

ISAS – Incest and Sexual Abuse Survivors

ISAS – Incest and Sexual Abuse Survivors is a Nottinghamshire based charity providing face-to-face, telephone and group counselling to adult male and female survivors of childhood sexual abuse, their partners and family members, throughout the county.

An organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, The Survivors Trust and the National Counselling Society, ISAS's services are free to all men and women over the age of 16, regardless of race, class, sexual orientation, disability and special needs. These include:

- Up to 12 months one-to-one or group counselling for survivors
- Up to 12 weeks counselling for relatives and partners of survivors
- Eight weeks immediate counselling for victims of rape and serious assault
- Telephone support
- Information and training for the voluntary and statutory sector
- Training, workshops and support for volunteer counsellors
- Accredited training approved by the Counselling society.

The charity was established in 1991 by Newark and Sherwood Volunteer Services, Women's Aid and other organisations to provide specialist counselling for female, and, later, male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. During the last two decades, it has also worked with sexually abused clients remanded in prison, in order to prevent them reoffending further, and established a provision for adults over the age of 16 who have experienced rape or sexual assault.

Working with between 100-150 survivors at any one time and delivering around 6,000 counselling sessions a year, ISAS's current services include:

- One-to-one and group counselling for males over the age of 16 in the City of Nottingham who have experienced sexual violence, including their non-abusive family members, partners and carers.
- One-to-one and group counselling for males and females over the age of 16 in the County of Nottinghamshire and Bassetlaw who have experienced sexual violence, including their non-abusive family members, partners and carers.
- One-to-one counselling of inmates at HMP Randy who have experienced sexual abuse.
- The Male Therapeutic Group offering weekly two-hour sessions for male survivors over the age of 16.
- Thanks to funding secured from the Ministry of Justice Rape Support Fund, The Rape Project, a specialist counselling and support service for male and female victims of rape and sexual assault, over the age of 16, in the County of Nottinghamshire.

ISAS accepts self-referrals and those from GPs, mental health teams, social services, the probation service, prison services, criminal justice teams, drug and alcohol teams, VCS organisations and other counselling services. All referrals are offered an initial assessment within two weeks of contact and are advised of waiting times for counselling in their area.

All of the charity's 60+ volunteer counsellors, who generally work with two clients at any one time, are qualified or in the final year of a counselling diploma. A strict selection criteria, ensures they are

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suitable to work with the client group and all members of the team receive in-depth training to ensure they have the skills and awareness to work with them.

All volunteer counsellors are also provided with a buddy, who is an experienced ISAS counsellor, for their first six months of working with clients. In addition, counsellors engage in regular, ongoing professional development with appropriate training, and receive monthly supervision from external qualified and experienced supervisors.

The experience ISAS has gained in providing these specialist services, has enabled it to provide extensive and specialist training for its volunteer counsellors and other organisations, accredited by the National Counselling Society. Its training and provision of placements for student counsellors has been endorsed and recommended by local colleges and universities.

Usually facilitated by two qualified counsellors, the training ISAS is able to offer to groups of eight to 14 people from the statutory and voluntary sector, individuals and groups, includes:

- An introduction to childhood sexual abuse awareness
- Exploring the issues of childhood sexual abuse in more depth
- Working with male survivors of childhood sexual abuse
- Offender behaviour
- Working with intermediate trauma
- Group therapy training
- Working with ritual abuse survivors
- Working with dreams.

Alongside income from donations, training delivered and other fundraising efforts,

“Counselling has helped more than I could ever have dreamed. Just talking about and opening up, I finally feel as if I can put the past behind me and get on with my life.”

“Words cannot explain the value of the support I have received from ISAS. When I look to my past, I am almost unrecognisable as a person. So many things have changed, all for the better, and I actually feel like I have a future to look forward to and embrace.”

ISAS is currently supported by:

- Nottinghamshire County Council Grant Aid
- Ministry of Justice Rape Support Project
- Ministry of Justice Victim and Witness Fund
- NHS Nottingham City
- NHS Bassetlaw
- North Nottinghamshire Drug Alcohol Team
- The Jones 1986 Registered Charity
- Boots Charitable Trust.

For further information on ISAS visit www.isas-notts.org.uk.