

CATALYST

COUNSELLING.THERAPY.TRAINING.LEGAL

About Catalyst

Catalyst is a registered charity which was set up in 1995 to offer help, assistance and counselling to people who have been damaged by religious groups or abusive relationships. We also address other problems that are faith, philosophical or relationship based.

Such issues include:

- Problems arising from an individual's conversion to a faith different from other members of their family
- Cultural problems where two people from different ethnic backgrounds wish to marry
- Clients who have issues with their religious upbringing.
- Individuals who have had problems with abusive religious and therapeutic groups (i.e. *cults, new religious movements and sects) or abusive relationships.

Catalyst has no religious beliefs or objectives and is willing to work with clients from any religious or ethnic backgrounds, firmly maintaining an individual's right to believe in whatever they so wish.

However, it is clear that under the auspices of religion or therapy many groups can be abusive and damage people financially, medically, psychologically and socially. This often entails breaking up families and damaging individuals' careers whilst costing them substantial amounts of money.

****Definition of Cult***

Clearly the word cult is highly controversial and is normally used in a negative way, which conjures up visions of people committing suicide (thankfully an extremely rare occurrence) etc. We do not like using this word because everyone has their own idea as to its definition. Sometimes these definitions are very emotive and the use of them unhelpful.

For the avoidance of doubt, for us a cult is a system that produces unhealthy dependence on the group or leader to the detriment of the members, usually by using unethical methods of manipulation. The damage caused can be medical, social, psychological, professional or financial etc.

Services

Catalyst has no religious or political position and offers help to all whatever their religion, race, sexuality or gender. At our new proposed centre we intend to have disabled access.

Services offered:

- Assistance for individuals to help them reconsider their membership of abusive groups, help them to leave and take back control of their lives.
- Counselling and therapy for individuals, families and friends.
- Advice to families and individuals concerning how to maintain relationships and communication, particularly in matters of religion.
- Advice to families and friends on how to promote re-evaluation of a person's beliefs by helping them to encourage critical thinking and to challenge what they have been told within their group.
- Advice to solicitors concerning issues relating to Childrens Act proceedings, divorce, and in some cases criminal actions and civil cases of undue influence (for recovering donations) etc.
- Advice to doctors, psychiatrists, counsellors, therapists, the Police and Social Services in respect of religious groups.
- Training courses for teachers, university lecturers, youth leaders and other professionals mentioned above to help educate about the dangers of all forms of negative manipulation.

Fees:

Catalyst is a registered charity but obviously needs funds to continue to operate.

We do not charge for services but the running costs to Catalyst of providing counselling is £50.00 per hour whether in person or on the telephone.

We encourage clients to make donations for our services if they are financially able. In some cases, clients have set up bank standing orders to give a small amount monthly and often end up supporting us long term as they would any other charity.

If an individual pays income tax the most efficient way of giving is via Gift Aid. By filling in a form once it enables us to recover from the Government, the tax that's already paid on the donation.

We try to never turn people away on the basis of finance. If a person has no means of contributing we still do all we can to assist.

People who have been in abusive groups have often lost most if not all their money to the group or leader. It's a common misconception that this is the result of them being stupid, gullible or in some way damaged. This is not the case. They are usually intelligent but idealistic people who have been

tricked and manipulated into giving both their time and money. They are victims and need charitable help to take back control of their lives.

To assist clients or supporters who wish to donate please find below downloadable copies of our standing order and gift aid forms.

Contact Catalyst

Charity Manager and Counsellor: Graham Baldwin B.D. (Kings College, London)

Medical Advisor: Dr. Paul Hardman M.A., B.M., B.Ch. (Oxford), M.R.C.G.P.

Administrator: Sally Hardman B.Sc

IT and Research Manager: Lee Mustoe

Please contact: Graham Baldwin 07976 442321

Email: contact@catalystcounselling.org.uk

Catalyst are currently moving from their location in South West London to new premises in Nottinghamshire. Catalyst can be contacted at:

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The Barnabas Project

Catalyst is a registered charity that has been helping individuals and families who have been damaged by abusive relationships and religious and therapeutic groups since 1995. Catalyst has no religious or political position and offers help to all whatever their religion, race, sexuality or gender.

We are, however, passionate believers in the individuals right to believe whatever they choose to believe. We are only concerned with the methods used to control, damage and abuse individuals.

Each year, Catalyst receives hundreds of requests for assistance and on average helps at least 150 – 200 individuals or families. This is merely the tip of the iceberg.

