

Family Participation

Family dynamics are altered by addiction and this means that unless the significant family members are involved in the treatment process the outcome for the patient can be affected. With this in mind family participation in treatment is highly recommended.

At Castle Craig we strongly recommend that family members are involved in counselling from the outset and our staff endeavour to build close links with the family during treatment.

Admissions

Enquiries regarding admissions are often made by family members. At this point the Admissions Manager will provide information, answer questions and ensure that the patient and family receive by post a DVD about the treatment programme along with a 'Frequently Asked Questions' leaflet. In some cases it may be appropriate for the family member who is making initial enquiries to consult with the doctor at the hospital.

Family members/significant others (i.e. spouses, partners, friends, colleagues, professional carers, or employers) are invited to the initial assessment at Castle Craig where they will be seen by the doctor and the focal therapist. Their input is valuable and will be documented by staff. This visit provides a further opportunity to inform family about the treatment approach at Castle Craig, discuss visiting times and provide the family with an information package. Information is also sought from the family to gauge their knowledge and experience of addiction.

Family Therapy

Following the patient's admission the family are contacted by the focal therapist who is responsible for facilitating family engagement and participation. They will be invited to attend counselling sessions, arranged for a mutually convenient time. Patients from

abroad are contacted by letter and by telephone and also encouraged to attend family counselling and, wherever it is feasible and appropriate, the residential three day family programme held at The Lodges.

Family counselling sessions are normally held on two occasions in the first stage of treatment and this involvement can continue following transfer to the extended care unit. The sessions are designed to promote an understanding of the illness of addiction and educate family on how they can support the recovery process.

The residential programme, which is supervised by our specialist therapist, provides a more intensive environment to facilitate education and supportive therapy and where feelings of pain and hurt and confusion can be explored. Details of all these sessions are documented in the patient's record and participants are invited to fill in an evaluation form after each session. Family programmes are facilitated in both Scotland and the Netherlands.

The Sunday afternoon programme for visitors is another setting where active family involvement takes place. The duty therapist welcomes visitors and provides an overview of addiction as a family illness. Visitors are invited to attend the self help groups that are run at the hospital on Sundays. The self help groups that offer this service are Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), ALANON, Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and Over Eaters Anonymous. Members of these self help groups are on hand to offer the families advice and encouragement.

The Annual Reunion

Family members are invited to attend and actively participate in the annual summer reunion for the patients and Friends of Castle Craig. Some family members take the opportunity to share the experience of their own journey in recovery with the audience.

Discharge Planning

We strongly recommend and encourage family or carer involvement in discharge-planning. Information and contact details of self-help groups and other relevant agencies are provided and documented in the two year aftercare plan.

After Care

Our relationship with the family continues after treatment. During aftercare counselling sessions the ongoing recovery for the whole family is explored. After the patient leaves treatment the family often phone Castle Craig for advice and guidance and, if the need arises they can attend the hospital for individual support.

Gordon Hogg
Head Therapist

