



A councillor's workbook on supporting residents with complex issues



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The Local Government Association (LGA) worked with One Plus One as part of its remit to share good practice and strengthen leadership within local government. One Plus One is a team of researchers, information specialists and practitioners working together to strengthen couple and family relationships by putting relationship research into practice. Brief Encounters® was created by One Plus One initially to help health professionals support clients with relationship problems.

It is now widely used by practitioners such as GPs, solicitors, prison volunteer visitors, children's centre workers and faith leaders working with a range of issues.

Brief Encounters® is a working model that provides guidelines and boundaries for listening to problems without becoming overwhelmed and encourages clients to seek their own solutions.

Introduction

This workbook has been designed as a distance learning aid for local councillors. It is intended to provide councillors with insight and assistance with the key skills which will help you to be most effective in your role. Some of the content may be of most use to more newly elected councillors, but nonetheless if you have been a councillor for some time, the workbook should serve as a useful reminder of some of the key skills, approaches and tactics that make for an effective ward councillor. It may even challenge you to reconsider how you have approached aspects of the role to date.

Those councillors who are new to local government will recognise that there are many aspects to being an effective ward or division councillor. The workbook will help you to get up to speed on the main areas that require focus and attention. In effect, it should provide you with some pointers on how to develop a style and approach that you are comfortable with, and that enables you to be most effective in your day to day duties.

The workbook can be used as a standalone learning aid or alongside other material you may cover such as e learning modules or sessions within your own council. It is recognised that each individual must decide how best to use and develop their influencing skills, based on individual preference and confidence. As such, the workbook should serve more as a direction marker rather than a road map.

You do not need to complete it all in one session and may prefer to work through the material at your own pace. The key requirement is to think about your own approach in influencing other people – how the material relates to your local situation, the people you serve and the council you represent.

In working through the material contained in this workbook you will encounter a number of features designed to help you think about the ward councillor role. These features are represented by the symbols shown below:



Guidance – this is used to indicate research, quotations, explanations and definitions that you may find helpful.



Challenges – these are questions or queries raised in the text which ask you to reflect on your role or approach – in essence, they are designed to be thought-provokers.



Case studies – these are 'pen pictures' of approaches used by other people or organisations.



Hints and tips – these represent a selection of good practices which you may find useful.



Useful links – these are signposts to sources of further information and support, outside the workbook, which may help with principles, processes, methods and approaches.

A list of useful additional information and support is also set out in the Appendix to the workbook.

The workbook also takes into consideration research from the Young Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation which focuses on the cultural shift needed in the councillor's role so that there is more emphasis on 'valuing the frontline aspects of the councillor's work'.

A number of councillors both new and long standing were interviewed by One Plus One during the original planning stage of this workbook and many described their unease when they were faced with a resident who is emotionally overwhelmed. They also reported that "helping people who are distressed and emotional is difficult" and several said that they didn't feel skilled enough to do this. The quotes are used in this workbook, to illustrate the specific issues that are raised by councillors and the case study demonstrates the practical use of the Brief Encounters® model by councillors in their everyday work. The quotes are not attributed due to the sensitive nature of this topic.

Managing professional and personal boundaries within available time can be a challenge. A simple three-stage, brief intervention model which uses basic listening skills and clear boundaries provides guidelines from the first sign of distress through to an ending with relevant but sensitive signposting/referral and follow up. This can be used by anyone who believes in and understands the value of really listening to residents, and who is confident in their listening skills. Councillors who find themselves in a difficult position can use good listening skills to communicate that they value that resident and what they have to say. This leads to a calmer resident who is more likely to cooperate.

Supporting residents with complex issues

Residents may often approach a councillor with a range of problems from parking issues to neighbourhood disputes, overcrowded housing to education. These often complex issues are likely to have an impact on the relationships within the family or result from underlying relationship difficulties and as the pressure builds up councillors often feel out of their depth as to how they can help, especially if it is a problem which has no immediate solution.

