



Willows Counselling Service.

This document sets out suggestions to improve communications and establish a fundraising/communications toolkit, addressing your key audiences with your 'offer'.

Key audiences:

- mental health issues (and their supporters)
- wishing to train / continue CPD
- wanting to give back to community (donors, volunteers)
- grantmakers
- professionals in the field / partner organisations

Pages 1-2: 'brand' elements

Pages 2-4: suggestions for new visuals

Page 5: key points of Willows offer, validation and personality

Pages 5-11: collection of texts provided by you, and some suggestions, annotated with comment and suggestion of 'where' content can be ordered. (underlined texts flag terms that might need explanation for the layperson).

Pages 11-12: ideas for approaches to counselling donations

Page 12: toolkit elements

This document, in addition to information gained from the questionnaires, can inform specific communications such as leaflets, the website etc.. I have not included a full critique of the existing communication as these were discussed at our meeting.

Logo

- improve by making it look more robust (less wispy)
- Make sure a mono-colour version is as successful as colour (there will be some applications where full-colour isn't appropriate and/or more costly)
- 2 layouts – one landscape, enables a logo to look recognisable/strong on different applications by better fitting available space
- Consider inclusion of roots as resilience metaphor
- Make the word 'Willows' dominate, and 'counselling' or 'counselling services' secondary
- consider a logo with figures sitting under the tree – a place of safety/calm (see strapline/quotes)

A sketchy, 'imperfect' style logo (with more robust lines) could be a direction for the new logo (TBD)



Colour

- green is great for willow trees and calm – test slightly more earthy/muted greens
- Decide a small palette such as 2 greens (muted and a brighter green, a strong contrast such as orange + 2-3 others for flexibility)

Text

- Generous leading (line spacing) makes texts easier to read, less crowded
- Choose fonts for headings, body text and stand-out text and quotations etc

Tone of voice

- knowledgeable, kindly, expert and experience, guiding, friendly
- Frame MH in terms of experience to show empathy (e.g. we offer support if you are feeling disconnected rather than if you have dissociation disorder). People may seek support with a named disorder / diagnosis or they may seek support because they are 'not feeling right' or 'not able to function'.

You versus us

- As far as possible, keep the service-users as the focus. Talk about you / your more than we / us.

- Also for fundraising: people want to support people who are in need via Willows, not the organization per se

Transparency

- Anticipate the questions the audiences might want answered. Donors want confidence in the organizations.
- List your trustees and key staff with a (very) short biography or statement e.g. "Working in x before retirement, [name] joined the board of trustees in [year]. "I'm proud to be involved with a service so important to the mental health of the local community"

Strapline / quotes

- A single line that define what you do, your aims, what you provide or who you are to be used with logo
- *People start to heal the moment they are heard / a place of calm*
- Consider using quotes to emphasise your ethos and break up text by sending little positive messages. As you already post quotes on Facebook, this would be good continuity between the 2 platforms (but don't be too mainstream/cheesy!). Some found examples:
- *Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith – Steve Jobs*
- *Life is a lively process of becoming – Douglas MacArthur*
- *Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking – Marcus Aurelius*
- *Our life is what our thoughts make it – Marcus Aurelius*

Define terms (and make internal decisions)

- When counselling terms are used, explain them (esp. for counselling service users).
- **Support:**
Be careful of over use: support for the service users, support for students, support (financial and volunteers) for Willows
- synonyms for talking about financial support:
 - our service is underpinned / sustained / assisted / aided by donations
 - our service benefits from / relies on / is grateful to
- synonyms for talking about well-being support
 - we will encourage you / help you to build resilience / give you techniques / discuss approaches
-

- Talk about the end results (aims)
 - benefit you and those around you / sustain a sense of well-being / strengthen your coping mechanisms / restore balance

- **Referral** (when you make a referral)

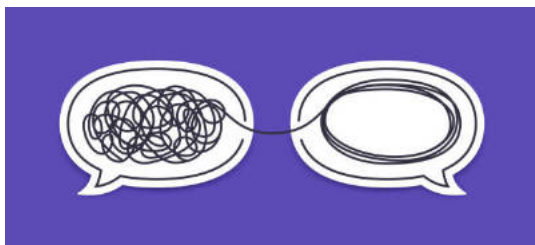
- Dictionary definition: an act of referring someone or something for consultation, review, or further action.
- Suggest self-referral is clearer.

