

Things that they know?

Qualifications are not the most important thing you can't learn everything from a book.

THEY HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO DEAL WITH THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE THEY MEET AND THEY HAVE RELEVANT EXPERIENCE.

"They need more understanding of other professional roles. And have ability to link with other professionals easily."

THEY ARE GOOD COMMUNICATORS

"They need to be able to identify when there is a problem. Pick out the right bits from all the information"

THEY KNOW HOW TO PUT YOU AT EASE AND HAVE EMPATHY.

"They should know about how to bring folk together and put them at ease."

THEY KNOW THAT SOMETIMES LIFE CAN BE COMPLEX AND PEOPLE NEED HELP TO UNPACK IT.

"They know that sometimes life can be complex and people need help to unpack it."

THEY SHOULD ALL KNOW ABOUT BEHAVIOUR AND HEALTH AND FITNESS.

"They have good local knowledge."

THEY SHOULD ALL KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT CONNECTING PEOPLE AND KNOW HOW TO GET THINGS SORTED.

"They know that I am a person with feelings too, but I am a person with them paperwork! They know that practical advice is sometimes better than hands on experience!"

"They know that I am a person with feelings too, but I am a person with them paperwork! They know that practical advice is sometimes better than hands on experience!"

"They know that I am a person with feelings too, but I am a person with them paperwork! They know that practical advice is sometimes better than hands on experience!"

The sort of things they'd say?

"They explain who they are and why they are seeing you."

CONVERSATIONS ARE ABOUT HELPING.

MEETINGS ARE ENCOURAGING POSITIVE AND CALM.

"They speak frankly and don't mince their words."

THEY GIVE CLEAR ADVICE BASED ON THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF PROBLEMS OR SITUATIONS.

"They leave you with something to think about."

THEY DON'T TELL YOU ANYTHING UNLESS THEY ARE SURE IT'S ACCURATE AND USEFUL.

"They give you positive feedback."

THE HELPING PROFESSIONAL WILL TELL YOU WHEN THEY HAVE GOT SOMETHING WRONG. THEY CAN APOLOGISE.

"They give me a kick up the bum when I mess it up."

or wouldn't say?

- Talk down to you.
- Judge you.
- Tell you you're stupid.
- Say something that upsets you.
- Force you to do something.
- Tell you to take a couple of paracetamol.

say: "Things can only get better" say: "I don't have time to talk to you."

Things they're good at?

THEY GET THINGS DONE, OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN. THEY ARE CREATIVE, EVEN INSPIRING, IN THINKING ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HELP.

"They make me feel valued"

THEY ARE APPROACHABLE.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE IS THE KEY TO THE HELPING PROFESSIONAL.

THEY RESPECT YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

"They put people at ease."

THEY ARE GOOD AT LISTENING AND GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

"They start with a smile. They acknowledge that it's a person in front of them."

THEY CAN HELP PUT WORRIES AND CONCERNS INTO PERSPECTIVE.

"They have the ability to make me feel like an individual."

THEY ARE GOOD AT REFERRING YOU ON TO OTHER PEOPLE THAT CAN HELP MORE THAN THEY CAN.

"They are good at looking past the facade."

THEY STAY CALM AND PATIENT AND ARE GENTLE IN THEIR APPROACH.

"They explain things."

THEY ARE CARING AND HAVE EMPATHY

"They should be on the end of the phone if I need them"

THEY ARE NON-JUDGEMENTAL

THEY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE OVER TIME.

How they make a person feel?

"There's a whole knock on effect of feeling listened to ... and how you can carry that with you."

"I'm starting to feel that I'm worth caring about... slowly. I feel listened to and that my opinions count. It took a long time to get to this point and could see a reason to get up in the morning."

THEY LEAVE PEOPLE FEELING BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES.

"I feel less agitated."

"They make you feel comfortable, and so they build your confidence and self esteem. They're capable of coping and you know when to ask for help."