During interviews with councillors we found that in order to manage difficult situations councillors use a number of avoidance strategies and didn't feel comfortable dealing with any emotional issues that the resident may be experiencing. Several said that they "shy away" from emotional issues and try and dissuade residents from raising them.

What you can offer

- time, attention and respect
- a real ability and wish to listen
- normalise when appropriate
- sensitivity
- skills of a Brief Encounter® in a range of situations
- share ideas or suggestions
- encourage self-help
- sensitive signposting – making relevant referrals in a non-rejecting way.

Don't panic

- use the basic listening skills (reflecting back) to give yourself a breathing space
- listen without taking sides
- put your own views and anxieties on hold
- remind yourself you do not have to 'solve' this problem
- have a clear idea of information that will help the resident
- be familiar with the protocol for referring/signposting people on
- establish good support for yourself.



Guidance

"I try not to get involved in the emotional issues myself. It is very difficult – there is a tension in that as a councillor you are not trained in any particular issues and yet you are supposed to know about everything."

Being a good listener

Councillors expressed reluctance to 'get involved' with emotional issues due to their lack of skills and inability to resolve such issues. But allowing residents to express emotions is a healthy and natural part of developing a dialogue with them – even if it sometimes feels scary and uncomfortable. Often, what a resident needs most is someone who will really listen to them.

Not to solve problems or to come up with answers, but just to listen

Listening is the basis of good communication and is important in offering support. When we offer people time, attention and respect, we convey to them that they are worthwhile and valuable.

Our posture and responses encourage the resident to trust us enough to share their thoughts and feelings and this can be the first step in helping them to help themselves. A surprising number of people seem able to help themselves or come up with ideas for improving their difficulties after 'just listening' help.

When residents are 'stuck', they often need minimal intervention. A little skilled support to get 'unstuck' helps residents to focus and start to work through their situation.

As we use listening skills and encourage the residents to share their story they often become reflective and begin to think of what they might do to help themselves.

"Nobody trains you how to listen or deal with difficult situations – as councillors we get trained on how to use our laptops but not in listening skills."



Hints and tips

Listening sympathetically to someone:

- gives them a chance to get their feelings out and to let off steam
- allows them to express their needs and begin to talk about how at least some of these can be met
- gives them a greater ability to face issues, or be strong enough to cope
- supports them be more proactive about moving things forward.



Guidance

"I would recommend that new councillors gain a working knowledge of what external services and charities can take up issues and problems that are not really those for a local councillor."

Listening responses include:

Reflecting back content: Restating in your own words what the resident has said. This skill helps the resident to focus more clearly and lets them know you are listening.

Reflecting back feeling: Similar to reflecting content, but emphasis is on the feelings being expressed by the resident. This helps them become more aware of their feelings and will enhance understanding of the situation and increase rapport.

Integrating feeling and experience: Feelings arise from our experiences. This skill helps residents identify the feelings and what caused them.

An easy way of doing this is to use the formula – 'You feel...because...'

Acknowledging internal conflict: Sometimes residents are faced with conflicting feelings. This skill demonstrates an understanding by acknowledging the internal conflict which may exist for the resident. This may be a mix of quite strong feelings.

The formula – 'You feel... but you also feel...' is an easy way to remember this skill.

Don't advise unless asked: People rarely take unasked for advice. Wait to be asked, or make suggestions tentatively.

Don't ignore the point: It may be tempting to steer the conversation into more comfortable waters. Perhaps the subject is too close to your own feelings and makes you feel uneasy. If you decide you are out of your depth, then it is always better to say so. You will help the resident far more by signposting them to relevant organisations for advice or support

Do signpost with sensitivity: If you feel out of your depth then consider who might be the best person or agency to refer the resident to. It is important that signposting is appropriate and therefore knowing who to refer to is key and how comfortable the resident feels with this.