- **Agency vs Service**

I think service is kinder (giving). I think of agents as entities that don't actually provide, but connect the service-user to someone who does

Images

- Avoid images of furniture! Images should reinforce / illustrate your message to the audience.
- In sensitive settings, where anonymity is important, illustrations are effective (and cost efficient). Vector illustrations cost on average around £20 each online, they can be edited to better reflect Willows, show diversity and fit the proportions of various applications (e.g. website, leaflets, presentations etc). Illustrations tend to give the audience a feeling or impression of what they'll experience whereas a photo shows exactly what is involved.



I think this is a great visual metaphor for mental health, perhaps for use on home page

Images' tone-of-voice

Open, friendly. Not too cute. Caring. Light, hopeful, chirpy but not comical or glib.

Overall look

Mainly white backgrounds for a feeling of space (uncluttered), calm, simplicity and openness – also easier for adding partners' logo, easy legibility and consistent print outcomes.



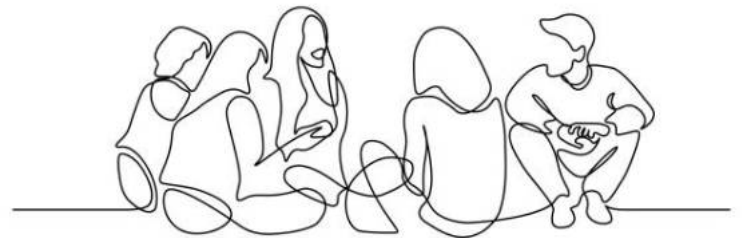
examples of styles and poses





These single-line illustrations echo the speech bubble visual metaphor (colour could be added)

examples of styles and poses



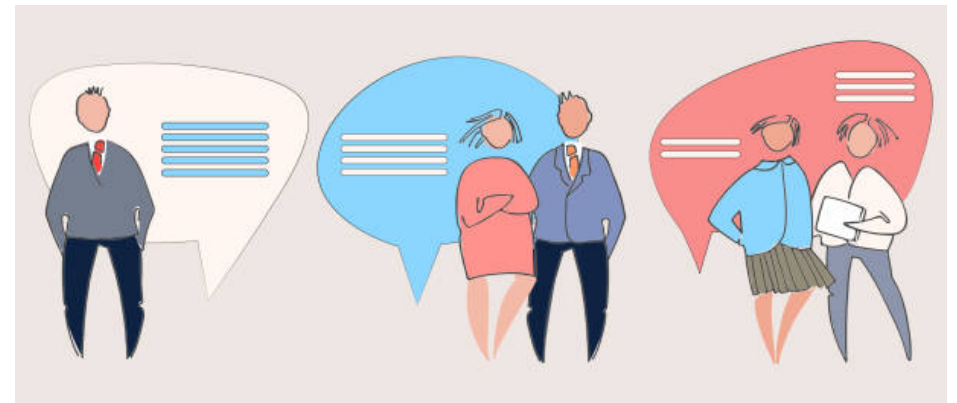
example showing how diversity can be illustrated



Above: I think these have a hopeful quality



Above: I like the realism of the poses and the sketchy style has an 'unpolished' informality



Willows Counselling Service

Your 'offer':

- affordable/ subsidised counselling for as long as it's needed
- unique 12 week stabilisation option
- counselling training and professional developments in a 'real world' environment
- service informed by research (Willows self-evaluates / service-user focussed
- established, well-connected, accredited and respected service
- trauma specialism
- integration of / respect to spirituality as part of well-being/resilience
- counselling solutions tailored to the individual

Your 'validity'

- history and ethos
- working with other organisations, membership and accreditation
- testimonials
- research – your continued professional developments (dedication)
- funders and supporters
- key staff and trustees
- set-up (volunteer counsellors – dedication)
- statistics (how many people your serve, your impact)
- sharing your expertise in training / conferences

Your 'unique personality'

- openness – explanation of other options
- friendliness – we offer different options and will signpost you to other services
- empathy and understanding – highlighting the feelings people find hard to cope with
- caring, empathy (talking directly to the audience/issue – how are you feeling? it can be difficult..., this is how we can help...)
- altruism – the service user is in control

Embedded in our community Willows engages in VAS and Involve Swindon events and instigated an Inter-agency group of sharing learning, support and ways to make better sign posting / referral experience for clients between agencies. Regular signposting between Willows and other counselling agencies including Ontrak, Cruse, Mind Self Harmony, Lift Psychology and IPSUM.

Willows Christian ethos

Willows was founded by a group of GPs and churches who recognised that at times people needed more than only physical or pastoral support. Willows Counselling and Training is the outworking of this Christian values and recognises the importance of spirituality for many people.

Willows approaches your well-being with an integrated approach. Counselling practitioners are skilled in a range of therapies and approaches, and additionally recognise that spirituality is important tool for many people to find a way forward.

