellors*

Voluntary counselling placements at the Stress Project are open to trainee or qualified counsellors and psychotherapists who wish to practice in a holistic and multicultural setting. We are looking for people who are in their 2nd year of diploma training level 4, and who can commit to a placement of at least a year, where they will see three clients per week in the morning or afternoon (occasional evening slots are open to qualified therapists).

Because some of the work is likely to be longer-term, applicants will need to have already experienced deep therapeutic journeys of their own and be able to work at depth with clients. This may not be a suitable place to have your first placement unless you already have considerable therapeutic understanding or experience in a therapy-related field.

The placement is supported by monthly individual and group supervision that ensures a great depth of holding and learning. Because we receive no funding, there is a reasonable charge for this. The supervision is from an integrative and person–centred perspective, and therefore if your training is not integrative, e.g. Purely psychodynamic, you will need to demonstrate that you understand and are willing to work from an integrative frame.

The Stress Project is committed to inclusion and racial justice and welcomes applications from people from diverse backgrounds, ethnic minorities, lived experience of mental health conditions, and people returning to work.

*Volunteer Counsellor Required Criteria*

* Considerable depth of personal development
* Commitment to at least a year to the placement
* Membership of BACP, UKCP or equivalent (This can take some time so you may want to apply straight away to avoid your placement start being delayed)
* Professional insurance
* Commitment to regular counselling or psychotherapy for the duration of the placement
* Good admin skills and knowledge of using a database.
* Commitment to contributing to HNG, attendance to training days and social events and attending our AGM.
* Either qualified or in 2nd year or near the end of a Level 4 or substantial training in at least one type of counselling theoretical modality
* You will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS application, that is, if you don’t already hold a valid enhanced DBS certificate in place.
* Demonstrate a clear knowledge of the importance of equal opportunities, and to be able to work with differences such as class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and physical ability and an awareness of the issues for individuals who experience discrimination.
* To be able to manage your own caseload in terms of keeping to scheduled timetables, database entries, record keeping, receiving clients in an open and efficient manner, and maintaining order in a shared workspace.
* Be available to work at the time the Stress Project operates.

If you meet the placement requirement and would like to apply for a placement with the Stress Project, please complete and return an application form in section 6. We will then invite you to an informal interview. This is a chance for you to see the Centre and ask any questions you may have.

**Placement Offer:** On successful completion of the interview and receipt of satisfactory references, the Stress Project’s Clinical Manager will confirm in writing a volunteer placement offer and will agree on a date for your induction. You will also meet with your internal supervisor to discuss the guidelines for working at the Stress Project. Following this:

* You will receive a Volunteer Information Pack containing all relevant information and working policies.
* You will need to provide a copy of your diploma and personal indemnity insurance.
* You will need to have a valid enhanced DBS certificate in place before you start seeing clients.
* At your induction, you will need to agree and sign a Counselling Placement Agreement.

**First Day at The Stress Project:** Your first day at the Stress Project will be for a 2-hour induction session. This gives you the chance to know how the Counselling Therapy Programme works, including how clients are referred to us and what your role and responsibilities are. You will also be given details of your first client, with whom you will begin therapy the following week.

**Starting your Placement:** To begin with, you will work with one client. New clients may be presented in your internal supervision or discussed with the Clinical Manager. The following week you will be allocated your second client.

You will decide when you feel ready to take on your third client and you may see up to 4 clients if your slot allows.

**Probation:** The probationary period is three months. At the end of this period, you will have a review meeting with the Clinical Manager where your progress will be reviewed, and we will take the time to evaluate your work over the initial 3 months. This is an opportunity to go over again the Placement agreement and answer any questions you may have. At this point, you will confirm if you are able to continue the placement for the next 9 months.

**Training Opportunities:** Additional free training opportunities may be available through partner organisations, these are optional to attend, however, we strongly recommend that you attend the ‘online safeguarding training’ in your first year with the Stress Project.

**Exit Interview:** This interview takes place when you leave your placement, or if you take a sabbatical, and is a chance for you to review and to feedback about your time with the Stress Project.

1. **Volunteer Support System**

*What is supervision and how is it useful?*

Supervision can take place on a one-to-one basis, or in a group led by a facilitator. It is a confidential meeting place where practitioners can bring any difficulties or dilemmas - and receive support and guidance. It is a place where therapists can become more open, stronger and clearer about what they are doing.

Counsellors focus on the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of our clients and in coming to supervision we receive emotional, spiritual and practical back up. In taking our own needs seriously we are more able to relate professionally to our clients. This increases our self-esteem and therefore our effectiveness.

Individual supervision is to be arranged with a supervisor from our team of supervisors. All supervision sessions are online often using the Zoom or Teams.