Activity 1 – what you can offer

Think of what's going on inside you when trying to support someone in distress. You may want to think of an example during surgery or on a home visit.

Reflect on the example you have given previously in relation to the following questions:

- Can you listen well when anxious about coping with disclosures or afraid of making things worse?
- Are you unsure about your role in making what may be unwelcome enquiries?
- Did you feel as if you had to come up with a solution?
- Were you able to set out and stick to clear time boundaries?
- What can you learn from how you felt? Do you feel instinctively that something just below the surface is upsetting the resident? Or does your heart sink as you wonder what you are getting into?



Guidance The Brief Encounters® model

The Brief Encounters® model provides a framework that maps out the three stages of an encounter that works well. The model encourages you to make choices about how to respond, if at all, when your instinct tells you that a resident needs to share something that is distressing them. Setting clear boundaries for you and the resident, that sound welcoming and positive is a valuable skill. Management of the available time and professional or personal boundaries is crucial to the success of a Brief Encounter®.

When a resident accepts an offer of help the councillor becomes an active listener, 'coming alongside' the resident and following their agenda but working within the agreed boundaries. Councillors stated that "...often the thing they are upset over are things that local government have no control over." It is important that the councillor does not feel they have to 'fix' the problem.

Stage 1 – signals and choices

There is recognition and acknowledgement of the signal, a sign of distress given by a resident when they are troubled and need to talk, whether explicit or covert. When appropriate the councillor then chooses whether to make an offer of help, taking into account the time available and the limits of their own competence.

This is framing an offer and constitutes 'a working agreement' that states the purpose of the encounter and the boundaries necessary to allow both resident and councillor to make efficient use of the available time. In practice some residents are too distressed and their situation demands a high priority response.



Activity 2 – what factors might affect your decision

When you choose to invite some exploration of the resident's distress, check out that it is acceptable to the resident, and it may help to establish how much time you have to offer – but be positive. Even ten minutes of really listening with attention and respect is valuable and will be appreciated.

Write down a list of the factors that might affect your decision. Some points to consider:

How much time have you got?

Can you create some privacy?

Would it be better to acknowledge the distress or the signal and offer a time in the near future?

Be aware of your own feelings eg you may be very tired, coping with your own distress or the residents issues may raise unresolved issues in you – often called 'personal baggage'.



Guidance

Stage 2 – listening, exploring, understanding

If the offer of help is accepted, the councillor uses good listening skills to help the resident focus on what is troubling them.

Really listening means you fine tune your ear into what is being said. Concentrate absolutely to hear the content and the feelings in the story you are hearing. Put on hold all your own thoughts, anxieties and feelings. Your role is to hear what you are being told. You are tracking every word that is said, and you will have to stop them quite often to let them know what you have heard and what feelings were expressed or hinted at. Don't ignore strong feelings. This creates an opportunity for the resident to talk and brings them close to voicing their needs. As the councillor listens and encourages the resident to explore their difficulties both the councillor and the resident gain understanding.

Good listening skills (and enough privacy) are essential to create a sense of rapport so that you can engage with the resident. Councillors may be in a position to put the resident's experiences sensitively into perspective and share information that may help. Empathetic responses make it possible to keep a balance between normalising problems and trivialising them. As the resident shares something of their difficulties and underlying issues become clearer the resident may begin to understand and gain some insight in how to move things on. It is important for the councillor to keep in mind that the issues that the resident presents may be masking underlying relationship difficulties and the relationship is likely to be impacted by the overwhelming nature of the external difficulties (see Couple relationships –Appendix 1).

'Personal baggage'

Everyone has personal experiences, the stuff of their own history. It can help us to empathise, or it can make us want to avoid certain subjects. If you find this happening, it might help to think about whether:

- You are having difficulty managing your own feelings. Where you might get support?
- You are afraid you won't be able to cope with the resident's feelings, or of being swamped by their demand. What do you need to do to feel enabled?
- You aren't confident about your own skill? Where might you get further training/support?



