



# Older Adult Primary Care Psychological Therapies

## Summer 2019 Newsletter

**Older Adult Primary Care Psychological Therapies in Salford** is a team of Psychologists, Counsellors, Occupational Therapist and Mental Health Practitioner who work with older adults experiencing moderate levels of age related mental health difficulties in primary care (such as depression, anxiety, carer stress, bereavement, loss adjustment and adapting to changes in physical health and mild changes in cognitive functioning).

Older Adult Primary Care Psychological Therapies  
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Pictured (left to right): Jonathan Kilcourse, Sharron Mitchell, Ruth Fox, Heather Kirby, Aliya Zamir, Dorinda Farrington, Rachael Smith & Rosie Cawley.

### Referrals & Waiting List

The average current waiting time for an assessment appointment is around **12 weeks**. However this is subject to change. We thank you for continuing to support us in delivering a much needed service to this client group.

Please continue to make referrals on our usual referral form. If you require any advice or more information about our service and appropriate referrals, please contact us on 0161 358 1477.

The team has experienced some changes over the last year. We warmly welcome Rachael Smith (Counsellor) and Rosie Cawley (Clinical Psychologist) to the team this year.

### The Team

**Dr Ruth Fox**

*Team Leader/Principal Clinical Psychologist*

**Heather Kirby**

*Senior Occupational Therapist*

**Dorinda Farrington**

*Registered Mental Health Nurse Therapist*

**Sharron Mitchell**

*Senior Counsellor*

**Jonathan Kilcourse**

*Counsellor*

**Rachael Smith**

*Counsellor*

**Dr Rosie Cawley**

*Clinical Psychologist*

**Aliya Zamir**

*Assistant Psychologist*



## Caring for someone with Dementia can be emotionally challenging

Carers provide unpaid care by looking after an ill, older or disabled family member, friend or partner (Carers UK, 2015). There are approximately **700,000 carers** of people with dementia in the UK. 40% of these carers look after that person 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (Dementia Carers, 2019). Carers often neglect their own health due to caring for someone else. Stress, anxiety, frustration, depression and poor physical health are common difficulties associated with the caring role (Department of Health, 2010). Around 40% of family carers of people with dementia have been diagnosed with clinical depression or anxiety; others have substantial psychological difficulties (Cooper, Balamurali & Livingston, 2007) and many experience **emotional exhaustion** within their roles (Truzzi et al., 2012).

Carers may not recognise when they need help and may struggle to give themselves permission to take a break or seek respite (Neville et al., 2015). These aspects can be a barrier and prevent carers from seeking help. Developing an **awareness** of carer stress and learning new **strategies to cope** with emotional difficulties can help to improve carers' quality of life (Elvish et al., 2013). Furthermore, opportunities to meet other carers and share experiences can be helpful in improving carer well-being (Dam et al., 2016).

Our service has been running the 'Coping Carers Group' for 5 years. The group is aimed at carers of people with dementia, who would like to learn more about coping with the emotional difficulties associated with the caring role (such as stress, anxiety and depression). The group is an 8-week programme based on a Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy approach. It offers a **safe and supportive** environment and provides carers with coping strategies to help improve their quality of life. The group also allows opportunity to **meet other carers** and **share experiences**.

Carers who have attended the group in the past have reported positive experiences of attending the group. Common **themes** from the feedback received by group members include:

**Sharing experiences**

**Learning new ways of coping**

**Increased understanding of difficulties**

**Safe space to express emotions**

“The group has been absolutely superb. I have learnt so much and it has empowered me” - carer

“Someone to talk to, to help. Somewhere I can discuss my worries” - carer

Our clinical outcome measures also indicate reduced levels of anxiety and depression among carers after attendance at the group.

### How to refer to the Coping Carers Group

The Coping Carers Group is due to start on 9th July 2019 and we aim to run 3 groups a year. A future group is likely to commence in winter 2019. If you feel someone may benefit from the group or to make a referral to a different part of our service, please use our usual referral form.

Following referral to the service, carers will be offered an assessment appointment with one of our team members. If the group is not suitable to the carer needs, our team will also offer 1:1 input to carers of people with Dementia, if this is more suitable. We will also signpost carers to the most appropriate services should our service not be the best fit for them.