



ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Connecting for Life *Donegal*

FOREWORD

Since its creation, Connect Mental Health has actively sought to work as a collaborator to bring evidence based programmes and workshops to the Donegal community. This work was furthered in 2018.

The opportunity to foster collaboration between state bodies, charities, community groups and the private sector has resulted in a number of evidence based programmes being brought to the south Donegal area. We are extremely grateful to have built strong relationships with the following organisations to date: HSE, Mental Health Ireland, Jigsaw, Foróige, Suicide or Survive, Mental Health First Aid Ireland, Aware and Pieta House.

Connect Mental Health will continue to partner with local and national organisations into the future while focusing on implementing Strategic Goal 1 of Connecting for Life Donegal:

To improve the county's understanding of, and attitudes to, suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing

I would like to sincerely thank all those involved from the committee members to the numerous volunteers that got involved in fundraising and assisted with the programme of events. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the HSE and Donegal Local Development for their continued support and funding.

Ciaran McLoone
Chairperson, Connect Mental Health

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ABOUT US

Connect Mental Health was founded in January 2015 to help raise awareness of mental health issues in South Donegal. Through events, digital media and educational seminars we aim to empower the local community with practical tools and advice on how to improve and maintain their mental health.

Mission:

Empower the local community to maintain and improve each others mental health and well-being

Connect Mental Health is a 5 year project (2015 – 2020) that specifically aims to deliver on the following awareness goal of Connecting For Life Donegal, Donegal's suicide prevention strategy 2015 – 2020

To improve the county's understanding of, and attitudes to, suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing

Strategic Goal 1: Connecting for Life Donegal



Connecting for Life *Donegal*

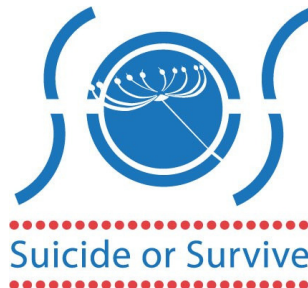
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 20150310

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the understanding of suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing and associated protective and risk factors
- Increase awareness of available local mental health services
- Reduce stigmatising attitudes to mental health and suicidal behaviour within the community

COLLABORATION

Connect Mental Health works in partnership with:



Local Secondary Schools

- Colaiste Cholcille
- Abbey Vocational School
- Magh Ene College

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY 2018



NEAR HEALTH SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

Connect Mental Health partnered with Easkey Britton to deliver a series of school workshops creatively engaging youth groups (i.e. TY students) to better explore and understand their nature connection and how that impacts their mental health and wellbeing, using a mix of methods. (Including use of photography / collage / outdoor walk-along / go-along interviews / focus groups and 'backcasting' - where participants vision they ideal environment and co-creating pathways to reach the vision... this could be for their school, home, town, county!)

This as a Half Day Workshop that took place in Magh Ene College Bundoran and Abbey Vocational School, Donegal Town on the 23rd & 24th January.

About NEAR Health

The Nature and Environment to Attain and Restore (NEAR) Health Project aims to connect people with blue and green nature spaces. The overall aim of the NEAR-Health project is to design and pilot inclusive nature-based solutions to assist communities value a healthy environment, maintain healthy lifestyles and promote and restore wellbeing.

STRESS CONTROL PROGRAMME

This Stress Control Programme is a six week programme delivered by Donegal Mind Wellness. It is free to attend and there is no advance registration required. The course is easy to understand and there is no pressure for attendees to speak at any of the sessions. It runs for 6 sessions and is suitable for everyone.

Connect Mental Health partnered with Donegal Mind Wellness to bring the 6 week programme to Bundoran in January and Pettigo in September.

January:

Venue: Bundoran Community Centre

Attendees: 45 pax.

September:

Started 20th September.

Venue: The Forge Family Resource Centre, Pettigo

Attendees: 16 pax.

Session 1: What Is Stress?

Session 2: Controlling Your Body

Session 3: Controlling Your Thoughts

Session 4: Controlling Your Actions

Session 5a: Controlling Panic Feelings

Session 5b: Getting A Good Night's Sleep

Session 6: Wellbeing

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



Mental Health First Aid Ireland with funding from the HSE and in partnership with Connect Mental Health delivered 5 Mental Health First Aid Courses throughout Donegal in 2017.