Case study

This case study illustrates how the Brief Encounters® model has been used in a typical scenario when a 'signal' has been picked up during a phone call from a resident.

As the local councillor, I had a call from a young woman about the transfer of a tenancy agreement. She suggested that it would not be possible for her to have the tenancy of the house in which she lived as her name was not on the agreement and her husband, in whose name it was, had left her for someone else. She – and her father, who also rang me – were raising the spectre of eviction and being out on the streets with her children.

It was unfair, she said, that she would be homeless whilst he had a flat with his new partner. I made a number of enquiries with the housing authorities and they assured me that no eviction was planned and that she could indeed have the tenancy transferred into her name. However, both parties would be needed to sign off the old agreement and then a new one could be established. She had told them that she would not come in to their office to sign the agreement at the same time as her estranged husband as she did not want to meet him again.

After another call to her and some discussion, I arranged with her to attend the office before her husband, so she did not meet him. Then he followed to do his signing at a later appointment. The real problem was not a possible eviction, but a breakdown of the relationship between the two parties and it was good to know that the solution was an easy one to arrange and not the extreme problem first raised with me.



Activity 3 – good listening

Describe a time when you used good listening skills. What made it a good experience for you and the resident? Write down the factors that you would consider being important in good listening.

Look at the answers you have given and compare them to the guidelines on page 17

Reflect on the situation of good listening that you described above. If you had the same situation again would you respond in the same way or would you respond differently?

What are the reasons for your answer?



Guidance Stage 3 – review and ending

As the time limit for the discussion is reached it helps to review any change or progress that has been made during the discussion, and to check out with the resident that their story has been accurately heard.

Can a further offer of help be made or can partners, friends or relatives be involved to offer support? There will of course be times when the councillor is faced with residents who have more serious problems, that need more structured and professional help and a referral may be necessary as a way of ending the Brief Encounters® session.

Suggestions for moving the resident on

- Councillors and residents will find it useful to summarise what has been shared.
- This skill increases understanding and encourages action from the resident to help themselves.
- Invite suggestions by asking – how would you like things to be, or what would be happening if things were better?
- A reminder of how residents have resolved difficulties in the past is affirming and puts them back in touch with their more coping self.
- Some residents will feel unable to make changes but experience relief at being listened to and understood.



Activity 4 – moving on

Think of a situation when you offered support to a resident in distress with particular focus on the ending. How did that encounter end?

What factors influenced the ending?



Activity 5 – reflection

(See Reflection and Learning section p 14. Write down your thoughts if this helps)

Reflect on the example in relation to the following questions:

- How serious and pressing was the situation?
- Were you able to manage the resident's difficulties by listening and perhaps offering information or tentative advice?
- Were there other sources of help the resident could make use of, such as self-help groups?
- Were they able to get help from supportive family or friends?
- Would the resident have benefited from more specialised help?
- Are you familiar with the services available in your area or do you lack knowledge, confidence or support?

Signposting – making a relevant referral

Signposting is the term used for referring the resident to another person or agency who have the time, skill or expertise to help with the specific problem. You may feel out of your depth quite early on in the process of listening, or you may be seriously worried about a situation. If you feel you are getting into something over your head, allow enough of the story to unfold before jumping in too soon and making a hasty decision. It may be clear that signposting is appropriate. Share this information in a sensitive, caring and confident way as early in the encounter as the decision is made. As your own feelings will influence the decision, it helps if you are aware of how you are feeling.

The following will help you to consider how to make a relevant referral when residents need more help than you can offer. Knowledge about how support services operate is key to making relevant referrals. This knowledge will include what the services provide and the criteria for making referrals.

(The text below needs to be in a box with a challenges logo as it is an 'Activity')



Activity 6 – building resources : networks

Internal networks

How much do you know about the skills and expertise of other local councillors?

