

Specialist Assistant Coordinators at UK FSY 2020

Background

In 2019 it was decided to have two specialist assistant coordinator roles – 1:1 AC and a mental health AC.

It had been evident over the past few years at FSY that there had been an increase in the number of youth requiring 1 to 1 (1 to 2) support due to Autism/ anxiety / depression. There has also been an increase in the number of youth not declaring anxiety or depression but then disclosing that information to their counsellor at FSY.

This had led to an increase of pressure on counsellors and ACs looking after a group of counsellors. It had been suggested that specialist ACs be called who won't have a responsibility for a group of counsellors but will be able to provide support to youth, counsellors, ACs and other members of the FSY leadership team.

It is not expected that these ACs be experts in these fields nor are they expected to give any kind of treatment etc but to make sure the appropriate support is given to all concerned. It is expected that they will work as Co ACs - to support each other.

These specialist ACs will provide support to counsellors and youth which then allows group ACs to continue with their responsibilities.

The Area FSY team will provide contact details of on call support for these specialists.

Following feedback from the specialist ACs in 2019 the following is recommended:

- These ACs don't have any other role or responsibilities at FSY
- Ensure there is a session at either mini FSY or weekend before FSY where these roles can be discussed with and understood by counsellors
- Ensure counsellors and group ACs understand it is not necessary to refer all situations to the specialist ACs but only more serious matters to be referred to the specialist ACs
- Counsellors/Group ACs to ensure that youth are not told the specialist ACs are trained mental health counsellors, but simply someone to talk to about more serious matters (to avoid referring to them as mental health ACs)
- Counsellors to understand the need to check up with youth who have been referred to the specialist ACs so counsellors can see how their youth are progressing and re-join their group as soon as possible
- All staff at FSY to understand that any youth raising serious concerns in dealing with moral issues e.g. LGBT, should be discussed with session director so appropriate support can be identified and given
- Arrange a meeting at mini FSY between health counsellors and the specialist ACs so health counsellors can be supportive of youth who declare mental health issues to them and only refer more serious matters to specialist ACs
- That these ACs meet with a member of the leadership team each evening to discuss any support needed, any youth they are concerned about, an opportunity to talk about how they are feeling as specialist ACs (any immediate serious concerns about youth should be discussed with the session directors) and to consider discussing the support they need with on call support provided by the Area Office
- Specialist ACs to be given "health counsellor" access to the FSY portal so they can briefly record discussions with youth

1 to 1 AC

This AC will:

- Be made aware of all youth where it has been agreed will have a 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 counsellor.
- Be made aware of counsellors called as 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 counsellors
- Support these counsellors in preparing for FSY to meet their youth's needs.
- Ensure all 1 to 1 and 1 to 2 counsellors contact the families of their assigned youth to clarify details and understand the youth's needs.
- Participate in any training given to these counsellors at the weekend before FSY.
- During FSY, minister to those called as 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 counsellors, ensuring they are ok and fulfilling their responsibilities (not becoming too stressed themselves!)
- Raising any concerns with the session directors initially and coordinators
- Work closely with the mental health AC
- Have access to on call specialist support

Mental Health AC

This AC will:

- Be made aware of all youth who have disclosed mental health issues on their application forms (regardless if they have a 1 to 1 or not)
- Be made aware of which of these youth have a 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 counsellor.
- Be made aware of counsellors with mental health issues and minister to them throughout the week
- Participate in any training given to these counsellors at the weekend before FSY.
- During FSY, minister to those counsellors (not 1 to 1 or 1 to 2) who have youth in their groups with mental health issues ensuring both the youth and the counsellor are ok.
- Raising any concerns with the session directors initially and coordinators
- Be the initial point of contact for any counsellor (including health counsellors) whose youth disclose any mental health issues during FSY – allowing the group counsellor to continue with their responsibilities and making the session directors aware.
- Supporting the session directors as needed in dealing with the above situation
- Work closely with the 1 to 1 AC
- Have access to on call specialist support

Specialist ACs should ensure they follow the guidelines in the First Presidency letter of May 2016 when meeting with participants which states,

To protect youth and children, leaders should always avoid one-on-one situations with a youth or a child unless the leader and young person are clearly visible to nearby adult leaders