



NEWSLETTER

November 2022 Issue

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Welcome Note

by Martina Queally, Chief Officer, Community Healthcare East

Community Healthcare East are delighted to be launching the first issue of our *Connecting for Life* newsletter, *The Link*.

Since the launch of our first *Connecting for Life Action Plan* in March 2017, the *Connecting for Life* community have worked tirelessly to improve people's understanding of suicidal behaviour and increase their capacity to respond to suicides, to fight against mental health stigma, to reduce access to lethal means and to identify pathways to care and improve access to services.

According to the CSO, this region has seen a downward trend in suicide rates in recent years. The current data also indicates a rising rate of self-harm, especially amongst young adults. *Connecting for Life* continues to shine the light on the need for a societal approach and working with our community partners to continue to strive to raise awareness and reduce suicide and self-harm rates. It is this commitment and work that is vital in achieving the vision of the national *Connecting for Life* strategy; an Ireland where fewer lives are lost through suicide, and where communities and individuals are empowered to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

The last 2 years have been incredibly challenging for everyone, in particular for those among us who are more vulnerable to isolation, lack of social contacts and precarious living conditions. We have learned to live with a new uncertainty in life that we could never have anticipated. Now that Covid-19 isn't dominating every aspect of our lives anymore, we are able to return to our core business and focus on the delivery of services. A new local *Connecting for Life Implementation Plan* was launched earlier this year, allowing us to concentrate on the next steps until 2024.

This newsletter is a snapshot of some of the work that has been achieved in the area of suicide and self-harm prevention over the last 12 months. As you can see, a lot of amazing work has been done throughout our community. It highlights the people involved in implementing the strategy, their passion, their commitment and the real benefits of their work. This newsletter is to help their stories to be heard.

We hope that you enjoy catching up with all the news. A sincere thank you to all of you who have sent in articles and pictures and have contributed to this edition.



Social Prescribing Summer Outdoor Physical Activity Programme

by Alexandra Kelly, Social Prescribing and Wellbeing Coordinator, Bray Area Partnership

The Social Prescribing Summer Outdoor Physical Activity Programme was a free, face-to-face, physical activity taster programme offered to Social Prescribing participants and delivered in a small group in collaboration with Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership and local fitness instructors. The programme commenced during August 2022 and was delivered over a 4-week period on the Seafront in Bray. This was Social Prescribing programme's initiative to promote physical health and wellbeing in the community.

The programme was created as a response to a growing need for free taster physical activity classes to allow participants a once-off experience in a social context in the locality, and to enhance their social and physical wellbeing.

This was the second delivery of this programme in collaboration with Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership, on foot of the success of the pilot delivered in March 2022. The initiative embraced the ethos of Healthy Ireland and was supported by Healthy Wicklow with the provision of T-shirts and bags for participants.

The benefits of participating in this small group included meaningful engagement for participants, social interaction, and participation in a diverse group including people with intellectual disabilities, a range of nationalities, and age groups. Further benefits comprised of increased community involvement and physical activity (as reported by all who completed the feedback forms to date), being able to trial activities free of cost that are often quite costly, increased knowledge of other local and national physical activities and social groups. Furthermore, there was an overall increase in wellbeing scores for participants, as measured at the start and finish of the programme.





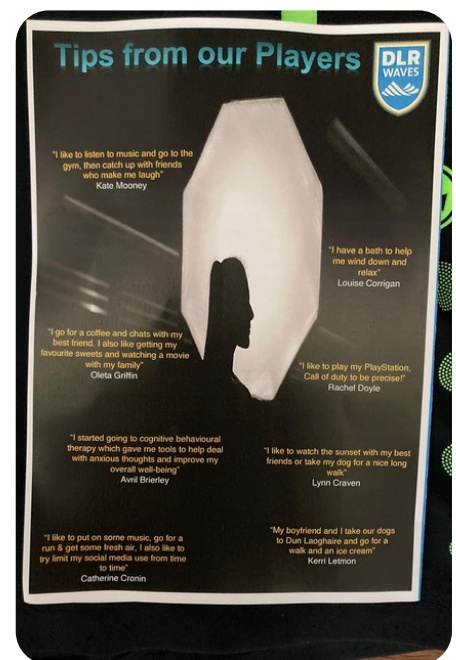
DLR Waves mark Mental Health Awareness Week