How can you find out?

How can you let them know what skills and expertise you have?

External networks

How much do you know about the local services in your area?

How can you find out?

Build up a resource file with names of local councillors and their areas of expertise and also local agencies and the services they provide.

When thinking about where to refer residents on to, there are two main referral routes used by councillors. Firstly, the internal network of other councillors and secondly the external network of local (and/or national) agencies.

Councillors often use internal networks because they know and trust the skills and expertise of their colleagues. Internal networks are used to contact colleagues who may be able to offer support, advice and information. The difficulties and advantages of creating and maintaining relationships with colleagues and networking with other disciplines are very pertinent so avoiding professional isolation.

External networks between councillors and local support agencies are likely to have a strong influence on referral practice. Close working relationships and good communication, involving a negotiation of how information will be shared, will increase the effectiveness of referrals.

Information to give to residents

Residents need information about what to expect from the organisation or individual they are referred to including practical information about costs, what will be offered, what are the working methods and expected boundaries and benefits. This is crucial to the quality and relevance of the referral. If you are not sure about this would you be able to find out on behalf of the client?

What type of services are available for residents seeking emotional support?

- the general practitioner or the community psychiatric nurse
- helplines (See Appendix 2)
- relationship support services, such as Relate (www.relate.org.uk) and Marriage care (www.marriagecare.org.uk)
- health centre or independent counsellors
- national or local befriending and support groups, such as
 - Gingerbread (www.gingerbread.org.uk),
 - Home-Start(www.home-start.org.uk),

- or Cruse (www.cruse.org.uk)

- less obvious options, such as employee assistance programmes, assertiveness training groups
- referral to other councillors with specialist knowledge.



Activity 7 – signposting

What factors might prevent a resident from seeking specialist help?

Write down the agencies or groups you can refer to and make a note of their contact details and any relevant referral information necessary eg waiting list, costs, etc. If you are unsure then research this area. You could begin by checking out the local authority website, libraries and local directories.

Have you got access to current lists of service providers? If not where might you get access to a current list?

Using reflection to support learning

Active learning is central to reflective practice and the worker's capacity for self-appraisal and the ability to learn constructively from significant experiences.

Key stages in reflection:

- describe and analyse a situation or event
- describe this situation in detail – what happened, why the situation came about, where it took place and how you felt about it
- follow this by analysing the knowledge, skills and experience you had at the time of the situation
 - evaluate the outcome by matching your intentions to the achievements
 - identify learning points
- what do you understand for this situation?
- what could have been done differently?
 - how will you act on what you have learnt?

These stages can be translated into practical use by asking yourself the following questions at the end of any session with a resident:

- What was the overall impact of the encounter/ interaction?
- What did I learn?
- What could have been better?
- What particularly did I find difficult, would like to explore more or practice further?

This allows learning and development of good practice at every stage.

Supporting the changing role of councillors



Guidance

“It’s unavoidable, it happens to everyone. There will always be times when we are faced with new challenges and we feel incompetent. But do we dare to move on – to manage our fears.”



Guidance

Top tips from an experienced councillor

Take up issues as quickly as possible and if necessary at a senior level.

Never promise a resident that you will resolve the issue or that it will be resolved quickly.

Be sympathetic but don't get emotional. Try to gauge the anxiety that is being created by the issue.

Find out as much detail as possible including contact numbers, address, e-mail etc.

If you know explain briefly how things work (or should work).

If you don't know be honest and don't make it up!

Give people time – don't rush them but don't overstay your welcome.

Keep them in touch where something is protracted.

If you pass the problem on to another party keep the resident informed.

Show an interest however insignificant you might consider the issue.



