

# Family Therapy for Bereaved Couples and Adult Families



St Joseph's  
Hospice



**Family therapy is offered to bereaved couples / adult families.** In this context, we define **family** as anyone you would include as being important in your life.

Family therapy is available to those aged 18+ who are residents of Hackney or registered with a Hackney GP.

The Clinic runs fortnightly on Thursdays from afternoon until evening.

How can you refer?

You can self-refer **via First Contact on 0300 30 30 400**

If you are a professional wanting to discuss a potential referral, please contact the Bereavement Team and ask to speak with the Family Therapist. **0208 525 6031**

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**Family life:** There is an assumption in family therapy that families know themselves best and with internal support, they will be able to develop solutions to their own problems without outside help. However, we also recognise that life can be challenging, particularly when there has been a bereavement. This can sometimes change how well a family is managing.

**What is family therapy?** Family therapy / systemic psychotherapy is a way of working with people and systems who are in close or significant relationship with each other. Family therapists use a range of different models to help explore family make-up, family structure, family history / stories, as well as family dynamics and resources.

**How does the family therapy clinic work?** The Adult Family Clinic is a clinic run by a team of qualified and trainee family therapists. Generally one therapist works directly with the family, however, with larger families, sometimes there is also a second therapist alongside for additional support and to ensure that everyone in the family is heard.

Alongside the therapist/s directly working with the family, there will be other therapists observing and offering support, this is known as a **reflecting team**.

The reason we have a reflecting team is that people not directly involved in speaking with each other can sometimes see areas or avenues to potentially explore that the main therapist/s doesn't. This can lead to more options being opened up which families may find helpful.

**What do sessions look like?** Sessions are structured to allow the bulk of the therapeutic work to take place between the lead/second therapist with the family. Halfway through, or sometimes at other points during the session, the reflecting team will offer observations and/or ask questions to the therapists and the family. Some of these observations might help to influence the direction of the session, equally, they may be discarded if they are not helpful.

**Clinic aims:** The aim of a **team clinic** is linked to the idea of family itself. Families tend to be made up of more than one person; this can include couples, parents, siblings and other significant people such as friends or professionals. When more than one person is present, it is helpful to have more than one therapist to help shed light on different views. As is often said; *more heads are better than one*.

**How will the clinic help?** The clinic tends to meet with a family to get an understanding of what the bereavement needs might be, and whether the clinic is a helpful place to meet again. For some, meeting as a family does not feel helpful, and we may discuss other possibilities with you which might be a better fit. Sometimes, the assessment alone is helpful in starting a conversation, and the family feel able to continue it themselves, therefore no further input is needed by the clinic.

**Clinic timings:** If meeting as a family is deemed helpful by the couple/family and the team, we then agree a short number of sessions. This is usually fortnightly with a review to assess whether continuing to meet is still helpful. Each session normally lasts 60 minutes.