



# Stepping Stones

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Group Report  
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**One to One Project  
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## Stepping Stones



### Group Report

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#### Group Overview

'Stepping Stones' is a newly developed group, designed to encourage and assist young people to make positive steps towards increasing their self esteem. It is offered both to males and females between the ages of sixteen to eighteen, where we perceive the need for further interactive support to be available at a crucial transitional time for many young people. The group's primary aim is to increase confidence and self esteem, through encouraging articulation of thoughts and feelings, and to increase motivation and aspirations. Within the acceptance of the group environment, it hopes to facilitate an acceptance of self, encouraging further self exploration and increased self esteem. The group's two facilitators offer a variety of creative and interactive exercises to ensure inclusion of all members and to stimulate a safe and supportive environment.

This group is designed to run for six weeks, meeting for two hours each week, with a general topic area to explore each session. These build upon a basic understanding of self esteem in week one, covering the following themes;

- *What is Self Esteem?*
- *Who Am I?*
- *Self Expression.*
- *Self Acceptance.*
- *Self and Others.*
- *Keeping It All Going!*

The final session concentrates on an exploration of how we might maintain healthy self esteem, using the self esteem 'tools' for future benefit. We also aim to offer handouts and worksheets over the six weeks for group members to accumulate a self esteem guidance pack for their future reference.

#### Referral

Referral opportunities for the pilot group were offered to GP Surgeries, Health Visitors, Community Mental Health Teams, Wellfamily, Homestart, Community Alcohol and Drug Services, The Fermoy, The Vancouver Centre, Mr. Bees, Social Services and Signpost Children's Centre. The main source of referral was from Community Mental Health Workers at North House. In total, four were received, with an additional referral for counselling, who opted to join the group. Four of these referrals were male and one female. Attendance to the initial

assessment interview was unpredictable and often several appointments had to be offered before clients attended. Problems identified from feedback at this stage included difficulty arranging travel, forgotten appointments and anxieties around a one-to-one assessment situation. Attempts to address these initial difficulties were made, with text and email reminders of appointments, travel timetables being made available and one initial assessment being carried out in the client's home, to acknowledge her difficulties and to offer early support to encourage her to attend.

### **Outcome**

Attendance to the pilot group was poor, with only one person arriving for the first session. Telephone contact was made by another client, who was experiencing anxiety and panic attacks before leaving the house. Despite wanting to attend, this client found the thought of a group situation overwhelming, having been used to one-to-one sessions from other services, such as his psychiatrist, psychologist and social worker. Another client experienced difficulties in travelling to the group and found the anxiety of a bus journey too difficult to overcome on the day. Text and email reminders were sent out for the following week but no further clients attended. After much consideration, it was felt unbeneficial to attempt to run the 'group'.

Feedback from the one attendee suggested travelling was problematic and he also had some anxiety around groups, particularly with people of a similar age. It was felt that this client would benefit from one-to-one support sessions, and was offered one hour per week over the five remaining weeks to work on his self esteem with one of the group facilitators. This was contracted and encouraged by his referrer, who felt it would compliment their ongoing work together. Two of the clients who experienced anxiety around attending the group have since been offered further support, with one due to receive one to one counselling and another opting for our befriending service, to take place in the home.

### **Problems Identified**

Reflecting upon the feedback received from this pilot group, it seems there are a number of potential difficulties to overcome before the group can run. In summary these are;

1. *The sources of referral.* Though a large number of fliers and referral forms were distributed around West Norfolk, there remains a need to raise further awareness of the group.
2. *The target client group.* Difficulties were experienced in reaching the target client group. Sixteen to Eighteen year olds with low self esteem tend to be lost from mainstream services and therefore very difficult to reach. Further research is needed into the best ways to make contact with these young people, or ways in which they may be able to contact us themselves and take ownership of their personal journeys.

3. *Prior experiences of the target client group.* Feedback suggested that clients were used to one-to-one support since the age of 16 and hence found group support much more anxiety provoking.
4. *Travelling to the group.* A common difficulty was the experience of travelling to the group, suggesting a necessity to take the group to a venue where young people may already feel comfortable or engaged in other services.

### **Future Ideas**

As discussed alongside the problems identified from this pilot group, there are several changes that need to be made in order that it is of maximum benefit and used to its full potential in the future. Ideas being considered include;

- Facilitating the group in the community, thus taking it as a package to the areas or venues that already have a community of young people who might benefit.
- Working in partnership with services in which young people are already engaged.
- Multi-team support to address travelling issues, for example if support worker could assist with travel.

## **Summary of one to one sessions offered in place of group**

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The original focus of “Stepping Stones” was to encourage the development of self confidence and therefore the facilitators felt it was important to recognize the courage it had taken our one attendee to simply turn up to the group. With this in mind, the young person was offered one to one support for the remaining weeks that the group had originally been scheduled. This work had no formal agenda, but was a welcome support for the attendee.

Initial feedback from this young person suggested the venue site was a little daunting to locate and access. This was a concern echoed by other young people who felt unable to attend on this occasion. Throughout the one to one sessions, the possibility of the attendee’s key worker supporting with travel arrangements was explored and adopted. This was later expressed to be helpful. Had such support been available to other potential group members, the initial step of travelling to the venue may have felt less daunting.

During the one to one sessions, the young person was informally encouraged to set his own agenda and invited to have an active role in deciding how to use the time and space. It was explained and agreed that the interaction was not counselling, but an opportunity to share and express thoughts and feelings about whatever was around for him each week. To echo the group ownership planned for Stepping Stones, the topics reflected the general themes of the group, including *problem solving, behavioral experience, maintaining and building rapport and understanding ourselves in relation to others*. The empathic interaction was about offering the experience of another individual, who was willing to be alongside the young person, to hear what it is like for him in his everyday world. The One to One support each week provided a secure place to talk, to be acknowledged and to offer reassurance, modeling healthy and appropriate communication. It was felt that this may have offered some of the experiential learning that might have been gained through Stepping Stones, had the group proceeded. Sadly we did not meet on the final one to one meeting, however a farewell card was sent, with an invitation to seek further support should it be looked-for. This could be accessed via the key worker.

*As a result of this pilot, we are making plans to run further groups.  
Please feel free to contact us for any other information. We would welcome any further suggestions you may have.*

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