by Avril Brierley, DLR Waves

In line with mental health awareness week (9-15/5/22) DLR Waves decided to include a piece into our match day programme that gets circulated to all players, staff and members of the crowd on matchday. This programme was also posted on our social media platforms to improve our reach. We interviewed some first team players asking them what they do to improve/upkeep their mental health and well-being. The answers and tips were across one page of the programme, followed by a paragraph explaining our inclusion in the FAI WNL Mental Health Board and our mission for the piece on in the programme. We also attached local centre support numbers. Players, staff and attending fans were also given a small wallet size booklet with contact numbers to help people with numerous mental health and well-being needs.

The idea came from a member of our team who was working alongside the teams mental health and wellbeing regional officer. Between the players, staff, fans and social media reach, we felt it was a good way of getting info and support services out to those who may need it, as well as trying to normalise the conversation around the topic. We are aiming to break the stigma around mental health among the club and community and encourage people to talk, reach out and ask for help. The project involved a number of people, from professionals to players and printing who brought our ideas and sketches to life.

We had a number of players come to reach out thanking the organisers for the initiative, highlighting the personal importance it held for them. We received a great response online, with other pages and profiles sharing on our programme. This is reaching a larger number which can only have positive outcomes. We are showcasing it as it is one of the first of its kind and we as a club are extremely proud of this initiative. We are hoping it can spur other clubs to do similarly in the future.





Mind your Health

by Wicklow Travellers Group and Bray Travellers CDG

Easier access to local Mental Health Services in Co. Wicklow was enabled through the provision of a fridge magnet which was designed by Traveller Community Workers, supported by the region's Traveller Mental Health Coordinator and Connecting for Life.

The goal was for mental health information to be provided in a culturally appropriate manner to be easier to access and understand for Traveller families in Co. Wicklow.

The Magnets were delivered to all Traveller families in Co Wicklow by the Community Health Workers. The feedback was incredibly positive, and families have found them very useful.





One of the challenges was to have a quiet space to bring people to to discuss personal issues regarding suicide. The stand was in the main thoroughfare of the hospital. We hope to resolve this issue for next year.

The feedback so far has been very good. Many people were very complimentary about the project and have asked for suicide to be acknowledged more than once in the year.

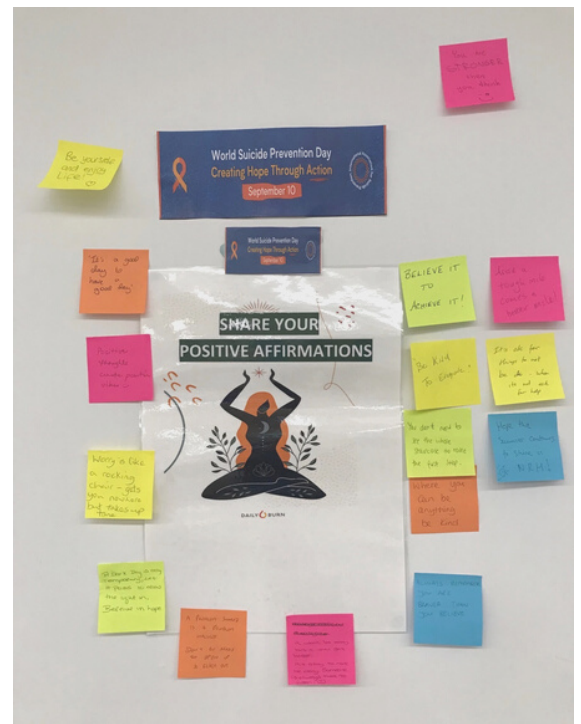
Suicide Prevention Day in NRH

*by Sheila Mac Gowan, Social Worker,
National Rehabilitation Hospital*

We had a stand in the main reception corridor of the hospital with information about suicide. We had three glass bowls on with laminated affirmations, one with resources (useful contact numbers in times of crisis) and one bowl with sweets. We also asked staff to put an affirmation and stick it on a laminated tree we had pinned on the wall.

We had a very short questionnaire with two questions on it, one asking the Theme of the day the second asking staff what they would like to see re training etc. for every questionnaire completed we gave a voucher for a free tea coffee. At lunch time we handed out free ice creams.

