

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. Breaches of confidentiality will be discussed in the group. Please be aware that there will be contact with people involved in your care including your GP.

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 drugs and alcohol and being under their influence is strictly prohibited on the premises. This also includes the TC. If you need help to come off sedatives, drugs or alcohol, please discuss this with the group.

Self Destructive Behaviours

Any 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

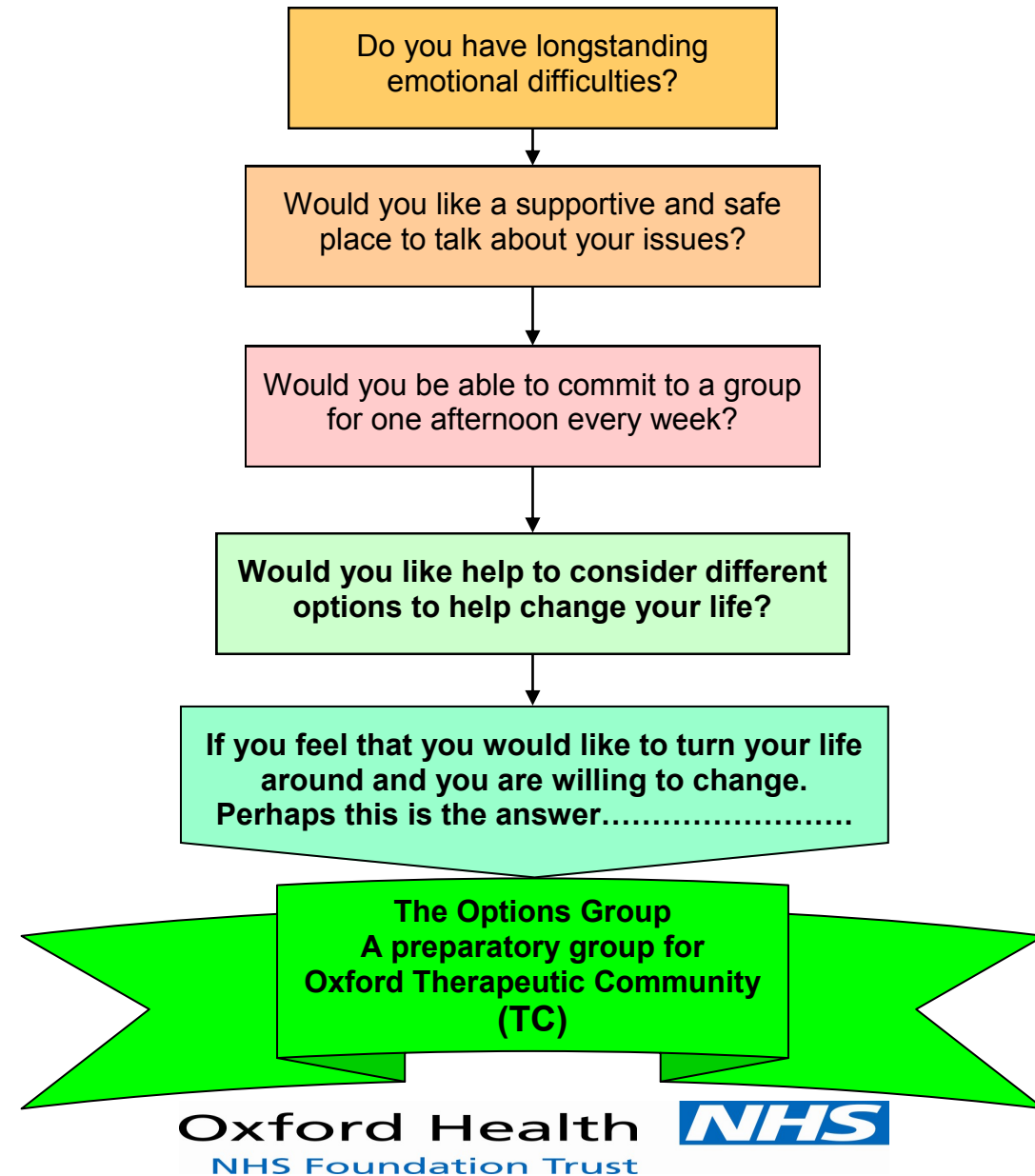
Intimate relationships between community members are not permitted and making any arrangements to meet or arranging contact (including e-mail and phone) with other members outside the time of the Options group makes the work harder and makes it more difficult to discuss things in the group. We strongly discourage this and if it does occur, please bring it to the next community meeting.



