

Your opinion matters

We welcome your views on the services we provide. If you would like to comment, make suggestions or make a complaint, please speak to the person you normally see or ask to speak to the team manager.

You may also like to speak to our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) by ringing the freephone number 0800 917 7159.

If you are unable to resolve your concerns or would like to take the matter further, please write to:

Head of Critical Incidents and Complaints
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
Pinewood House
Pinewood Place
Dartford
Kent
DA2 7WG
Tel: 01322 625751

www.oxleas.nhs.uk

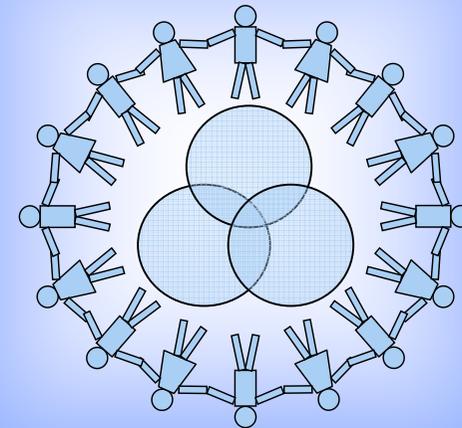


*Bexley Family Consultation Service,
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust,
Erith Centre, Park Crescent,
Erith, London, DA8 3EE,
Tel: 01322 356100*

Bexley – Adult Mental Health Services

Introducing...

The Bexley Family Consultation Service



Erith Centre

improving lives

Oxleas 
NHS Foundation Trust

What is the Family Consultation Team?

The Family Consultation Team works with family members to find constructive ways to help each other. A family can mean any group of people who define themselves as such, who care about and care for each other. Sometimes, families struggle to cope with problems on their own, for example when one or more family members suffer from a mental health problem. In such situations it can be helpful to work with the Family Consultation Team to think about how things can change.

The team works in ways that acknowledge the context of your family, sharing and respecting individuals' different perspectives, beliefs, views and stories, and exploring possible ways forward.

The Family Consultation Team's areas of particular experience and expertise include:

- The impact of mental health problems on family relationships.
- The impact of family relationships on mental health problems.
- Supporting families and carers to develop and utilise their resources to provide the best care possible for family members with mental health problems.
- The negotiation of changes that occur during the family lifecycle.

Confidentiality

All our staff are required to abide by a strict code of conduct on confidentiality. In some circumstances we may need to share some information with other professionals who do not work for Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust (for example, your GP or social services employees). We will not do this without talking to you about this first. When considering who may see information about you, our staff use the following principles:

- **Only** share information with those who **need to know** in order to provide good quality care.
- Share the **minimum** information necessary to ensure good quality care.

Feedback on your experience of the service

In order to ensure that we respond to the needs of families, we want to know what you think about our service and whether you found it helpful. You will be invited to tell us what you thought about the service you received. We will also ask the person who referred your family to us for their views on the service we provided.

we will help you think about how to do this as safely as possible. We will always be open to considering with you whether, in your particular situation, therapy poses any kind of risk.

What will happen to the recordings of the session?

The recordings will be kept in a secure place and will be erased when the work with your family has finished. Therapists may need to present recordings of their work to their supervisors as part of their professional development. Their supervisor will be bound by the same rules of confidentiality.

With the written permission of the family concerned, we sometimes use the recordings for training purposes. We would not identify the family by name. Recordings will only be shown in professional training situations and everyone who sees them will have to agree to keep the information confidential.

Will other people watch our family?

Sometimes other people, who are interested in how family consultation works, will ask if they can observe sessions. These people usually work for the Adult Mental Health Service. You will always be asked whether you agree to this and no one will watch your sessions unless you give consent.

What are the questions that the Family Consultation Team may ask?

The team will talk to families about their strengths and successes as well as about the problems that they are facing. Questions will be asked in order to hear from all the members of the family who attend and to find out how the team may be able to help. The team is interested in what your family believes about how families should be organised, or what it is like to live with mental illness. No one will have to answer any questions they don't want to answer.

Who is part of the Family Consultation Service?

The main contact with the Family Consultation Service will be with your therapist. Therapists work with a team of other people which might include:

- Family Therapists
- Psychologists
- Psychotherapists
- Art Psychotherapists
- Community Psychiatric Nurses
- Psychiatrists
- Social Workers

The team is not there to judge you, but to help you and your family find ways of doing things differently by giving additional ideas and views which help the therapist and the family.

What happens in a family consultation session?

The most common way for a family session to happen is for your therapist to work with a “reflecting team”. The reflecting team may sit in the room or may watch the session through a video link. The reflecting team will be asked, at various points in the session, to comment on what they have observed so your family may be able to hear a number of perspectives on your interactions.

The team often record the sessions onto a DVD. They will make sure that these are kept confidential and in a secure place. These recordings help the team think about your family in between sessions. Some families find it helpful to watch part of the recording with their therapist. No recording will take place without your consent. If you change your mind you can ask for the equipment to be switched off.

Families are usually invited to meet the team before the first session starts. We aim to keep the team as consistent as possible during the series of sessions.

Please ask us if you have any questions about family consultations. You may find it useful to write down your questions before your appointment and bring them with you.

How long will the sessions last?

The sessions will usually be 60 minutes long, but may occasionally vary depending on the work being done.

Who can attend?

We prefer to work with as many family members and significant others as possible. We recognise, however, that this is not always possible or appropriate and we will endeavor to work with the people who you invite to attend. During the sessions the team will help you to think about who you might invite. These may not be the same people each time.

We may also suggest individual sessions within a series of family meetings, when appropriate. We will also, when appropriate, work with the professionals and/or social networks around your family.

What are the risks?

Family consultation is an ongoing process in which we work with you to make changes that will improve things in your family. For some families talking together may be an unusual experience so we will try to help you find ways of doing this which pay attention to everyone's feelings. There may be sensitive issues which are difficult to talk about and