

CREATING A SAFE PLACE:

Confidentiality

This is central to the success of the group. Please treat who you see and what is said as confidential.

No violence & aggression

We operate on a no tolerance basis. If anyone is physically violent or abusive they will be asked to leave.

No Drugs or Alcohol

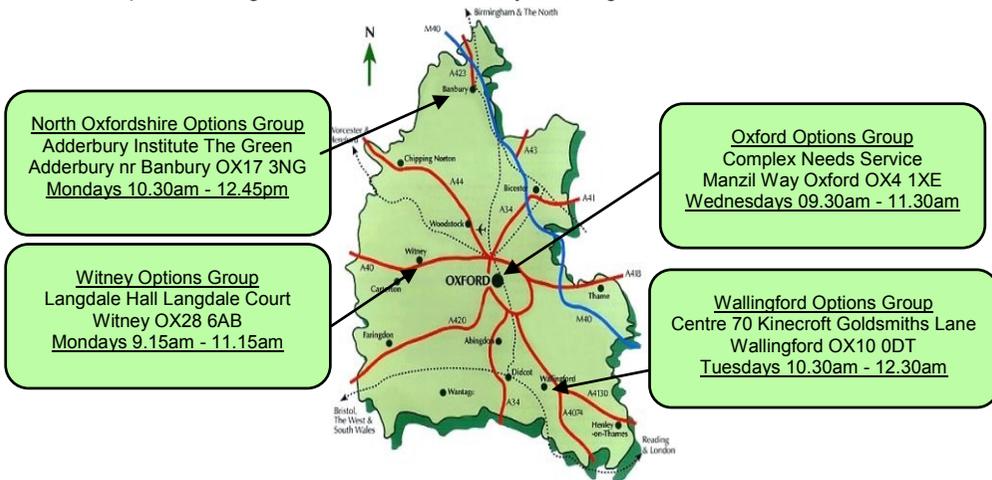
The possession of and being under the influence of drugs and alcohol are strictly prohibited on the premises. This also includes the TCs. If you need help to come off sedatives, drugs or alcohol, you will be expected to discuss this with the group.

Self Destructive Behaviours

Self destructive behaviour has quite a strong effect on the group and individuals are encouraged to talk about these issues.