Before mental health was seriously talked about, when there was little provision on the NHS, Willows was established by a group of Swindon GPs and members of the clergy to offer specific, targeted pastoral care for people in Swindon. The doctors recognised that some patients, presenting with physical ailments needed a holistic approach to becoming well, and that mental and emotional problems hampered their healing. The members of the church had long been providing pastoral care (looking after the emotional and physical needs of their congregations as well as their spiritual needs). From 198x to 199x Willows operated as a training agency, training people to work in GP surgeries and churches to offer pastoral care. Since 1995 Willows

About / background

also **Counselling overview** (edited) how you signpost certain disorders to other services

Willows Counselling Service.

Transpose 'importance of spirituality' with 'Christian values' and add relevant values (e.g. compassion...)

about/background

Counselling overview

about/background

expanded version of above

established as a counselling services, retaining some counselling students it trained to support people with issue of mental health and well-being.

Willows has been embedded in the local community for over 30 years, understanding the issues of people in the area. We still retain strong supportive links to Swindon churches, and refer people to NHS services when we think they better serve your unique needs.

Funders include

Regular

- *Wiltshire Community Foundation (subsidised counselling and training hardship fund) as we subsidise our courses training counsellors*
- *District Advance Fund (Methodist) core costs of half one staff salary (over 3 years)*
- *Haydon Wick Parish Council subsidised counselling*

Current / one off / ad hoc

- *Zurich -subsidised counselling*
- *Edward Gostling Foundation -subsidised counselling*
- *SMB Charitable Trust - subsidised counselling*
- *Card Factory Foundation- subsidised counselling*
- *Albert Hunt Trust- covid support*
- *Business Covid Fund*

Professional Membership Bodies

Professional standards and ethical working are adhered to as evidenced by organisational membership of National Counselling Society and Association of Christian Counsellors. These

Professional Bodies hold regulated registers within the government.

Who we work with

Peer organisations including Ontrak, Medaille Trust, Focus Counselling Network Counselling, Teens in Crisis, St John Parks Women's Group and Bristol Diocese have benefited from tailored training and facilitated groups.

Nationwide approached us for some mental health awareness training which was very successfully received.

about/background

Main funders: add sentence under logos outlining their support.

Get logo for DAF

Include logos under subtitle. Dated title e.g. support for 2020 – 2021 (shows potential donors that this funding is not on-going_

[list of trustees and key staff]

statistics and infographics

Counsellors give their time voluntarily invite people to also make a contribution 220 people benefit each year because of community support

about/background and/or training

Peer?

Ontrak? Can only find a recruitment agency online

Re-frame: work in the community to give people better understanding of their own mental health and how to cope

Nationwide Building Society: (emphasis what you delivered rather than their approach to you)

about/background

about/background or impact

Awarding Bodies for our training courses.

Open College Network (OCN) is a regulated awarding body under Ofqual and accredits our Level 2 and 3 counselling training courses.

Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB) accredits our qualifying Level 4 Diploma in Counselling and our post qualifying L5 Diploma in Trauma Counselling.

An **Annual Training Conference** welcomes delegates from across the UK and Ireland as well as greater Swindon, provides world class training and an opportunity to share resources and build support networks.

A programme of high standard and financially accessible CPD resource counsellors, youth workers, pastoral workers and counselling students is another opportunity for resourcing and connection.

Why train with Willows?

As a student in Willows on all our courses you will benefit from our 30 years of counselling and training experiences. You will experience the unique atmosphere of training within a counselling agency rather than a college or stand-alone training institution.

You will be part of training that is given outstanding reports from our awarding bodies (CPCAB and OCN) each year and excellent feedback from students.

You will not only be taught the rudiments of counselling required to pass each course, you will benefit from our experience of the types of issues clients are currently bringing to counselling and we teach beyond the curriculum so that you are prepared and equipped to counsel your clients.

use logos
training

Each year Willows holds... (it's your action/initiative)

training

about us

offer overview (subsidised CPD)

Give info rather than ask questions

training/education

[edit/reframe]

Willows students uniquely train... benefit from. 30 years etc

stats and testimonials

use logos

'In addition to', more positive than 'not only'

You will also gain from our experience as a counselling agency who take on placement counsellors and have your training tailored to help you get the most out of your placement whether it is with Willows or elsewhere.

As a Willows student you will be given access to discounted and free CPD.

(Stats to add) as a Willows student you will join in the long list of alumni who have gone on to many and varied counselling roles including

- Setting up in private practice
- Working or volunteering variety of voluntary and statutory agencies
- Working in multi-disciplinary teams
- Training counsellors of the future
- Gaining further post Diploma qualifications and developing expertise specific areas including supervisions, addiction, trauma, children and young people etc.

great list of practical applications of training

The mental health landscape is varied and constantly changing depending on political will and commissioning targets. There are a number of different ways to be involved in mental health care of which counselling is only one.

