

## **Counselling Sessions at *Changing Faces* for Children under 11 years old**

### **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS**

- **What happens in a session with my child?**

In a session younger children may choose to use toys (e.g. puppets, paint, sand, miniature plastic animals etc.) to express how they feel or what they think, while older children may talk about their feelings and thoughts.

These sessions are not like being in a school or medical environment so we would like to encourage children to feel free to express their feelings in an uncensored way. We find that children get the most out of the sessions when they show in their play and/or talk about whatever they feel ready to share.

Your child will be able to explore the different things that they can do and say to deal with other people's comments, questions, and/or staring more easily. Overall, these sessions will enable them to build their confidence and self-esteem.

Sometimes paints and sand can be messy, so we suggest your child wears clothes you won't mind getting soiled in order to give them the opportunity to express themselves freely.

- **Who could I talk to?**

If your child is **under 11 years old** and is willing to engage in face to face sessions, the child will be seen by the *Child Specialist* or the *Child and Young People's Specialist* in the children and young people's room. If you would like to talk to someone about your concerns, we will be able to arrange a face to face and/or telephone appointment with a different member of the team.

- **Where will the sessions take place?**

The sessions take place face-to-face in the *Changing Faces* office. All the sessions are private and take place in a counselling room.

- **Do I need to stay on the premises when my child is in the counseling room?**

Yes. You can wait in our comfortable reception area. Coffee and tea is provided.

- **Is there a charge for the sessions?**

All counselling sessions are free of charge. All *Changing Faces'* services are offered free of charge although we welcome and are dependent on donations.

- **What shall I say when my child comes out of the session?**

Your child will spend a special and private time in the children and young people's room. These sessions are confidential between the child and the relevant specialist. Therefore, when your child and the specialist come out of the counselling room it is not helpful to ask questions such

as: “Did you have fun?”, “What did you do?”, “Have you told the lady about \_\_\_\_\_ ?”, “How did things go?” or “Have you been sensible?”. While it is natural for you to feel you would like to ask all these questions as your child’s wellbeing is of paramount importance to you, it is helpful to just say: “Hi. We can go home now” and allow your child to decide for themselves if and what to share with you.

- **Is there anything else that I can do to help?**

Occasionally children may make a painting or drawing and decide to take it home with them. You may wish to comment on what you see on the painting e.g. “You used yellow and blue”, “I see a lot of colours on your painting”. This way you will show interest in your child’s drawing and invite them to talk about it if they want to. If your child does not want to comment on it just say “OK” and move the conversation on (e.g. “Are you hungry?”).

- **What do I do now?**

If you would like to arrange a counselling session or if you would like some more information you can email us at: [info@changingfaces.org.uk](mailto:info@changingfaces.org.uk) or call 0845 4500 275 and ask to speak to someone in the Children and Young People’s Service.