

Evaluating the Village Counselling Service (VCS)

METHODOLOGY

The experiences of service users; service providers; and key external stakeholders were gathered using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods:



Client satisfaction questionnaire¹ (N=72)

Focus group with parents whose children have attended VCS (N=8)

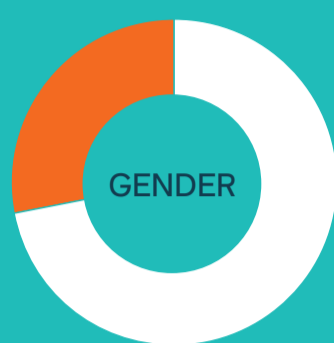
Focus group with VCS counsellors (N=7)

Interviews with key external stakeholders (N=3)

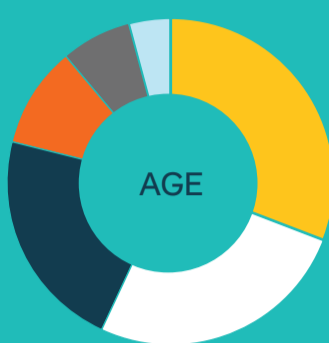


CLIENT SURVEY FINDINGS:

SAMPLE



FEMALE: 72%
MALE: 28%



31-40: 31%
21-30: 26%
41-50: 22%
Under 20: 10%
Over 60: 7%
51-60: 4%



OVER 10: 64%
6-10: 20%
5 OR LESS: 16%

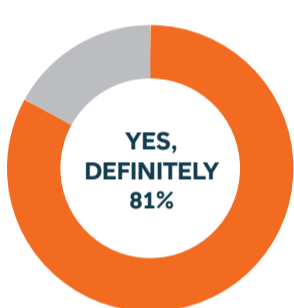
The results of the CSQ-8 were overwhelmingly positive with clients reporting that they are extremely satisfied with the service they are receiving from the VCS.

With a mean score for the CSQ-8 of 30.52, VCS clients scored higher than the reported norm of 27.8 for adult in mental health/ counselling settings.²

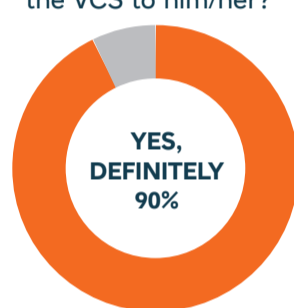
How would you rate the quality of the service you have received?



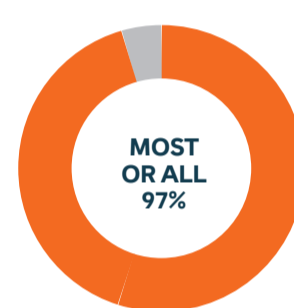
Did you get the kind of service you wanted?



If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend the VCS to him/her?



To what extent has our program met your needs?



How satisfied are you with the amount of help you have received?



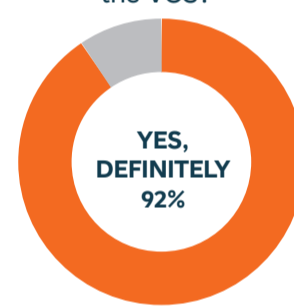
Have the services you received helped you to deal more effectively with your problems?



In an overall general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you have received?



If you were to seek help again, would you come back to the VCS?



OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

"Fantastic service. I have recommended and will continue to do so. Thank You."

"The service has made a huge difference in my life. I'm sorry I did not seek help forty years ago. Thank You."

"It's a brilliant service and I'm very thankful and appreciative for the help I've received."

"Excellent Service. I have come back three times and have recommended it to other people who have found it positive and helpful."

"Unbelievable work you guys do. So caring and supportive. A HUGE THANK YOU!!"

"Thank you for the wonderful support. Alive and looking forward to the future with hope."

"Thank you so much for providing this wonderful service. At a time in my life I felt I could not get through, there was a lifeline and it was you."

"The VCS are great. Without their help I would still be in a dark place. A service like this is invaluable to a community."

CLIENT FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS:

All of the parents within this focus group sample express very high levels of satisfaction with the services their children have received from the VCS. They describe the real, tangible, positive impact that attending both group and one-to-one counseling at the VCS has had on their children's behaviour and overall wellbeing.

Participants describe the individual counselors who have worked with their children as 'amazing' and believe that they, and not only their children, have benefited considerably from attending the VCS. The VCS is described as a 'safe space' where both parents and their children feel supported.

"..he was being bullied in school and he didn't tell us ...and it was like a relief to him that it was out in the open, that he could tell....he skips in here now, he wants to come up here to talk which has made a big difference... he's meeting other kids as well - there's a complete difference in him."

"I've found it absolutely fantastic...[her counsellor] is amazing, the extra mile that she goes is unreal.."

KEY STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWS:

All stakeholders express very high levels of satisfaction with the service that the VCS provides. The VCS is repeatedly described as a 'quality', 'professional', 'responsive' service which meets the complex and often urgent needs of the local community.

As well as meeting these urgent needs the stakeholders describe how the VCS plays an important role in early identification and prevention, and is becoming a key part of the wider integrated service offered to individuals and families experiencing mental health difficulties within the area.

FOCUS GROUP WITH VCS COUNSELLORS:

Overall the counsellors who participated within the focus group feel that the VCS provides a very good and worthwhile service to clients who otherwise may not be able to access any counselling support.

The group also highlight the flexibility and person-centred nature of how clients are treated as a key positive characteristic of the service. There is clear flexibility in terms of the number of sessions which a client can avail of.

"I've never felt that you have to have the job done in a certain amount of time which is very important"

1. The CSQ-8 is a widely-used instrument for assessing client satisfaction with mental healthcare services, including counselling services. It is a brief, standardised measure of client satisfaction that is comprised of eight items. Greenfield, T.K., & Attkisson, C.C. (1989) Steps toward a multifactorial satisfaction scale for primary care and mental health services. Evaluation and Programme Planning, 1989, 12:271-278

2. Atkinson, C.C., & Greenfield, T.K. (2004). The UCSF Client Satisfaction Scales: I. The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8. In M.E. Maruish (Ed.), The use of psychological testing for treatment planning and outcomes assessment (3rd Ed) (pp. 799-811). Volume 3. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.