Oxford Options Group
Wednesdays from 09.30am - 11.30am
Oxfordshire Complex Needs Service
Manzil Way off Cowley Road
Oxford OX4 1XE
Tel: 01865 455 872/815 Fax: 01865 455 859
Email: tvi@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk Web: www.psox.org/ocns
Self referrals welcome

OXFORD OPTIONS GROUP

A Preparatory Group for the Oxford Therapeutic Community



WHAT HAPPENS IN THE OPTIONS GROUP?

THE TIMETABLE OF THE GROUP

9.30am - 10.15am	Opening Community Meeting
10.15am - 10.30am	Break
10.30am - 11.15am	Activity
11.15am - 11.30am	Closing Community Meeting



The opening community meeting and closing community meeting groups are chaired by a group member with a secretary to administer the diary. The purpose of these groups is to begin to discuss your options. Both chair and secretary are chosen from the group. The community groups have an agenda and start and finish promptly. We ask all members to arrive promptly for the meetings. If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will not be able to join the group until the next activity.

In order to engage in the pre therapy process we require you to attend regularly, i.e. weekly. We do understand that illness, holidays and events beyond your control happen from time to time. If you know that you will not be able to attend, please can you either give the group prior notice of absence or phone before 9.30am to notify the group on the day of your absence.

Every week two members of the Oxford Therapeutic Community (TC) also attend the Options group, and are available to give guidance and information about the TC; they are not trained facilitators. (There are also half day visits to the TC arranged every 6 weeks). If a member of the Options group would like to join the TC, they ask the group if they agree, then arrange with the TC members to visit for a week (9:00am - 2:30pm Monday Tuesday and Thursday) Before arranging to visit the TC, members should have attended the Options group for at least four weeks, and discussed with the group what issues they would like to work on.

After the visiting week you can arrange a case conference to present to the members of the TC what you would like to work on, and a vote is taken as to whether membership of the TC will be offered. People join the TCs for 18 months.



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.
- Start confronting issues of alcohol and drug dependency



The Options group is a pre therapy group aimed at preparing you to engage in therapy. Do raise and name issues that you need support with and that have been problematic in the past. The Options group divides in to smaller groups to provide an opportunity to explore issues raised in greater detail. Issues will be fed back to the large group. Members are encouraged to interact in different small groups each week to promote trust in the wider community. Issues of self harm need to be raised in a sensitive way with the group. Self harming behaviours need to be under control before considering moving on to therapy.

We ask members to stop all 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; please see our Medication and Drug/Alcohol Policy Leaflet. We understand that this may cause of anxiety, but we believe that this is achievable with the support of the Options group and other mental health agencies. We specifically ask for this because forms of dependency and self harm behaviour can be detrimental to the therapy programme and for you gaining any form of recovery and independence.

The expression of emotional issues and the development of trust is central to the process and important for beginning the therapeutic process once you have joined the TC. You can be a member for up to a year.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CHOOSE TO LEAVE?

We understand that sometimes people experience difficult times and are unable to participate. This may make you feel like you want to leave, but the group can support you through it. The important thing to remember is that this is part of the process of entering therapy and that the stage will pass.

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

However, members who do not attend for four weeks without contacting the group will be assumed to have left the group. We will send you a letter to remind you if you miss two groups without sending a message.