



Jemma Turner, Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead, The Rendezvous

NO TIME LIMIT ON HEALING

Helen Da Silva Wood, Chief Executive Officer, The Rendezvous

If you don't know the Rendezvous, then you're probably not in our target audience. Or maybe you've heard about us but are not quite sure what we've been doing tucked quietly away under the Cheap Street Church for all these years. In fact, since 1997 we have been making a profound impact on the lives of young people aged 13 to 25, helping them to grow and develop, to overcome obstacles and help smooth their transition into adulthood so they can go on to lead

happy, fulfilling lives.

A life-changing mission

At the core of the Rendezvous is our mission to improve the mental health and overall well-being of young people. In the early days, we primarily ran informal drop-in group sessions. Now, recognising the importance of focused and tailored support to address the increasingly complex needs of young people, 80%

of our work is delivered through one-to-one mental health sessions. Improving mental health is a goal that underpins everything we do whether it's English and Maths tutoring and employability programmes, work with young parents or special projects and outreach.

No time limit on healing

We want to achieve change that will last a lifetime not just a few weeks. As Jemma Turner, our Mental Health and Wellbeing lead explains, 'Unlike many other support services, we are not constrained by time limits. Building trust takes time and progress can be slow but if the young person wants to change we

will do everything we can to help - and we don't give up! We are not clinical counsellors but have mental health training and use many of the same approaches. However, unlike counsellors, we can challenge and give informed advice which is something many young people appreciate.'

To help achieve this change and give young people the best chance of going on to thrive we run two projects to complement the work of our mental health and learning programme. 'Anxious to Awesome' and 'Bekah's Kitchen' are invitation-only groups that give young people the chance to find their voices and build social confidence in a small, safe setting. The groups have helped some of our most anxious young people successfully manage the transition into college or work.

Meeting demand

As needs have got greater young people stay with us longer so we are excited to be launching a pilot project this autumn using local volunteers to provide a listening ear for those with low-level needs. As with all our support work, these sessions will be free and open to all, whether by self-referral or referrals from parents, schools, GPs or social care. We are keeping the project small as we first test the model and ensure our volunteers are trained and supported throughout but trust it will increase our capacity to help more young people in Sherborne in the long term and enable the staff team to focus on those with the greatest needs.

A local solution, a community effort

The Rendezvous offers a vital solution to the community at a time when services are limited and hard to access. We work hard to maintain our broad-ranging programme and are extremely proud of the young people we work with and the trust they show in us. These resilient individuals in our community deserve credit for the remarkable efforts they make to overcome hurdles and transform their lives.

Thanks to the generous support from the community, including the Sherborne Town Council, The Friends of The Yeatman Hospital, the Sherborne Castle Country Fair and numerous individuals too many to mention, the Rendezvous continues to thrive as a charity despite the challenging economic times we are living through.

You can find out more about the charity, how to refer to us, volunteer with us or make a donation to support our work, at therendezvous.org.uk. ●