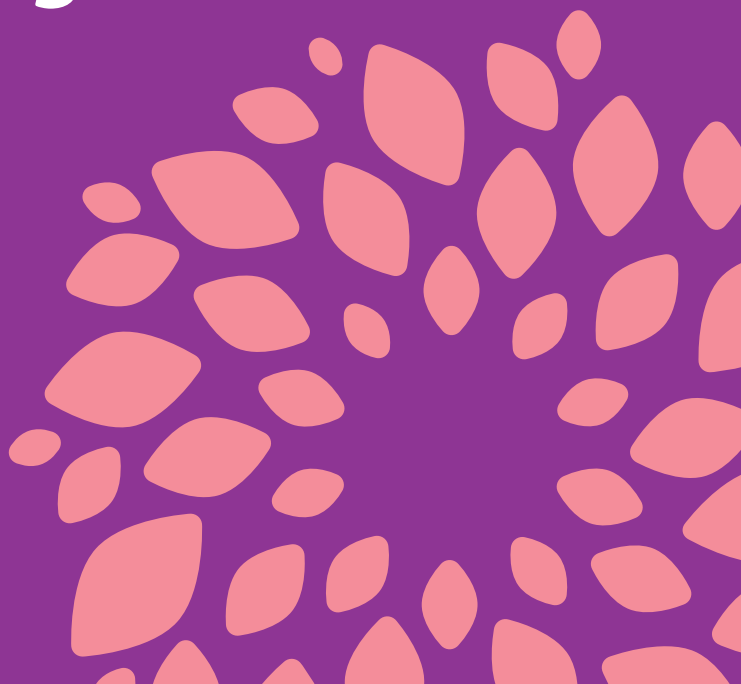




Compassion- Focused Therapy for Older Adults (CFT-OA) programme



What is Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT)?

Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) is an evidence-based psychological intervention that aims to increase self-compassion and reduce self-criticism and shame.

While the term “compassion” can mean different things, in this programme we understand it as a “sensitivity to suffering in self and others, along with a commitment to try alleviate and prevent future suffering” (Gilbert, 2010).

CFT recognises that feeling cared for, accepted, and connected with ourselves and others is important for our psychological wellbeing.

When we experience these things, we tend to feel soothed and this enables us to live our lives in a healthier way.

Some people experience strong internal criticism and feelings of shame that result in rarely ever feeling a sense of being at ease. This can make life very painful.



The Compassion-Focused Therapy for Older Adults (CFT-OA) programme aims to explore and teach ways to work with our pain and suffering, and to generate feelings of soothing and connectedness.

Who is the CFT-OA programme for?

The CFT-OA programme is for those who have been living with self-criticism and shame for a long time, who struggle to feel relieved, reassured or safe and who have difficulties receiving compassion from others and offering self-compassion.

In order to attend the CFT-OA programme you must be under the care of a consultant in St Patrick's Mental Health services (SPMHS) or referred to older adult psychology day programmes by an external referrer such as your GP, community mental health team or a geriatrician.

What is the structure of the CFT-OA programme?

The CFT-OA programme consists of 18 group sessions running once per week. At the midway point, each group member will attend an individual reflection session where they will have an opportunity to reflect on their experience of the group before completing the remaining group sessions.

At the end of the group, participants are invited to an individual session to reflect on their experience in group and explore next steps. CFT-OA is a closed group meaning that all participants begin and end the programme at the same time.

This helps to build connection and a sense of belonging. Our aim in group is to develop attributes and skills associated with compassion. These skills will involve working with imagery, attention, reasoning, and engaging in compassionate behaviour.



In CFT-OA, participants are invited to share as much as they are comfortable with, and the facilitators will support and guide them with this.

Who runs the CFT-OA programme?

The programme is run by a team of two clinical psychologists and an assistant psychologist. SPMHS supports education, so occasionally a psychologist in clinical training may also facilitate groups.

When and where?

The group takes place on Thursday mornings in St Patrick's University Hospital.

How are referrals made to the CFT-OA programme?

If you are interested in attending the CFT-OA programme, you can discuss it with your SPMHS team. Your team psychologist will then meet with you and help determine if this group is a good fit for your needs.

GPs, community mental health teams and geriatricians can also make referrals to older adult psychology day programmes. Referrals can be made using referral forms on stpatricks.ie or by contacting the Referral and Assessment Service by email: referrals@stpatricks.ie.



Referrals should be marked as Older Adult Psychology Day Programmes. Potential participants will be offered an assessment appointment with one of the team of psychologists who run the older adult psychology programmes to explore which programme is likely to meet the needs of the potential participant, with the referral then directed accordingly.

More information

For further information, contact the CFT-OA team on 01 249 3554.

If you are interested in finding out about other psychology programmes available to older adult service users at SPMHS, please don't hesitate to talk to your SPMHS team.

If you're not currently under the care of SPMHS, you can find out more about older adult psychology day programmes at stpatricks.ie

Helpful Resources

- **The Compassionate Mind Foundation UK:**
www.compassionatemind.co.uk
- **Compassion Focused Therapy: Distinctive Features.**
Gilbert, P. (2010).
- **The Compassionate Mind Workbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Developing your Compassionate Self.**
Irons, C., & Beaumont, E. (2017).

St Patrick's Mental Health Services

James' Street, Dublin 8, Ireland.

t: +353 1 249 3200 f: +353 1 679 8865

www.stpatricks.ie