

**solace**  
women's aid



# PIE4Shelters

The Refuge as a PIE

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# Peace of Mind Project

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- Refuge Access for All
- Early 2017
- Improving access and outcomes for women/families fleeing VAWG with additional MH and problematic substance use
- In UK – traditional view is that support needs are high
- DCLG – Islington, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Barnet and consultancy and evaluation from AVA



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# Peace of Mind Project - Components

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- Steering Group – SU and partner membership
- Improved access to refuge – smooth transfer of support and early access in new location
- Establishing a Psychologically Informed Environment to and improve support in refuges



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“But we are not counsellors!”



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# Practical Stuff

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- Experience at point of seeking and referral critical
- Learning sets for staff
- Use of physical space available
- Offering space to talk about trauma
- Building trusted relationships – space to better understand and solve problems
- Modelling a relationship which contrasts with abuser
- Creativity of approach and activity
- Psychoeducational approach – clients and staff
- Whole family approach – including women apart from children



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# Peace of Mind Project – Main Outcomes

- Significant reduction number service users turned away because of mental health support needs
- Marked improvement in staff understanding, knowledge and confidence around the psychological needs of service users, and how best to support them
- Positive feedback from service users
- Overcapacity of local mental health and substance use services resulted in lack of joint protocols and pathways



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# Peace of Mind Project - Outcomes

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It changed my whole thinking process with the women we work with and my own self-care.

The Solace staff are very approachable, happy, down to earth people, dedicated to their jobs, working from their hearts, understanding and supportive. I commend them all. They help us find ourselves again.

Games using the aggressive release toys were key in her being able to express her anger towards her father and her mother's helplessness.



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# Going forward – what are challenges?

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- Awakening experience for staff
- Staff turnover – regular bite size training important
- Readiness of woman at entry/constraints of time in service
- Increasing conflict with resolution of practical matters
- Boundaries – use of space/time/flexible approach
- Staff sometimes feel conflicted e.g. rent collection
- Managing house dynamics
- Availability of mental health and substance use services
- Whole service approach – PIE in mind!



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# Questions

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**“ I smile now that Mummy smiles ”**

**- Solace child in play therapy**

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