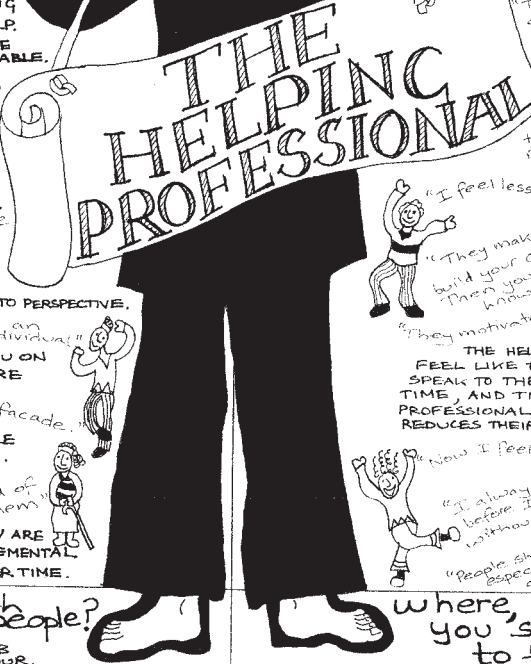
"They motivate me to help myself and stay in my outlook on life."

THE HELPING PROFESSIONAL MAKES PEOPLE FEEL LIKE THEY ARE WELCOME TO GO AND SPEAK TO THEM IF THERE ARE CONCERNS. THIS TAKES TIME, AND TIME ISN'T SOMETHING THAT EVERY PROFESSIONAL CAN OFFER, IF THEY CAN'T IT REDUCES THEIR ABILITY TO HELP.

"Now I feel more optimistic - I am a person!"

"I always feel 100 times better coming out than before I went in. I'm getting to say what I feel without somebody saying 'Oh you're being stupid'."

"People should feel confident and loved especially at school. Giving the kids a cuddle makes them feel more secure and worthy of themselves."



How they deal with people?

THEY ARE HAPPY IN THEIR JOB AND HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR.

"They are very professional, they have the right attitude. Always got a positive approach so they make you feel at ease. They are just themselves and that makes you feel more relaxed."

"They don't make promises they can't keep."

"They are at ease with me. They're interested. They accept me as they see me and my point of view."

A NON-JUDGEMENTAL APPROACH IS AT THE HEART OF THE WAY THEY DEAL WITH PEOPLE. THEY ARE POLITE AND NEVER OFF HAND.

"They are down to earth and not arrogant. They see me as an equal."

There's respect and a sense of humour, they spend time and they don't rush."

CONFIDENTIALITY IS CRUCIAL.

"They ask me what I think I feel I can trust them."

"Never underestimate a cup of tea and a informal blather."

"There's a partnership with parents to get to know children and their needs."

"They understand people's abusive backgrounds, they take time to be nurturing and to build trust. They listened to what I needed and kept in touch with me and let me know what was happening."

"There's mutual respect, they treat you as a person. They don't dismiss you. There's no snobbishness."

Where, when and how you should be able to find them?

ONE STOP SHOPS IMPROVE ACCESS.

"Accessibility is the key. Services should be local."

"It would be easier to find helping professionals in places that feel like community centres that host a lot of agencies."

"Schools have the potential to provide lots of good information for parents about supports for families."

GOOD SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE HELPING PROFESSIONAL INCLUDES THE PHONE BOOK, IN LEAFLETS OTHER PEOPLE GIVE YOU, AND LEAFLETS IN PLACES LIKE WAITING ROOMS. LOCAL PRESS CAN BE USED TO DESCRIBE WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE. SOME PEOPLE CAN ACCESS THE INTERNET AS A GOOD SOURCE OF INFORMATION, AND ITS 24/7 SO LOCAL SERVICES SHOULD USE IT.

"It is helpful when the hours offered by a service are as flexible as possible. A mix of drop-ins and appointments works best."

HELPING PROFESSIONALS NEED GOOD ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, SO YOU CAN BOOK APPOINTMENTS OR FIND OUT WHEN THE PROFESSIONAL IS AVAILABLE AGAIN.

"They should be open to contact from the general public who might have concerns about children or other vulnerable people in the community."

THE HELPING PROFESSIONAL CAN ALSO HELP THE SERVICE USER ACCESS OTHER PROFESSIONALS BY SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO MAKE NEW CONNECTIONS.

"Voluntary sector agencies are good ways to share information about what's available."