

Mat work is a resource that can be used to assess quickly how clients are feeling/thinking. It allows staff to gain a quick synopsis of the client before any work is done, allowing any situations to be dealt with before sessions begin. This can either be done within the group setting or on a 1-1. It allows clients to learn how to articulate their feelings and express themselves correctly. Mat work creates inclusion and equality within the group between staff and clients, creating a more open and honest environment.

There are three mats, each one slightly different in word usage. The purple one is stage 1, a green one is stage 2, and a yellow mat is stage 3. The colour coordination can be changed to fit within your colour scheme, so bear this in mind because your colours might be different to these instructions.

The mats can be used at different stages and meet the need of the client where they are at in that moment. You will notice when clients are ready to move on to the next stage as they are able to articulate themselves with greater ease. There is no time frame for changing the mat, but it is estimated around every 6-8 weeks a change can be made.

There is often a reluctance when a new mat is introduced this is because the client has to learn the meaning of the words and how to apply them to their feelings and situation.

You will notice each mat contains one circular shape – at some point everyone will ask why it is there. The reason for this is to be kept quiet and remain a mystery. There is a psychological reason to this:

1. It takes the brain longer to process odd things, so it becomes more thought provoking for the client and giving you an indication for the type of client you have.
2. It can also be attention seeking to stand on the odd one! Once again letting you know what is going on with the client.

Usually you will find nobody will stand on this shape for a few weeks until they start to feel confident among their peers, this allows you to recognise the comfort level of a person.

It is agreed that whoever is in the room at the time that the mat is laid out, will take part and take their turn to stand on the mat and share what is going on for them. This includes leaders, teachers, and pastors or anyone visiting, it allows everyone to feel equal with one another, and builds up the trust level when leading or entering the group.

If you would like more information on the mats, or would like to order a set for use in your project, please contact Dawn via dawn@recovered4life.org.