It is important to consider the different options and which is right for you. Psychology and Psychiatric Support (e.g. CPN) are more medically minded. Support workers within social and advocacy services are practical and by nature outcome driven. Helplines such as Samaritans and ChildLine provide listening only services. Counselling is about developing a therapeutic relationship which supports the client.

Why come to Willows for counselling?

When you are considering counselling it is important that you find somewhere that feels safe and a good fit for you. There are five main avenues to consider. Counselling through the NHS, going to a private counsellor, using self-help, using a service dedicated to a specific issue such as bereavement, addiction, relationships etc. If your referral fits any of these options we will let you know how to access them although you are of course welcome to continue with Willows.

When you come along to Willows for counselling you will be able to park in our free carpark or get off the bus just across the road in Old Town. You will be welcomed warmly and offered a hot drink. You will be meeting with your counsellor for an hour on a weekly basis usually at the same time. You will not be rushed into telling your story and your counsellor will work to support you to discover what it is that you want to get out of counselling and help you get there in a way that is unique for you. You won't be expected to lie on a couch nor will you be told what you must do. You and your counsellor will together consider how long you stay in counselling and you

[edit] the options available to you

give external focus. Willows counselling may not be the right path for you, we will listen to your needs and signpost you if more appropriate help is available e.g. support workers... (here you can list the disorders)

[edit]

'you will' sounds a bit prescriptive

negative! Counselling is like a chat in a friend's living room - comfy chairs...

always will have the opportunity to end at any time or ask for more sessions.

The cost of counselling is a big factor for many people and we understand this. When you contact Willows and make a referral you will be asked if you can make a donation towards the cost of counselling. You will not be under any pressure to donate a certain amount.

Unlike other counselling agencies you will not simply be allocated to the next available counsellor. Your specific needs will be considered by our Counselling Coordinator and you will be matched with the counsellor with the best experience to work with you.

As a counselling agency for Swindon for 30 years you will have the benefit of our learning and knowledge. As well as listening to you we will provide you with information and resources to help you. You know yourself better than anyone else and we will share our knowledge with you so that together we can find what helps you best.

The **NHS** provides counselling at no cost which can be an important factor for many people. However many clients who come to Willows tell us that NHS appointments are rarely offered on a weekly basis and can be ad hoc and up to 6 weeks between sessions. These sessions will be primarily focused on changing thinking and behaviour which is helpful for certain types of difficulties such as phobias, work related stress etc. This type of counselling is not particularly helpful for long term, deeper difficulties such as bereavement, depression, deep anxiety, difficulties in relating to people and abuse. Generally the number of counselling sessions are limited to 6 - 12.

cost in separate section (see ideas later in document)

Tailored to you

counselling landing page

4 buttons with expandable information, the fourth being Willows offer

or

(TBD) 5 options, the 5th being the stabilisation programme

Consider re-naming the programme slightly (Stabilise / resilience/better balance)

Private Counselling

Generally private counsellors do not have a very long waiting list and offer flexibility in appointments and is a very helpful option for people who are able to afford the cost of service. The fees are generally around £50 to cover all the required costs that private counsellors incur.

Self Help

Many people find **self-help** very beneficial as it provides a sense of order and control. There are various websites, apps and books which can be accessed at a time that suits. The difficulty with only using self help is there is no objective supportive person walking you through and can be hard to sustain.

Research

You will benefit from what Willows learned from research we completed in conjunction with Bath University a few years ago whether you come for counselling or attend our training.

The reason we started this research was that a significant number of the people who come to Willows for counselling need long term counselling (6 months or more) While we are very happy to provide counselling as long as it is needed this meant that many of our counsellors were working with their clients longer term and the waiting list for new clients was growing longer.

We considered the reasons our clients needed long term counselling and while everyone is unique there were common themes of having early life trauma, difficult relationships and having minimal support elsewhere. We hypothesised that if we offered clients an opportunity to meet with a counsellor weekly for up to 12 weeks they could learn tools and strategies to help them help themselves manage life better. Listening to client and based on our 30 years of

there could be a pros/cons table e.g. for self help, pros: readily available, online; cons: no objective support, easy to let slide and not feel progress

[edit] brief mention on the counselling page and hyperlink to find out more - this info on **Willows background/overview**, it gives a great example of your approach and dedication

experience we developed a programmes that could be tailored to each person individually and taught this to our counsellors. We call this Stabilisation.