The ideas came from our committee members. We have acknowledged World Suicide Prevention day for many years. We are always trying to get people to talk about suicide and to remove the stigma that still exists. We want to equip people with the confidence to have discussions with staff, patients and family members around suicide. We want everyone to know that there are options out there other than suicide. We also wanted to highlight upcoming Safetalk training that we are hosting.





San Remo go Green

by Dublin Simon Community (Bray)

Staff and clients of Dublin Simon's San Remo accommodation in Bray - and Bezz the dog! - went all out to celebrate **Green Ribbon Month** in September.

This campaign aims to spread awareness about all mental health difficulties to help end mental health stigma and discrimination.





Recovery in Colour

by Wicklow Travellers Group and Bray Travellers CDG

County Wicklow Primary Healthcare Project organised a staff wellbeing programme for their workers. Over the course of six weeks, 15 Traveller Community Healthcare Workers participated in Colour therapy and trauma care facilitated by Recovery College Community Healthcare East, supported by Connecting for Life.

The project came about as community healthcare workers returned to the norm after two years of Covid-19 in 2022, and found they needed space to reflect and recover.

The project highlights the need to care for our community health workers and their mental health and wellbeing after 2 years of Covid and their huge commitment to supporting Traveller families in Co Wicklow.

We want to ensure that our Project and Community Healthcare Workers are supported and feel valued.

The Community Healthcare Workers really enjoyed the colour therapy, and their attendance was 100%. They found the experience very relaxing and supportive and would like to continue with a follow-on course. The two facilitators were "very understanding", "trustworthy" and "showed great empathy with us".

Mental Health and wellbeing will continue as part of our work schedule in supporting our Community Health Workers.



Launch of HUGG Wicklow

by Fiona Tuomey, CEO, HUGG

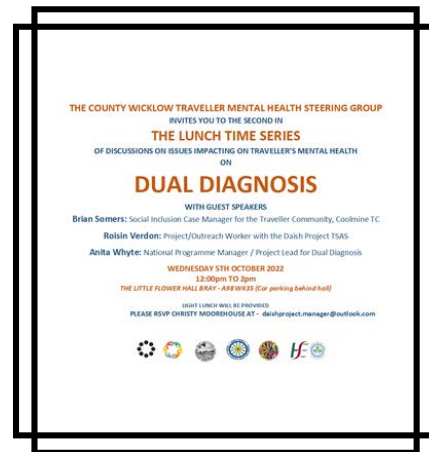
HUGG is a national suicide bereavement charity which provides a free, safe and confidential space where people bereaved by suicide can share their experiences and feelings, and receive and offer support to each other. HUGG support groups are led by trained volunteers with lived experience of suicide bereavement.

The **14th of June saw the launch of HUGG Wicklow**. Since then, HUGG facilitators have led 6 support groups with a total of 35 attendees highlighting the demand for this support service in the Wicklow region and wider.

HUGG believe there is healing in being in the company of those who understand. The high level of repeat attendees is an indication that HUGG Wicklow is providing its members with the support they need to help them cope with their grief.

Recruiting volunteers to facilitate HUGG groups remains challenging. It is vital we work together to continue to raise awareness about the free service HUGG offers in the region, and to reach into local communities to signpost people to volunteering opportunities with HUGG.

HUGG WILL RUN SEVERAL 20 MINUTE INFORMATION SESSIONS ACROSS ZOOM FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING AT THE END OCTOBER AND AGAIN IN EARLY NOVEMBER. FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT VOLUNTEER@HUGG.IE



Lunchtime Discussions

by Co. Wicklow Traveller Mental Health Steering Group

County Wicklow Mental Health Steering Group were proud to invite members of the community and different services in Community Healthcare East to the second in a series of lunchtime discussions on issues that impact Traveller health and wellbeing.

The lunchtime discussion series is one of the initiatives the Steering Group have developed to progress the recommendations from the County Wicklow Traveller Mental Health Report, launched in October 2021.

The aim of the discussions is to create a space to share stories and experiences and to build relationships between services and the community. This will be done in an informal setting with a short presentation followed by a discussion and lunch.

