



For better
mental health

Dartford

Gravesham

Swanley



Caring for Mental Health

A service for the Carers of
people with mental health issues

Caring for someone who suffers from any of a range of mental health issues can be a difficult and draining task. Many people doing this find themselves becoming isolated, stressed and unsupported, and have to cope without the information and advice that would make their task easier.

They may be caring for relatives, partners or friends who have mental health issues such as:

- depression
- anorexia
- bipolar
- severe anxiety
- agoraphobia
- schizophrenia
- personality disorder, etc.

“Caring for Mental Health” is a service provided by Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind which is focused purely on the needs of such carers.

You are entitled to use these services if you meet all three of the following:

- You are a relative, partner or friend who provides support to someone with mental health issues
- You are over the age of 18 and live in the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley area, even if the person you care for lives elsewhere

We provide:

- Support groups where carers can get together to share the difficulties of being a carer with other people who understand
- 1 to 1 consultations with staff working in the “Caring for Mental Health” service
- Advocacy to support carers in their dealings with mental health professionals and other agencies
- Workshops for carers on all aspects of mental health and the caring role
- A listening ear when a carer needs to talk over issues they are facing
- An informal network of carers who use our services, who wish to contact each other outside of support groups for social events or mutual support
- Information on carers' rights to benefits and their legal rights
- Opportunities and support to be involved in the planning and provision of local services for carers
- Access to our specialist library of books and videos on mental health issues

DGS Mind is developing the Caring for Mental Health Service to offer improved services to Rural Areas and to carers from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.

We also administer the carers' break funds. This is used to fund carers' breaks where the person needs to have time away from the person they care for, in order to "recharge their batteries". This may be through holidays, short breaks, educational or leisure pursuits etc, funded on an individual or group basis.

However, to access the funding for carers' breaks, you must also have been assessed by social services as eligible for these funds. We can explain how to apply for this assessment.

Sometimes carers also have mental health problems of their own. If this applies to you, you should speak to the co-ordinator to discuss how DGS Mind can best serve you.

For more information contact:
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What carers have said about the "Caring for Mental Health" service:

About the support groups . . .

"It's my own island to do what I want"

"I feel that I am no longer on my own trying to cope"

"We are able to laugh and help each other"

"People understood me"

About the 1 to 1 sessions . . .

"I can talk about my true feelings and know it will go no further"

"Learnt how to deal with certain situations"

"Stops me going out of my mind"

About the Breaks . . .

"Time for just me, to be me without being responsible for someone else"

"This was the first break we have had . . . it was very special"

"I was really lucky to go away on a group breakaway . . . we all helped each other and had a good laugh"

About the group outings . . .

"I can be myself, don't have to worry about anyone else"

"I find these enormously helpful, as the people I am with are all in the same boat"

DGS Mind provides other services including:

Community Services:

A wide range of drop-ins, activity and other sessions, as well as self-management groups, individual assistance and assisted volunteering.

Housing:

Long and short-term supported housing.

Counselling:

More than 25 counsellors provide weekly sessions to individuals at venues in Gravesend and Dartford.

Caring for Mental Health:

A service for the carers of people with a mental health problem. Support groups, training, 1 to 1 support sessions as well as arranging breaks for the carers.

Education:

Placements for social work students, mental health nurse trainees and police cadets. Mental health training sessions in various settings.

All our leaflets are available in large print, Braille, or other formats, on request.

In DGS Mind we are committed to continuously improve our services through quality review and service user feedback. We follow the values of the Code of Practice for Social Care Workers as defined by the General Social Care Council.

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www.dgsmind.co.uk

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