**Equality**

We are committed to equality of access to our services and undertake not to discriminate against any child or young person within our age range, for any reason. We actively welcome enquiries and referrals from any member of our community in West Lothian who thinks we may be able to help them, irrespective of their background, lifestyle or circumstances.

Confidentiality

All aspects of counselling and resilience work will be treated with confidentiality within West Lothian Child Protection Guidelines. Our counsellors also work within the BACP ethical framework for good practice. Our confidentiality policy is fully explained to every child or young person at the first session.

**How to make a referral?**

Referrals for the Counselling & Resilience service generally come from Schools, Social Work, GP’s, CAMHS and occasionally self -referral. All referrals are screened at a Mental

Health and Mental Wellbeing screening group which meets fortnightly. The group has representation from Education, Social Work, CAMHS, the wider Children & Young People Team and the Voluntary sector, and an appropriate service for each referral is identified. *The team operate an open access policy, and every effort should be made to inform the child or young person.* We currently operate a waiting list system due to the high number of referrals.

**Referral forms can be requested from the Children & Young People Team on Tel: 01506 282948**

**or by email to** cypt@westlothian.gov.uk.



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Counselling & Resilience

Service.

Who are we?

We are part of West Lothian Council’s Children & Young People’s Mental Health & Mental Wellbeing Team. We have a full time resilience worker, two full time counsellors and also provide placements for counsellors in training.

What do we offer?

We offer Counselling/therapy for children and young people aged from 5 to 25 years and a Resilience service for children and young people aged 5 to 16 years old, who live in West Lothian. We meet with children and young people in their school or in their community who may be experiencing a wide range of difficulties such as depression, anxiety, self-harming behaviour, suicidal thoughts, separation and loss, bereavement, gender issues , low self-esteem, trauma, and those who experience constant stressors affecting their emotional development.

We offer an initial session where the child or young person meets with a counsellor or resilience worker to talk about what can be offered that feels right for them. The resilience worker will normally make a home visit before

starting work and the counsellors may invite parents or carers to attend the first session with younger children. If it is agreed to continue with counselling or resilience work, the child or young person will be offered 6 weekly sessions initially, and then a further 6 sessions if needed. Sometimes a counsellor or resilience worker may work longer if required. An evaluation tool is used at the beginning and end of all our work to help inform our service.

What does the counsellor do?

The counsellor aims to provide a safe place, where children and young people can feel listened to and understood. Sharing experiences and feelings with someone outside their own immediate situation can provide them with a chance to make more sense of what is happening to them. Counselling is not advice or telling people what to do. The child or young person is in control and is encouraged to talk about things at their own pace. Each individual is unique and is believed to have the potential to become the person they want to be. The therapeutic relationship is considered integral to the work and the qualities of

empathy, acceptance and genuineness are offered.

**What does the resilience worker do?**

Resilience is the ability to thrive in the face of adversity. The resilience worker aims to encourage this ability in young people by promoting resilience skills and helping them become more self-aware and in control of planning for their short and longer term future. The resilience worker does not work to eliminate the risk factors in a child’s life but aims to focus on helping individuals cope with and overcome emotional burdens by using the positive factors around self, home, school, community, talents, interests and friendships. The work will focus on the child and close communication with the school if required.

Co-operation of the parent /carer or special person in the child’s life is beneficial to the work but not paramount to the work. However it is essential that the parent/ carer is aware of the referral and gives full permission for the individual work with the child.