

The Cathja Project Guide for Referrers

The workshop provides a day service for people with severe and enduring mental health problems. It takes place on a fully converted 130ft barge, the Cathja, which is permanently moored on the Thames at Isleworth. The provision is based on the premise that creative activity can have a significant influence on confidence and self-image. At its basic level, making one's mark is a fundamental statement of "I am" as such it represents a real opportunity for therapeutic interaction.

The activity takes place in a group of 8-9 people. This size of group enables genuine contact and support to take place. Movement away from the dependent role is encouraged at all levels as is a sense of ownership of the project.

Referrals

The operational parameters of the workshop allow for the involvement of individuals having a wide range of mental health problems.

But there are also those for whom the Cathja Project is inappropriate:

- Persons with severe learning difficulties
- Persons with substance or alcohol abuse problems
- Persons with degenerative organic mental conditions

The service has had best results with people who experience severe and enduring mental health conditions such as: bi-polar, schizophrenia, uni-polar conditions, rather than personality disorder related conditions, including OCD as a lead diagnosis.

Referrals will be considered from statutory agencies, G.P.'s and self referrals. A duplicate referral form must be completed by the potential client. On receipt of the completed referral form we will arrange an interview at which the operation of the workshop will be explained. The decision whether to take up a place will then rest with the client, providing he or she does not fall outside the referral criteria, however we attempt to maintain a balance in the group of gender, ethnicity and diagnosis.

Attendance

The workshop operates from 10 am to 3.30 pm from Monday to Friday. Persons attending will be expected to make their own way to the workshop and to have sufficient self-motivation to attend at least one full day per week.

Evaluation

The workshop operates within the Care Plan Approach to client care, attendance by the workshop staff at CPA meetings will be only at the request of the client.

Further enquiries to the Workshop Tel: 020 8560 8360
Cathja, Rear of 20, Church Street, Isleworth MIDDX TW7 6BG

HOW THE CATHJA PROJECT CAN HELP YOU

The project is a community-based workshop for people who have had some form of mental illness and are trying to regain control of their lives. It operates as a fairly small group – there are usually no more than ten people in the workshop at any one time – as too many would create an impersonal atmosphere.

The workshop has full-time staff and is well equipped with tools and machinery for woodworking and other related activities such as painting and varnishing.

There are two main aspects of the workshop philosophy. The first is the idea making your mark. When you make something, whether it be a box or a painting, you have invested something of yourself in the thing that you have made – this leads to a greater sense of self-worth and improves your confidence.

Secondly, a move away from dependence is encouraged. The ball will always be in your court as to when to have a tea break or how long you wish to stay at the workshop or any number of decisions. You should experience a growing power and confidence as you learn to take more control over your own existence.

The workshop is open from 10 am to 3.30 pm, Monday to Friday. It is important to realise that there are no pressures in the workshop. You are not going to be criticized for not turning out a certain body of work within a certain time, but by the same token the secure group setting should encourage you to be as creative and resourceful as you can.

The effect of spending even just a short time in the Cathja's productive and supportive atmosphere can be profound, and has already led to many so called "hopeless" cases regaining a positive attitude to life.

Written by Nick - Client