Hints and tips

Some guidelines for good listening

- Relax. Trying too hard can make us feel self-conscious.
- Concentrate on listening. It's easy to be distracted by our own anxieties and what we want to say to reassure.
- Repeat what you have heard, to be sure you understood it. Unlikely though it seems, it does help people to go on talking, and it stops us interrupting before they have a chance to say what's really on their mind.
- Listen carefully for feelings being hinted at, and talk about them, especially strong

feelings. It helps to voice them aloud and to describe them. For example, a response to a complex issue being presented could just pick up feelings: "You sound overwhelmed by it all."

- If a resident says "I can't stand it anymore" that's a stronger message and shouldn't be ignored; to acknowledge what you've heard you might reply: "You sound as though you're at the end of your tether."
- Don't be afraid to name the feelings you pick up – it won't make things worse – it will be a relief for the resident. Someone who finally understands!
- Listen carefully for the main message. If you encourage a resident to talk for 10 minutes, do they talk about the housing situation, or how tired they are, or is the main message really that they are at the end of their tether?

If you hear a clear message that they are desperate, you may need to encourage them to talk about their feelings, and see whether they need more help than you can give.

Some important things to avoid

- Don't share personal experiences before someone has a chance to talk through theirs as it may stop them communicating. A resident needs to feel you are tuning into them directly, not substituting your own experiences.
- Don't judge – disapproval is the quickest way to stop someone talking. It is difficult for someone to communicate if they don't feel respected.
- Don't appear distracted.
- Don't miss the point – this is related to active listening. If you misunderstand, people are unlikely to keep talking.

Next steps



Activity 8 – future development of your skills

Use the following checklist to identify your strengths and growth areas. To do this, use a scale of 1-10. If you feel that you are always able to incorporate this point into your practice then score a 10, if you feel you rarely address this point in your practice score a 1. Your rating may be affected by a number of things including time to research, skills and training, 'personal baggage', your understanding of your professional role etc.

- ☐ Respond to signals of distress.
- ☐ Address sensitive issues including relationships.
- ☐ Understand the signals you are giving to a resident eg how busy or how open you are, how much you care or if you are being judgmental.
- ☐ Awareness of your own feelings during the encounter which might provide valuable clues about the resident, your relationship with them, your own barriers to referral and your personal competency.
- ☐ Seek out training to increase skills and confidence.
- ☐ Find out information on local providers.
- ☐ Find out how support services operate, what they provide and the criteria for referral.
- ☐ Work within confidential boundaries.
- ☐ Encourage contact with local support services.
- ☐ Respond positively to residents who may default on attending support services.
- ☐ Seek out and use peer mentoring support.

Once you have completed the checklist activity identify ways of getting support around the three areas that scored lowest on your sheet. These ratings are not fixed and will vary depending on a number of internal and external factors.

Complete the activity again once you have gained support around your chosen areas and see whether your ratings have increased in those areas.

Appendix 1 – couple relationships

Most couples start out 'in love', wanting the best for themselves and their children, but making a go of it – achieving a loving, stable relationship, is a challenge. Family life developments, times of change, expected and unwelcome happenings – all have to be successfully negotiated during the life of the couple and can undermine their stability. Few people are immune. Most of us will recognise and have experienced the change from the early romantic stage, to the reality of trying to live together.

We know from research that a great deal of the foundation building for successful relationships is achieved during the first five years and that many couples experience some level of relationship difficulty in these crucial years. These are testing times of change eg the birth of a first child or children requires major adjustment for a couple:

- romance
- disillusion
- reality
- stability and caring
- transitions.

A transition may be described as the process of changing from one state to another, such as a woman becoming a mother, a man losing his job or a family becoming homeless. The inevitable developmental changes of maturation or change challenge the original state of stability. The coping response of the person experiencing the transition will be influenced by their resources and capacity for change. Everyone, as we move 'from the cradle to the grave' have to work through many transitions. Life is rarely static and this is reflected in our relationships.

Coping with transitions

As we look back on our own transition times we will see that sometimes we have been flexible and have survived transitions well, and at other times we have suffered distress and anxiety. The ability, energy and commitment to cope with transitions are affected by:

- stress*
- family background
- self-esteem
- support
- education/information
- health.

