

# 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

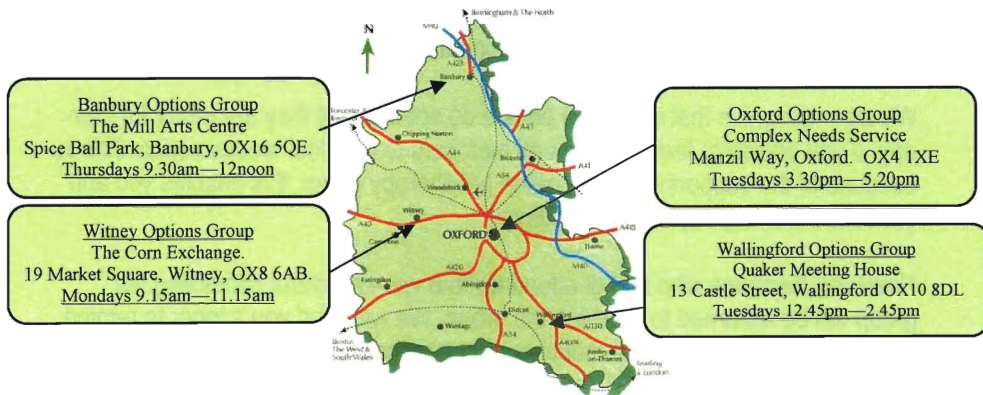
The possession and being under the influence of drugs and alcohol are strictly prohibited on the premises. This also includes the TC. If you need help to come off sedatives, drugs or alcohol, please discuss this with the group.

## Self Destructive Behaviours

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

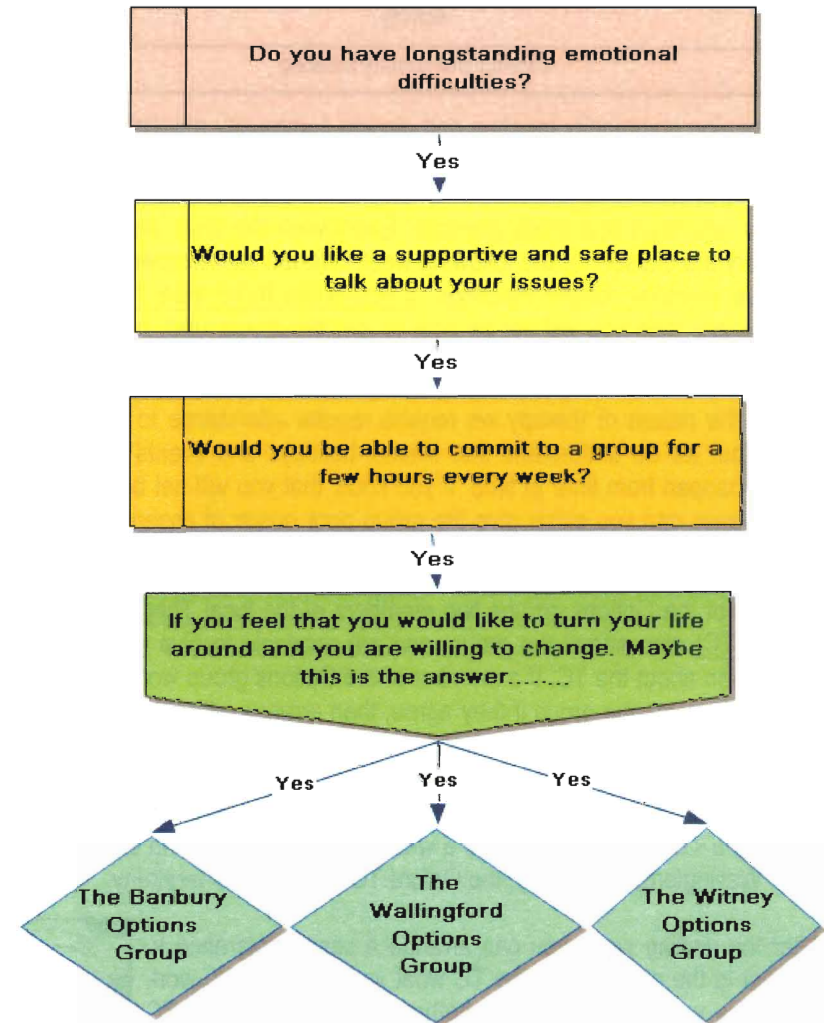
Intimate relationships between community members are not permitted. Making arrangements to meet or arrange contact (including e-mail and phone) with other members outside the time of the Options group makes the work harder and makes it more difficult to discuss things in the group. We strongly discourage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



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# THE OPTIONS GROUPS

Preparatory Groups for The Oxfordshire complex needs service



# WHAT HAPPENS IN THE OPTIONS GROUP?

## THE AGENDA OF THE OPTIONS GROUPS

Opening Community Meeting
Break
Activity
Closing Community Meeting

The opening community meeting and closing community meeting groups are chaired by a member of the 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 group, 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, please can you either give the group prior notice of absence or phone before the group.

In some of the Options groups two members of the local Therapeutic Community (TC) also attend the group, and are available to give guidance and information about the TC. 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 the large group, which meets once a week. 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. There is a TC which meets twice a week in group meetings in each of Banbury, Wallingford and Witney; the Oxford TC meets every weekday.

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.
- Issues with drug & alcohol dependencies.



As part of the pre-therapy programme, 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. We understand that this maybe a 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 these forms of dependencies can be detrimental to the therapy programme and for you gaining any form of recovery and independence.

The Options group is not really therapy—it is a chance to prepare yourself for therapy in one of the TCs. 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 in any of the activity. This may make you feel like you would 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 sometime 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 of the supportive nature of the pre-therapy group, this 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.