The cost is £40 per hour. We ask that you have 1.5 hours of individual supervision per month, or 2 hours of monthly group sessions that are multi-disciplinary groups of up to 3 therapists.

For counsellors who already have supervision arrangements in place, you are required to have the right amount of supervision sufficient for your training requirements. In your placement, you must ensure that to have sufficient internal clinical supervision for your client to work.

*Self Esteem*

Many people are inspired to train in a therapy that has helped them. Following successful completion of their training, some therapists have difficulty in identifying as professional practitioners and in gaining the necessary confidence to set up as a self-employed person. The issue is not only “are my skills good enough in themselves?” but also “do I have the right to charge for my services?” Supervision helps practitioners value themselves more highly and understand the need to charge realistic fees.

We also find that as body-energy therapists our self-esteem is affected by the dominance of the medical model in our society. In the orthodox medical approach, we see the suppressive treatment of the symptom rather than seeing it as meaningful - possibly a result of some imbalance in the client's lifestyle, beliefs of attitudes. As complementary practitioners we do not have the infrastructure that the orthodox medical establishment has. A negative consequence of this is that we still do not have the full recognition of mainstream culture. This situation can be isolating, and if we become isolated, we are likely to become needy.

In supervision we look at the medical model and how our consciousness is caught up within it. We respect orthodox medicine and support its use where appropriate. Supervision is also, therefore, a time where controversial issues can be aired and information shared, after which practitioners find they are more confident because they are more fully informed.

*Maintaining Boundaries*

Practitioners find supervision constructive in becoming more assertive about managing time and other boundaries, such as being clear about responsibilities towards our clients and themselves. It is often not until a situation is discussed in supervision that we realise that we are permitting ourselves to overstep these sorts of boundaries. Examples include: the therapist being unclear about the length of the sessions; becoming involved with members of the same family group who do not understand the need to respect confidentiality.

One common cause of boundary difficulties is "the rescuer syndrome". In this syndrome our desire is to make others feel better whether it is appropriate or not. It is important to have some understanding of why this is, or we may fall into the "rescuer syndrome" (rs).

The "rs" occurs when helping becomes a compulsion and the compulsion covers the practitioner's denial of their own needs. For example, a practitioner may stop a client from crying by immediately reaching out to comfort them; the consequence of this is that they distract the client from their own experience and consequently their inner healing process. Another example is when the practitioner has higher goals in terms of good health than their client. For example, a massage practitioner working with an arthritic client may desire to achieve an improvement in joint mobility through the treatment - rather than giving the simple relaxing massage that the client had in mind. The practitioner's expectations may not leave the clients completely free to experience their own unique response to the therapy. In other words "helping" the client in this situation is not actually for the client at all, but is really for the benefit of the practitioner. When the client refuses to be "rescued", the practitioner is likely to feel resentful and let down.

Doing role-play exercises to explore different communication styles is one useful way to expand the choice of responses we can have to these situations. Supervision helps the practitioner become aware of their own unconscious motives in how they are responding to their clients.

Because many of us come to our profession from a perspective of wishing to heal others it’s important to look at what we need to heal. Where recurring issues arise in supervision there will often be a need to explore the individual's personal background in a counselling or psychotherapeutic setting, which is what we recommend. For example, an established practitioner beginning to be involved in massage training to certificate standard found his unsatisfying and damaging experience in the educational system got in the way of course planning and the external accreditation of his own students.

In supervision we are able to spend time on developing appropriate assessment procedures to meet the criteria of the examining body and support the teacher through the challenge this presented. At the same time, we encouraged this practitioner to get counselling to help process his feelings. Although supervision is about personal growth it is not a substitute for therapy.

Other boundary issues including touch, sexuality, relationships, ethics and codes of practice can be dealt with in supervision. We are particularly concerned about the issues of sexual boundaries and practitioners not becoming sexually involved with their clients. The healing relationship carries with it a special trust not to abuse the seen or unseen dependent elements that are inherent in that relationship.

Supervision is a place where we can look at the consequences of acting upon a sexual attraction towards a client. This is a complex and emotionally charged area which we believe needs to be taken seriously. We refer our supervision clients to the work of Dr Peter Rutter in his book "Sex in the Forbidden Zone". This book outlines some of the issues involved.

*Code of conduct*

Being accountable to other practitioners helps us take ourselves more seriously and to maintain our standards of excellence. Most professional practitioners will be aware of the Code of Practice of their professional association or have an informally developed code for themselves. Supervision gives the therapist an opportunity to explore the reality of their code. Discussing ethics and codes of practice in supervision is not only about being accountable to others, it’s also about having the feedback we need to see when an issue may be one of ethics - and then getting the support to work a situation through constructively. We are challenged, yet supported, rather than criticised in supervision so that we can become clear about the skills we have to offer. This is especially necessary when so many of us are multi-talented practitioners and keen to apply holistic approaches to treatment. Also important is how we want to work, whom we want to work with, and where we want to work?

