

BISHOP HARVEY FAMILY SERVICE

Catholic Children's Society (Westminster)

Crusade of Rescue



About the Work of the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists (CAPTs) offer treatment to children and adolescents whose disturbance or unhappiness is impairing their normal functioning or development, and putting them at risk.

Most CAPTs work in multi-disciplinary teams and make a distinctive contribution in terms of keeping in mind the emotional experiences of disturbed or abused children. Many also offer support to GP's paediatric staff, health visitors, social workers and teachers.

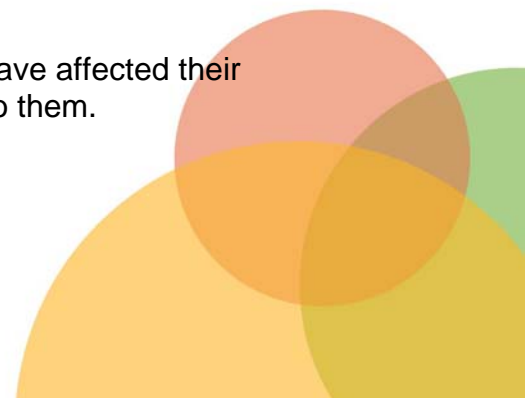
A high proportion of those referred to CAPTs have failed to respond satisfactorily to other forms of treatment. Even when external change takes place, some children and adolescents are still unable to gain relief from their emotional disturbance and symptoms.

CAPTs concentrate particularly on those for whom 'tlc' and or external change is not enough. They are trained to deal with a whole range of problems ranging from the most severe to the more ordinary hiccups; these include:

- **Emotional disorders** anxiety, phobias, school refusal, social withdrawal, unhappiness, suicide risk, inhibitions and obsessions
- **Conduct disorder** disobedience, aggression, bullying, truancy and delinquency
- **Serious mental illness** such as schizophrenia, anorexia
- **Developmental disorders** such as learning difficulties, mental handicap, and autism
- **Abuse** physical, emotional, sexual
- **Psychosomatic illnesses**

Intensive individual work lies at the heart of a CAPT's work. CAPTs help children gain insight and find new ways of relating to others. Their method is understanding of children's communications, both verbal and non-verbal. Through a relationship with the CAPT, children can learn to express and understand their anxieties, thoughts and feelings.

They can discuss, in a secure setting, those traumas which have affected their ability to relate to others, and have been a source of misery to them.



In very young children, play and drawing are the predominant means of expressing these feelings. Older children and adolescents usually use language.

The therapist gives meaning to what was previously unbearable and therefore incomprehensible to the child. The child's inner belief system powerfully determines his perception of the world. The task of the therapist is to work on the disparity between the inner and outer worlds, and support the child to clarify the distortions this can create.

CAPT's apply the knowledge gained from intensive clinical work to differing situations and client needs, by offering consultation, training and teaching to other professionals, enabling them to work more effectively with damaged children and adolescents they are in contact with—this includes both mental health and non-mental health professionals. CAPT's socialised training enables them to offer support to other professionals in understanding their clients' behaviour.

CAPT's input also extends to working with hospital staff and the families of ill or dying children.

CAPT's also offer preventative work at an early stage with children and families who are at risk, or are simply struggling with more ordinary parenting issues.

They offer help with methods of child rearing and with family relationships. The consultative work of CAPT's also develops awareness and skills amongst primary healthcare workers and professionals in educational settings who are in regular contact with families, and are therefore well placed to identify those at most risk.



For further enquiries or discussion please contact Patsy Ryz, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist and Service Coordinator.

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