



THE HARBOUR

Someone to talk to when you need it most



IMPACT REPORT 2023 / 2024

www.the-harbour.org.uk

info@the-harbour.org.uk

0117 925 9348



A YEAR OF CONTINUED DEMAND



The Harbour is a small charity with a huge vision. Our mission is to help people live well with grief when facing their own death or the death of a loved one, or when they have been bereaved. We do this by providing in-depth emotional support to individuals, couples and groups. We strive to be accessible and inclusive, helping everyone who needs it across Bristol and the surrounding areas.

The last year has been an extremely busy period for The Harbour, as we continued to deal with an on-going heightened demand for our services, began extending our reach to people in areas of multiple deprivation, and dealt with a difficult and competitive fundraising climate. We could not have navigated through this period safely and successfully without the support of our many funders.

Recognising the need to ensure our financial sustainability and resilience, in 2022 we rolled-out a paid-for-service. Clients who can afford to pay are asked to do so, and this increased to 10% of clients last year. However, financial circumstances will never be a barrier to accessing our vital service, and we continue to offer the same help to all. Provision of free and subsidised sessions continues to be a priority, against a backdrop of increased financial difficulty for many,

We work hard to make our services accessible and we had a good reach to diverse communities: 10% clients were from minority ethnic communities; 15% identified as LGBTQ+; and 17% had a disability.



OUR IMPACT

The Harbour received self-referrals from clients, as well as referrals from GPs, other health providers and charities. We offered our clients individual, couples and group counselling, providing an in-depth service that is unique in our city. We work psychodynamically, helping our clients deal with their grief. We know our work makes a difference to the community, creating a ripple effect that goes far beyond our immediate work with the client.

If grief goes unprocessed, it shows up in mental and physical ill-health, loneliness and poverty, with knock on effects in employment and long-term economic outcomes (Bereavement Commission, 2021).

Our work prevents complex and severe health problems, reduces health inequalities, and creates less demand on the NHS/statutory services. It reduces anxiety and depression, making people better equipped to cope and thrive in their lives e.g. being better parents, being able to get back to work; and more able to contribute positively to their communities.

In 2023/24 we supported 184 clients with 1,251 counselling sessions and assessments. 90% of these services were provided heavily subsidised or free of charge, as only 28% of our clients are in full-time employment. Our data shows we reduced levels of anxiety and depression for 81% of our clients, improving their emotional well-being and helping them to be able to cope with their problems.

We assess the journey our clients take through standard assessment tools and capture qualitative feedback that gives meaning to the statistics we gather. We use standard measures of anxiety (GAD7) and depression (PHQ9) at the beginning, middle and end of counselling. These include questions about sleeping and eating issues, concentration, feeling depressed or bad about yourself, not being able to stop worrying, feeling anxious, having suicidal thoughts.

“ I feel that I may have just got what is left of my life back. Many, many thanks. My therapist was brilliant, really helped me work through stuff.

”

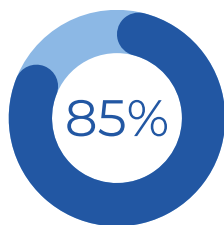


OUR IMPACT

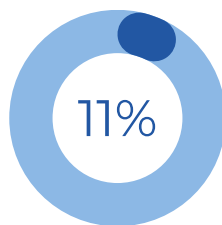
GAD 7 anxiety	Score	PHQ9 depression	Score
		None	0 - 4
Mild	0 - 5	Mild	5 - 9
Moderate	6 - 10	Moderate	10 - 14
Moderately severe	10 - 14	Moderately severe	15 - 19
Severe	15 - 21	Severe	20 - 27

During the year the average PHQ and GAD scores for clients reduced from 13 to 7 and 11 to 6 respectively. This equates to a shift from moderate to mild depression; and from moderately severe to moderate anxiety.

In qualitative feedback 92% of clients felt they were 'much better' or 'a little better' at dealing with their problems after their counselling.

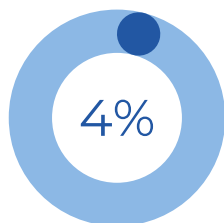


Before

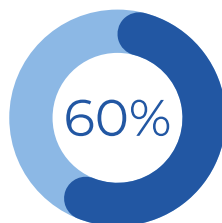


After

85% rated their emotional well-being 'very poor' or 'poor' before counselling, compared to 11% after counselling



Before



After

only 4% rated their emotional well-being 'good' before counselling, compared to 60% who rated their emotional well-being 'good' or 'very good' after counselling

100% rated their relationship with their counsellor as 'excellent' or 'good'
94% were 'very satisfied' with the service

When taking into consideration the work we do, and with many clients living with a life-threatening condition, we think that these figures are remarkable.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“

I understand it is not just the person diagnosed with cancer suffering it also has a tsunami affect on the family members too. The space allows me to express my darkest fears, which alleviates much of the weight, pain and my reluctance to look at death. I can't imagine what I would do without the sessions.”

“

Mary is 61 and came to The Harbour following the death of her brother who died from cancer. She had become his carer and lost her job because of this. She was also estranged from other members of her family. When she approached us she said “I am in a worse state now than I was when he died”. We offered 16 sessions of fully funded counselling. At the end she said “I have recognised that I have been shelving some of my true personality in order to placate members of my family and it is now time for me to prioritise me.”

“

Doris is 75 and her husband had died the year before she approached us. She had cared for him in the years leading up to his death as he had Parkinson's and Dementia. And she is now facing the need to support her sister.

At the end of her 16 sessions, she told us: “It has been transformative, I almost don't recognise the Doris at the start to the Doris at the end of these sessions. I have learnt so much about myself in these sessions and this has been to the benefit of those around me. I feel robust and able to deal with whatever now happens with my sister.”