*Case management and onward referrals*

The themes for supervision in this area include: setting contracts with clients; note-taking & record-keeping; thinking about ways to select and go forward with treatment; when does the client need another sort of therapy?; when is it appropriate to discuss a case with the client's GP; what is our referral structure?

Being in supervision encourages us to look after ourselves, and also grows our network and information about other therapists. This expands our options for referring clients to other practitioners and also increases the number of referrals we ourselves receive because people know our work. Receiving regular supervision helps us to be aware of our ongoing personal and professional growth and development which leads to a greater sense of personal power and an appreciation of self-worth which is recycled back into our practices and helps measure the impact of therapy.

*Equipment Provided*

The therapy rooms each containtwo armchairs, two clocks, lamps, and tissues.

Sanitising products for between sessions are provided for hygiene routines and the rooms are cleaned on a daily basis. There is a water cooler on the first floor and there are toilets on each floor.

1. **Profiles of the people who access the service.**

*Paul*

Paul is very anxious. He's been feeling bad for the last two years. He hears voices, which tell him he is evil. He's afraid that the food he eats may be poisonous and that people in the street are talking about him. When he panics he can't breathe, and he's scared that he is going to die.

He has recently been discharged from the hospital and is on medication, which helps him with his anxiety. H

e lives alone and has nobody that visits him.

*Caroline*

Caroline has been depressed for the last seven years. She sees a psychiatrist who gives her tranquillisers and anti-depressants. Caroline doesn't feel that this is doing her any good.

She feels that she cannot work or face any sort of responsibility, she has been involved with a man who has been violent towards her but she has difficulty in ending the relationship.

1. **Placement Application Form**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at the Stress Project.

Please do take the time to complete this application form fully and return by email to the details at the bottom of the form.

**Position Applied for**

POSITION APPLIED FOR:

Job title: **Volunteer Counsellor**

1. **Applicant’s Details**

Surname: First name:

Home address:

Post Code:

Home Telephone: Mobile:

Email address:

Date of birth:

Gender: Female, Male, Transgender, Prefer not to say

1. **Counselling Placement Information**

Which type of Counselling do you wish to practice at the Stress Project?

Please give details of the training and/or qualifications gained in this therapy, including the dates and duration of the training and the address of the training institution.

If you have training or qualifications in other therapies, please give the details.

Are you a member of a professional organisation or governing body for the therapy that you practise? If so, please detail the name, address & telephone number of the organisation and the level of your membership (i.e., full, associate, student)?

Do you have insurance cover for your therapy? Please detail.

Do you hold a valid DBS certificate? Please detail.

Do you receive clinical supervision for the therapy you practice? If so, from whom and how often? Please also provide contact details.

Are you in personal therapy? Please provide details.

Do you practice your therapy, either paid or as a volunteer anywhere else? Please detail.

What do you hope to gain from working at the Stress Project, either professionally or personally?

In what way have you personally experienced a deep therapeutic journey, and what have you learned about yourself through it? We want to know about you and your process and how you might relate your life experiences to your future work as a therapist.

In what way do you work holistically in a therapeutic setting?

What are your strengths and weaknesses as a therapist?

Have you ever been in a relationship with any of the therapists currently, or previously, at the Stress Project?

Have you ever been in a relationship with any of the therapists currently, or previously, at the Stress Project? This includes therapeutic, supervisory, friends, and any other relationship. If yes, can you tell us your thoughts about being in a dual relationship

Do you have any physical or learning needs for access which can support you with?

How many client hours have you delivered to date?

What times are you available for the three-hour slot, Monday to Friday between 9.30 am and 5 pm (and evenings and weekends if qualified)?

What times are you available for monthly individual 1.5 hours or 2 hours of group supervision?

We cannot guarantee that this will be on the same day as a placement slot.

The group and individual times available are:

Friday is, am or pm

Saturday 9 am – 11 am

Does your supervisor at the Stress Project need to be UKCP registered? Y/N

1. **Referees**

Please give details of two referees, one of whom should be from your place of training.

**Referee 1**

NAME:

ADDRESS & TELEPHONE:

Email:

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU:

**Referee 2**

NAME:

ADDRESS & TELEPHONE:

Email:

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU

**I confirm that the information given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Date:

Signed:

Thank you for applying.

Please return to:

**Carol Louvet**

**Clinical Manager**

**The Stress Project**

**2, Shelburne Road**

**N7 6DL**

**TEL: 0207 700 3938**

**Email:** [stressproject@hng.org.uk](mailto:stressproject@hng.org.uk)

Holloway Neighbourhood Group is GDPR compliant. Our full privacy statement can be found at

www.stressproject.org.uk/privacy