The problem

During the past twenty years we have seen the problem grow and are receiving a continuous stream of new referrals. We estimate that there have been more than 1500 new abusive groups started in the UK since 1950. Some groups are large, some consist of less than 20 people. There are very few people working professionally in this field and, in Europe at present there are no residential therapy centres nor sufficient therapists to respond to this growing problem.

In addition to people that have joined groups, we are seeing a growing number of young people who have been born into such groups. Often they have been separated from normal society and educated (often poorly) by the group. They often have no idea of how to relate to the world and have been taught to see it as both dangerous and evil. They need a place of refuge where they can be supported and helped.

The reason that there is such a shortage of resources is because the public perception of those damaged by groups is a major problem for fundraising. The generally held belief that people who have been damaged by groups or abusive relationships have only themselves to blame and that their problems are self-inflicted. This could not be further from the truth. The victims are normally of above average intelligence and well-balanced. They are also often idealists who just happen to have had the misfortune of meeting a recruiter. The methods used by the recruiter are normally unethical and highly manipulative.

Our proposed response to the growing problem

Although Catalyst successfully helps many families each year, our work has been reactive rather than pro-active. With this in mind, we believe the time has come for a re-thinking of strategy to not only produce a response to the problem, but to try and develop preventative programmes to educate and help make people aware of this growing problem. With this in mind, we are endeavouring to establish a new centre that we believe is crucial to help respond to this problem. We are therefore looking to raise funds to purchase a property that will meet the need to develop a whole new and comprehensive response to this problem.

This is to be named the Barnabas Project

Our aims are:

- To establish a residential treatment and retreat centre for people who require help. At present the only residential centre we are aware of offering similar help is in the USA.
- To establish a training centre. At present, there are few if any resources to help counsellors, therapists, psychologists, social workers, and chaplains learn to help those damaged by their involvement with abusive groups. We intend to develop a programme of courses and seminars to meet this need.
- To offer advice for friends and families. Parents and friends of those who have been recruited by such groups are normally at a loss to know how to respond when a loved one joins a group. We intend to establish seminars and one-on-one sessions to help them understand the situation and to give them tools to help their loved ones reconsider whether the group is helpful or abusive.

- To provide aid and training for teachers. At present, as part of the strategic response to the growing problem, we propose to set up course and seminars for teachers, youth leaders etc. to help them to educate their client base to spot and question abusive techniques and methods. For teachers, this would include developing lesson plans which could be integrated into Personal Development or similar courses, which would cover the whole spectrum of manipulation, from peer-group pressure, aggressive selling techniques, internet grooming and other manipulative and abusive situations.
- To train and provide outreach workers. We intend to help train and support speakers to visit schools, universities and other groups to make people aware of this growing problem, and to advise families how to educate their own children to avoid manipulative and abusive relationships.
- To set up a library, resource and research centre. The centre will be able to assist students, researchers and lawyers by enabling them to access primary source material and to obtain advice and assistance as required.

Can you help?

To help us fulfil the needs set out in the Barnabas Project, we are looking for a property that will meet the need, where running costs are low but is still well-served by road, train and air. The accommodation needed is rooms for people to stay, conference facilities, counselling rooms and a library and resource centre.

It is envisaged that after 3 years the project would be in the main self funding. If there are any under utilised facilities we intend to make them available to the local community and other organisations, thus maximising use of the centre and providing extra income.

How can you help?

To make this project a reality we are in need of the following.

- We estimate we need £1.5 million to purchase the property, carry out alterations, redecorate and equip it. In this figure we include a contingency fund and 3 years running costs to enable the business plan to make the centre self funding.
- Regular donations. Since many of the people Catalyst deals with have had most or all of their money appropriated by the group or leader, they are often unable to make any donation at all to Catalyst. As we take the position that we never turn people away on the basis of money, we would encourage anyone who wishes to support the work to consider contributing regularly by way of a standing order, however small. Such donations will help us to continue working with people who have no finance to continue their treatment. In

addition it will help us to fund speakers to visit schools, universities , youth clubs, women's institutes etc.

Volunteers

To keep costs down, we are always looking for volunteers to help in a variety of ways. If you wish to discuss with us how you could help, feel free to ring Graham Baldwin on 01777 816808 or 07976 442321.

Gift Aid

To enable people to respond, a standing order form can be downloaded on the website. We also include a Gift Aid form. If you pay Income Tax within the UK, by signing the Gift Aid form you enable us to claim back the proportion of tax that you have already paid.