



PRESS RELEASE

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GHA Improves the Provision of Counselling Services

The GHA is delighted to announce that it has contracted an extra Counsellor to complement the Chartered Counselling Psychologist and Counsellor currently providing services at the Primary Care Centre. The Chartered Counselling Psychologist and Counsellor have increased their sessions by an extra day each.

The welcome addition of the new Counsellor and the additional sessions, follow recent important enhancements to the Mental Health Services, with the newly created Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) due to commence in January 2018. The GHA has also engaged an additional Consultant Clinical Psychologist to provide in-patient care at the Ocean Views Mental Health Facility, who commenced on the 15th October 2018.

As our community may be aware, counselling is a talking therapy. Counsellors listen to patients and help to find ways for them to deal with any emotional or other issues. This type of therapy can prove beneficial to persons experiencing the following:

- a mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or an eating disorder;
- an upsetting physical health condition;
- a difficult life event, such as a bereavement, a relationship breakdown or work-related stress; and
- difficult emotions – such as, low self-esteem or anger.

Persons in the community who feel they may benefit from seeing a counsellor, should visit a GP at the Primary Care Centre, where they may obtain a referral. Counsellors are often the first port of call for patients who may be experiencing mental health issues or concerns. In some cases, when deemed appropriate, a counsellor may refer a patient on to a Psychologist, Psychiatrist or other mental health professionals.

General Manager for Mental Health Services, Mr. Chris Chipolina commented: “Everyone, throughout the course of their lives, will develop their own unique set of life experiences, so the exact path to overcoming any existing problems will inevitably vary between individuals. While there are many shared problems, and common issues, the exact elements at play will always differ from case to case. By working in partnership with clients, a professional counsellor can help improve the skill of decision making, reduce tension, develop better self-esteem, confidence and

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice

HM Government of Gibraltar • Zone 1, Level 7 St Bernard’s Hospital, Harbour Views Road • Gibraltar GX11 1AA

t +350 20007011 (Centrex 2027) f +350 20059942 e ministry@gha.gi w gibraltar.gov.gi



feel generally more positive and optimistic towards life. Counselling is a step-by-step process that requires time and consistency in order for the therapy to work; increasing the availability of therapists will help tremendously towards achieving this goal.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honorable Neil F. Costa MP said: “Counsellors offer a very important service. In many cases, persons experiencing emotional issues can benefit from this type of therapy, by talking to a trained professional. The counsellors form an integral part of our Mental Health Services, in many cases, averting the need for more intensive therapy or treatment. My colleague, Minister Cortes, announced, only last week, the welcome engagement of counsellors to work full-time at our schools. This is, undoubtedly, a major development in the provision of mental health services for children and young persons in Gibraltar. These counsellors will work in close collaboration with the GHA’s Mental Health Services, in order to identify pupils that may benefit from therapeutic, psychological or psychiatric services. I am delighted to say that we have also significantly increased the availability of counselling sessions at the Primary Care Centre; a development which will be beneficial for our community. “