

# Covid-19

## Crisis Appeal



14 April 2020

### Mental health crisis

The effects of Covid-19 are being felt all across our community and the consequences for mental health and wellbeing are serious. There is a public mental health crisis running alongside the physical health crisis. Anxiety, fear, financial worries, relationship difficulties and isolation have a very real effect on our wellbeing and ability to cope. This is also a time of great uncertainty for Network: our very existence is in doubt.

Across the UK self-reported anxiety and depression increased immediately after the 'stay at home' guidance was issued. We know that in times of economic recession suicide rates rise<sup>1</sup>, and when vulnerable families spend longer periods of time at home, domestic violence and child safeguarding issues increase<sup>2</sup>. We know that epidemics and recessions hit the poorest hardest<sup>3</sup>, as they have the fewest options for avoiding illness and are most financially vulnerable.

### Counselling saves lives

The roots of wellbeing, mental health and relationships difficulties are deep and complex, and the Covid-19 crisis is making them more visible. As a supporter, you know the work that Network has been doing for the past 34 years. You know the impact that quality affordable counselling has on people in severe emotional distress. Our clients frequently report their counselling with us as "life-changing", "transformational" and even "life-saving", and the fact is that the majority of people who come to Network cannot access the support they need elsewhere.

The current crisis will only make matters worse, and we are anticipating a huge increase in demand for counselling as people deal with their current challenges, and beyond, as society begins to recover. All this comes at a time when Network's finances have been severely impacted by the very crisis we need to respond to.

**"I don't know what I would have done without it, I went from feelings of utter desparation to feeling good about life again."**

*Network client*

**"Honestly, Network has been a lifesaver."**

*Network client*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-27796628>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52157620>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2017/06/19/pandemics-and-the-poor/>

## Immediate impact

Whilst our core services are still running in different forms, other income-generating activities been cancelled or postponed. Not all clients and counsellors have felt working online or by phone to be appropriate and around 65% of clients have chosen to pause or end their work. The client donations that cover a part of our running costs have dropped. All fundraising efforts involving the public, including our May event, have been cancelled.

After many years of hard work to secure Network's ongoing viability, the charity had in the last year arrived at a financially sustainable position. Our new four year strategy outlined achievable plans to grow our services, increase our training, and develop our team. And those plans were beginning to be accomplished.

## Network's future in crisis

However, we are forecasting that we will lose between one and two thirds of our income against budget for the next four months, and that we will be unable to continue through the academic year 2020-21 without significant funding support from Trusts, churches and the community. We are not alone, as organisations across the charity sector report huge losses and reductions in staff levels. We have moved from being in a financially robust position to facing an uncertain future in just four short weeks.

**Network is providing a vital service to the community right now, and we need your help to continue to do so. To ensure Network stays open during the next four critical months, and further until next summer we need to raise £150,000.**

**We need to raise at least £50,000 of that by mid-May 2020.**

**It would be deeply tragic if Network were forced to close. We believe God recently provided a purpose-made building and brought us to the point of financial sustainability, and we trust God will provide again.**

**Go to [network.org.uk/donations](https://network.org.uk/donations) or email [sue.payne@network.org.uk](mailto:sue.payne@network.org.uk)**



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