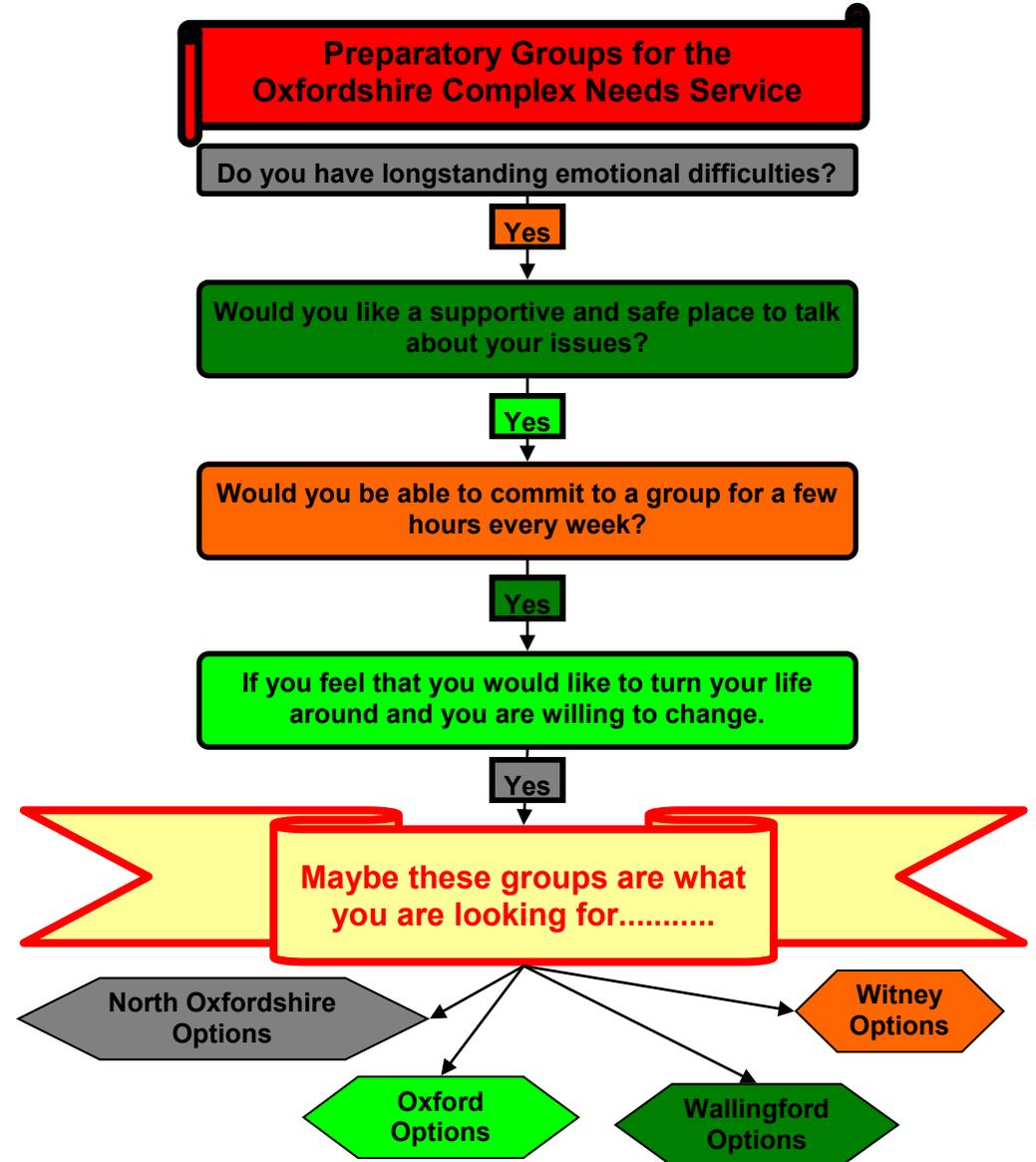
No Contact Outside the Group

Intimate relationships between Options Group and TC members are not permitted. Making arrangements to meet or arranging contact (including e-mail, phone etc) with other members outside the time of the Options Group makes the work harder and makes it more difficult to discuss things in the group. We strongly discourage this - if it occurs, you will be expected bring it to the next Community Meeting.



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THE OPTIONS GROUPS



Oxford Health
 NHS Foundation Trust



WHAT HAPPENS IN THE OPTIONS GROUP?

AN OPTIONS GROUP AGENDA

Opening Community Meeting
Break
Activity
Closing Community Meeting

The Opening Community Meeting and Closing Community Meeting groups are Chaired by a member of the Options Group. There is also a Secretary to administer the diary. The Community Groups have an agenda, and start and finish promptly. Each week the Chair and Secretary are chosen for the following week. We ask all members to arrive promptly for the meetings. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late then you will not be able to join the group, until the next activity.



Due to the nature of therapy we require regular attendance to the Options Groups, but we do understand that illness, holidays and events beyond our control happen from time to time. If you know that you will not be able to attend, you will be expected to either give the group prior notice of absence or phone in before the group to give your apologies.

In some of the Options Groups two members of the local Therapeutic Community (TC) also attend the group and they are available to give guidance and information about the TC. If a member of the Options Group would like to join the TC, they would initially ask the group if they agree with this, then arrange with the TC members to visit the large group in the TC, which meets once a week. Before arranging to visit the TC, members will need to have been attending the Options Group for at least four weeks, and to have discussed with the group what issues they would like to work on in therapy. There are mini TCs which meet at least once a week in Adderbury, Wallingford and Witney and the Oxford TC meets on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The TC therapy is an 18 month programme.

After visiting a TC, an Options Group Member can arrange a Case Conference to present to the Members of that TC what they would like to work on in therapy, and a vote is taken as to whether membership of the TC will be offered.



WHAT CAN THE OPTIONS GROUP HELP ME ADDRESS?

- Start trusting others.
- Start changing destructive/unhelpful behaviours.
- Working within a group environment.
- Becoming more aware of your issues.
- Issues with drug & alcohol dependency.



As part of the pre-therapy Options Group programme, we work with members to help them stop illegal drugs, get alcohol use under control, and stop prescribed *sedative* medication (benzodiazepines, sedatives and hypnotics such as diazepam/valium, nitrazepam, temazepam, lorazepam, zopiclone and zolpidem) prior to joining the TC. We understand that this can be a cause of anxiety, but we believe that this is achievable, with the support of the Options Group and other relevant services. We do this because these forms of dependency can be detrimental to the therapy programme and for you gaining any form of recovery and independence.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CHOOSE TO LEAVE?

We understand that sometimes people experience difficult times and are unable to participate in some or all of the group activities. This may make you feel like you want to leave the group, but the group is there to support you with any issues that arise. The important thing to remember is that this is part of the process of entering therapy and that these stages will pass.

We also recognise that sometimes people do not feel that they are ready for therapy. If you do decide to leave, we ask all group members to give four weeks notice. This is because of the supportive nature of the pre-therapy Options Groups and it enables the member leaving and the others in the group to say 'goodbye'.

We will send you a letter to remind you to attend the Options Group if you miss two groups without contacting us. However, members who do not attend for four weeks without contacting us will be assumed to have left the Options Group and their place in the group will then be closed.