This second lunchtime discussion provided a forum to share experiences on the topic of **Dual Diagnosis**. Speakers included Brian Somers, Social Inclusion Case Manager for the Traveller Community with Coolmine T.C., Roisin Verdon, Project/Outreach Worker with the Daish Project TSAS, and Anita Whyte, National Programme Manager/Project Lead for Dual Diagnosis with the HSE.



Breaking Through



Suicide Prevention Training in Community Healthcare East

by Breaking Through

Breaking Through co-ordinate suicide intervention/prevention training on behalf of the HSE in Dublin South, Dublin South East and Wicklow.

The training will help you:

- Recognise when someone might be at risk of suicide.
- Build your confidence to talk to them about it.
- Connect them with helpful supports and services.

Training programmes on offer include:

Since February of this year 492 people have received training in suicide intervention/prevention in Dublin South, Dublin South East and Wicklow.

- 171 people completed START
- 8 SafeTALK trainings were held where 135 participants completed the training
- 8 ASIST trainings were held where 123 participants completed the training
- 5 Understanding Self Harm trainings were held where 63 participants completed the training

How to book training:

Training is free and for persons over 18.

All trainings are listed here and individuals can also book a place online by clicking [on this link](#).

If your organisation is interested in holding training please contact admin@breakingthrough.org

Suicide Prevention Skills Training

An overview of suicide prevention skills training programmes available from the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention

| START | safeTALK | ASIST | Understanding Self-Harm |
|--|--|---|--|
| What will I learn? A 30 minute online interactive training programme that will give you the skills and knowledge to keep others safe from suicide. | What will I learn? A half-day training programme that supports you to recognise and engage with people who may be having thoughts of suicide and to connect them to suicide first aid resources. | What will I learn? A two-day training programme that supports participants to reduce the immediate risk of a suicide and increase the support for a person at risk. You will explore what a person at risk may need from others to keep safe. | What will I learn? A one-day training programme that supports participants to improve their awareness and understanding of people who self-harm. |
| Who is it for? Anyone over the age of 18. | Who is it for? Anyone over the age of 18. | Who is it for? Targeted training, over the age of 18. | Who is it for? Anyone over the age of 18. |
| What will I learn? You will learn what to say and do if you are concerned that someone is in suicidal distress. | What will I learn? You will learn what to do if you are concerned that someone may be in suicidal distress. | What will I learn? You will learn how to respond to a person in suicidal distress and how to keep that person safe. | What will I learn? You will learn how to engage with people who self-harm, understanding the functions, motivations and meanings of self-harm behaviour. |

"Having done the training, the difference is, I now know what to do if I'm worried about someone"

For more information on any of these training programmes, please visit www.connectforlife.ie/training or contact your local Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention.

yourmentalhealth.ie

Breaking Through co-ordinate this training to enable this local area to contribute to Ireland's National Suicide Prevention Strategy, *Connecting for Life*: "an Ireland where fewer lives are lost through suicide and where communities and individuals are empowered to improve their mental health and wellbeing".



Wicklow GAA to host Suicide Prevention Trainings

by Breaking Through

Wicklow GAA County Health and Wellbeing Committee have kindly offered the use of Wicklow GAA Centre of Excellence in Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow as a venue to host suicide intervention/prevention skills trainings.

Its first safeTALK (Suicide Alertness for Everyone) training took place on Saturday 17th September, 2022. This modern sporting complex was ideal for members of the GAA and wider members of the community to complete this life saving training.

Training helps those in the community to recognise when someone might be at risk of suicide, build confidence to talk to them about it and connect them with helpful supports and services. Community Healthcare East looks forward to working with Wicklow GAA, and training such as Understanding Self Harm and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is planned for 2023.





National Mental Health Information and Supports

yourmentalhealth.ie/



More Information on Connecting for Life CH East

<http://www.connectingforlifecho6.ie/>



Suicide Prevention Training in CH East

<https://bookwhen.com/che>



Next Issue of The Link!

If you're interested in making a contribution to our next issue of the link, get in touch with us!

Deadline for submission: 30 June 2023

Contact: adam.byrne@hse.ie -or-
andrea.koenigstorfer@hse.ie



Cúram Sláinte Pobail Thoir

Cill Mhantáin | Baile Átha Cliath Theas |
Baile Átha Cliath Thoir Theas

Community Healthcare East

Wicklow | Dublin South | Dublin South East