* Stress may be associated with a number of separate or coexisting factors and this can have a cumulative effect.



Guidance

“I find it is very important not to be overwhelmed by the complexity of a resident's case and to try and hone in on what can be solved by a local government intervention”

A councillor from Chorley Borough Council

When a transition becomes a crisis

When the response to internal or external stress cannot be managed by a resident's usual coping mechanisms, they experience a state of crisis. They are then faced with what seems to be an impossible dilemma which, for the time being, is beyond their normal problem-solving skills.

A crisis is an upset in a steady state, a turning point, a disruption or breakdown in a person's or couple's normal and usual pattern of functioning that creates a state of 'disequilibrium'. During a state of disequilibrium people suffer from increased anxiety, tension and disorganisation, and attempt to resolve their situation with their normal help-seeking and problem-solving methods. Research shows that many of us will turn for help to people that we know or trust, as part of our help-seeking behaviour. Often these are people whose work brings them into routine contact with families such as councillors.

During this period minimum intervention can have maximum impact. "A minimum of therapeutic intervention during the brief crisis period can often produce a maximum therapeutic effect.



Guidance

Practice-derived wisdom suggests that access to help should be available early and that help is best timed at the onset of a crisis experience. The goal of crisis intervention is to reduce stress and sustain the clients coping." (Marmor, 1979)

Excerpts from a paper edited by
Dr N Rao Punukollu – Recent Advances
in Crisis Intervention

Appendix 2 – resources

Printed publications

LGA Councillor's Guide www.local.gov.uk

Useful websites

www.local.gov.uk

The LGA website is an invaluable source of help and advice for all those in local government. It has many pages discussing community leadership and a number of publications, a series of case studies, the Knowledge Hub, and development programmes for councillors and council officers. For more information please go to www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership

LG Inform

LG Inform presents you with up-to-date published data about your local area and the performance of your council or fire and rescue authority. Whether you are interested in scrutiny, a particular service area, or simply need an overview, it can help you review and compare performance with other authorities.
<http://lginform.local.gov.uk/>

Citizens Advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Website of the Office for National Statistics

(ONS) which provides ward profiles.
www.ons.gov.uk/help/localstatistics

The Young Foundation study on changing role of councillors

<http://youngfoundation.org/>

Useful sources of support

Relate (National Marriage Guidance),

telephone 0300 100 1234

www.relate.org.uk

Refuge (for women and children against domestic violence)

24 hour national helpline 0808 2000 247

www.refuge.org.uk

Marriage Care

telephone 0800 389 3801

email info@marriagecare.org

www.marriagecare.org.uk

South London Family Centre (formerly African Caribbean Family Mediation service)

telephone 0208 671 5843

email southlondonfamily@yahoo.co.uk

Asian Family Counselling Service

telephone 0208 571 3933

email afcs@btconnect.com

Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships

telephone 020 7380 1960

email appointments@tccr.org.uk

www.tccr.org.uk

National Family Mediation

telephone 01392 271610

email general@nfm.org.uk

www.nfm.org.uk

Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)

free 24-hour helpline 0808 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

Samaritans

24-hour helpline 08457 90 90 90

www.samaritans.org

Childline

free helpline 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

**British Association for Counselling
& Psychotherapy**

telephone 01455 883316

www.bacp.co.uk

**British Association for Counselling
& Psychotherapy B**

ACP House

15 St John's Business Park

Lutterworth LE17 4HB

Switchboard

Lesbian Gay, Bi sexual Transgender + helpline

<https://switchboard.lgbt/>

Refugee Council on line

telephone 020 7346 6700

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

For Training In Brief Encounters®

Model contact:

OnePlusOne

CAN Mezzanine

7-14 Great Dover Street

London SE1 4YR

Telephone 020 3096 7871

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