Thanks to all our counsellors and clients who took part we discovered that

- Some people find up to 12 weeks of one to one support to learn new ways to manage life better was all that they needed
- Some people benefitted immensely from this tailored programme and then went on to have counselling. They seemed not to need as many sessions of counselling as they were already more able to manage their difficulties.
- Some people did not find the tailored programme helpful and wanted to go straight into counselling - they often needed more counselling sessions, however they felt this e best option for them.

Based on further feedback from counsellors and clients we have developed this Stabilisation even further and have created some useful resources.

Grounding cushions - you will find help when feeling anxious, upset, stressed and depressed. They are heavy and can be used on your lap, across your chest or shoulders or on your feet. They help to regulate you.

Packs of cards which fit in your bag - you will find these useful to help you work out what helps you deal with your difficult symptoms such as panic, anger, anxiety, feeling a bit spacey etc. On one side these cards have an image which relates to a particular difficulty and on the opposite side they give general ways to cope. You and your counsellor will develop extra coping strategies that are specific to you.

[edit]

counselling offer

intro about counselling (within Willows) and why it might not be for you / better to find a

offer this as an option to potential counselling service users e.g. Research informed the development of the Willows tailored stabilisation programme - 12 weeks of one to one support to learn new ways...

Introduce cushions (link to shop) with shop introduction validated by research findings

shop

training

counselling/stabilisation offer

Why have counselling?

You are unique and everyone is different. You might have been considering counselling for a while or someone might have suggested you give counselling a try. There are some similarities though. Perhaps you have been feeling under pressure and more stressed than usual, you might be forgetting things, having difficulty sleeping perhaps having nightmares. You may be struggling to eat or eating / drinking more than usual, wanting to catch up with people but pulling out at the last minute, Perhaps you are feeling weepy, angry, low or even not wanting to keep going. You might be feeling no one listens to you and you want to be more assertive. You might have a really difficult situation that you can't see a way through or feel stuck. You might be finding it hard to relax or to concentrate.

Mental health is something we have to talk about.
(Let's talk)

Healing begins the moments that we are heard.
How do you feel today?

Life can be overwhelming, and it doesn't get easier no matter what you try. We're here to see you through your issues (new perspectives)

When life is overwhelming we support people through it.

And we are supported by donations from our community

We talk in confidence about how you feel. We listen to hear what you say and feel, and with you find a way to quieten troubling thoughts and reactions
Willows offers you a listening ear, support and guidance

(Edit)

home/ counselling offer

great intro: You are unique, listing feelings (empathy), end with your offer

headings for home page / leaflets

what you do as a solution to the above feelings

about us /donations

Not coping, overwhelmed, overworked, under appreciated, unfairly judged, angry, defensive, confused, anxious, sleepless, irritable, unreachable expectations, grief-stricken, hopeless, purposeless or fearful.

alternative feelings

ideas for approaches to contributions to counselling costs and reciprocation

Give and take

Belonging and contributing within a community is important to good mental health. Willows is a charity that encourages reciprocation - we offer you the support you need, for as long as you need it, to overcome issues that trouble you, and ask that in return you make a small contribution to our charity so we can continue supporting other people.

we will discuss this with you (what you're comfortable with)

- ask for something back from your clients. (reciprocation, purpose)
- At a last session (or other time) ask them to answer a few questions about their experience (more than a service assessment e.g. was counselling different to their expectations? how would they explain Willows counselling to a friend?)
- Ask them to take a few leaflets to their workplace, or display a poster, or share a Facebook post.
- Ask them to remember you to people they know (give them some business cards, or stickers or a pin badge)
- Ask them to share what they've learned / knowledge of you with others
- Frame donations as a comparison to other 'feel good' activities e.g. one session = 4 pints of beer, or a slice of cake and a coffee, Sunday lunch, match ticket, a weekend break, a meal out, a new pair of shoes, 2 new hardback books
- We will discuss how much you can contribute and come to an agreement...

Many people want to give back to services that have helped them. Also sense of belonging/ involvement for donors

- add financial agreement statement into your agreement with clients (with disclaimer that if your circumstances change we can amend)
- (add to your registration form a question about job status e.g. part-time, self-employed, student to gauge ability to pay)
- Your contributions mean we can give you the support you need for as long as you want as well as enabling Willows to offer similar support to others in your situation
- Donation box at the exit, with a polite notice

Toolkit:

- website
- presentation: about the organisation; basics of mental health support
- general leaflet; offer support leaflet; offer training
- posters
- forms, contracts etc: put details on everything, and call to action
- email footer
- office and counseling space (display posters)
- press, media PR (standard overview sentence for press releases)
- social media
- infographics
- images