

TIPS ON DEALING WITH PARANOID/DEPRESSED PEOPLE

Remember:

- Depression very common
- Research by King's College/Institute of Psychiatry in 2006 found that one in three people regularly suffer from paranoid or suspicious fears (report in Medical News Today, 26 June 2006)
- South London and Maudsley NHS Trust with Institute of Psychiatry just launched website 'paranoidthoughts' which has some useful information
- Rethink has useful information on its website

KEY POINTS IN HAVING CONVERSATIONS ON THE PHONE:

- a. All paranoia has at least a seed of truth.
- b. Paranoid thoughts can be triggered by some or all of the following: Stress/Major life change; Depression/Anxiety (diagnosable); Unusual feelings, sometimes caused by external factors such as drugs; Internal Explanations (our way of understanding the world); Our Reasoning (the way we come to decisions or judgements e.g. not thinking through alternative explanations).
- c. Try to avoid:
Confronting them
Laughing or undermining the person
Ignoring them
- d. Reassure by:
 - Acknowledging their distress whilst not colluding with their explanation
 - Staying very calm, and not responding emotionally to their story
 - Reassure by saying you believe that there is no need to worry
 - Come up with rational explanation of why should not worry e.g. "you have done nothing wrong, so the police will not want to hurt you"
 - Try to determine how distressed they are ('how long have you been worried about this) and whether they have talked to others ('who else have you been able to talk with about this')
 - If you get an acknowledgement of distress, try suggesting referral by:

'I have taken notes of your concerns. I don't think that there is anything we can do just now, but this must be very upsetting for you. Can I suggest somewhere else you may be able to talk to confidentially about this?'