

Raleigh Centre, Ampthill Road
BEDFORD
MK42 9HE
Telephone: 01234 316801
Website:
www.familygroups.org.uk
E-mail: admin@familygroups.co.uk



12/08/2015

Update on the Freedom Programme

Family Groups have been delivering the Freedom Programme in Bedford Borough for women since October 2014. It was an in house service for the first 3 months although it was soon apparent that there was a local need for the service to be expanded to support any woman in Bedford Borough who has experienced relationship issues. In January 2015, we opened the doors for referrals from partnership organisations and started to deliver the 'Introduction to the Freedom Programme' for professionals who wished to understand the programme and refer women in to it.

We have trained 58 professionals over 3 sessions and will be hosting another course on the 18th September 2015.

Family Groups have 3 trained facilitators who are all qualified and experienced trainers to deliver the programme and to date, 44 women have attended from numerous sources as you will see from the table below:

Organisation	Attended
BeNCH	20
IDVA	7
CAN	1
NPS	2
Social Services	5
Family Groups	9

At present, 11 women are on the programme with a further 5 starting in September 2015. It is a rolling programme made up of 11 sessions so women can join at any time and if they cannot make a session or need to put the programme on hold, they can re-join or complete the next session which they have missed.

We are delivering one session per week every Wednesday 1.00pm - 3.00pm. We decided to reduce the weekly sessions from 2 to 1 as we have the capacity to support up to 20 women in each session and found that one large group worked better than two smaller groups. Those of you who have attended the Professionals training will know that the Freedom Programme does not provide written reports on individuals who attend although we will provide you with the number of sessions they have attended and if they are engaging in the group. We believe that the decision not to write reports and track outcomes makes the group more relaxed and improves the relationship with the women and their facilitators who will not disclose their personal circumstances to others (unless it is a Safeguarding disclosure). We encourage referring agencies to stay in contact with the woman attending the programme and discuss their progression and outcomes with them.

We do however, have a guest book which women can write in (anonymously) at any time they wish. Here are some of the excerpts from our book:

The Jailer - This session made me look back on past relationships I was in and made me understand that I could not be his rescuer. I have ended the relationship and am now healing. (Nov 2014)

Warning Signs - because of attending the programme, I am emotionally stronger and I can recognise the possible signs of a Dominator. This programme has empowered me as an individual and it is only my 4th session! (Jan 2015)

Freedom has given me the confidence to challenge my partners' behaviour before it escalates in to something serious. It has helped me to approach some issues more rationally rather than just shout at each other. (Jan 2015)

Having progressed through the programme watching and listening to the other group members', I can see the extent of empowerment that the women reveal. (Feb 2015)

I have found the Freedom programme to be very beneficial. It is so helpful to be with other women who are in a similar position to me. Many thanks to all involved in the programme, it is invaluable. (Feb 2015)

*I've met some lovely, nice, good girls. All going through the same s**t as me. Bless us and God help us to get on in life. (Feb 2015)*

I think this course is one of the best things (organisation) has done for me by advising me to attend. It does good for women to see and understand what women are going through. It shows us how much we have put up with and teaches us to cope. (March 2015)

I love coming to the Freedom programme. When I cannot attend it is annoying but when I come it makes me feel good after like I have achieved something. (April 2015)

Freedom programme, Wow! What can I say? What an enlightening and empowering experience. I thought that I had never been challenged by DV before attending. I have come away feeling empowered and aware with open eyes and an open mind. Thank you. (Aug 2015)

I hope that you have found this short update useful and interesting. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like any further information about the programme. We will be sending out more information about the next Professionals training course on the 1st September along with a booking form. Please be aware that we were inundated with applications for the last event and have a capacity of 20 maximum.

Lastly, thank you for your help and support working with us. I hope that we have made a small difference to some of the many women in Bedford who have experienced Domestic Abuse.

Kind Regards,

Derry Dynes

Chief Officer - Family Groups.

(The office will be closed from the 13th August until the 1st September)