24th & 25th Feb: Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny
Attendance: 17 pax

29th & 30th April: Inishowen Gateway Hotel
Attendance: 21 pax

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the initial help given to someone who is developing a mental health problem or who is in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional support is received or until the crises resolves. The MHFA programme is available in 23 countries worldwide.

Emerging mental health problems covered in the course include: depression, anxiety, psychosis and substance misuse. The course also covers mental health crisis situations including: suicidal thoughts and behaviours, self-harm, panic attacks, traumatic events, severe psychotic states, severe effects of alcohol or other drug use and aggressive behaviours.

GREEN RIBBON CAMPAIGN



Campaign Aim: To encourage open conversation of mental health problems in Ireland

Connect Mental Health supported the month long national Green Ribbon Campaign in May 2018. This campaign is run by See Change, the National Stigma Reduction Partnership and saw more than 500,000 green ribbons distributed nationwide free of charge to spark a national conversation about mental health in boardrooms, break-rooms, chat rooms, clubhouses, arts venues, college campuses and around kitchen tables throughout Ireland. Distribution of the green ribbons is conducted by over 90 partner organisations nationwide.

As part of the campaign Connect Mental Health volunteers distributed 5,000 green ribbons across the south Donegal community.

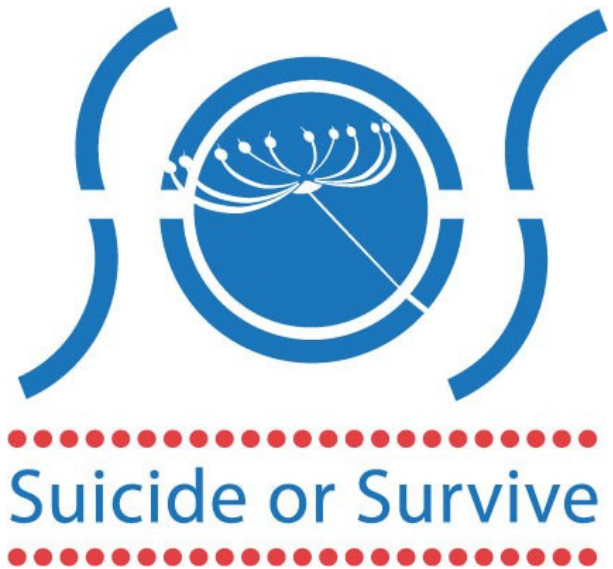
The benefits of participating in this nationwide campaign are illustrated in the impact report from the campaign in 2016:

71% say the Green Ribbon campaign has encouraged them to start conversations about mental health (up from 66% in 2015)

65% have been hearing conversations about mental health among family and friends since the campaign (up from 62% in 2015)

61% have been hearing mental health conversations in their workplaces since the campaign (up from 53% in 2014 and consistent with 2015)

WELLNESS WORKSHOP



Date: 15th May

Venue: Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town

Attendance: 43 pax

Suicide or Survive (SOS) in partnership with Connect Mental Health partnered with Suicide or Survive to bring their renowned Wellness Workshop to Donegal Town on the 15th May.

The workshop is of benefit to anyone who is interested in looking after their mental health and wellness. The workshop is informal and relaxed. It is facilitated by people with both lived-life experience of mental health difficulties, and experience of working in the mental health area. They combine personal testimony with practical tools and tips that you can use in your everyday life to improve your own wellbeing.

Throughout the day the workshop covered topics such as relaxation, mindfulness, stress management, our thinking process and how to develop a wellness toolkit and daily wellness plan. A full comprehensive workbook to support attendees in maintaining their daily wellness was also provided.

INSPIRE HOPE YOUTH CONFERENCE



**JIGSAW
DONEGAL**
Young people's
health in mind



Date: 4th October

Venue: Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town

Connect Mental Health's 'Inspire Hope' Youth Conference brought 270 students together on Thursday 4th October for an educational and interactive day. The event, held in the Abbey Hotel Donegal Town, was run in partnership with Foróige National Youth Organisation and Jigsaw Donegal.

Workshops on the day included Jigsaw Donegal's 'Time To Start Talking workshop,' a healthy eating demo from food blogger Finn Ní Fhaoláin, an 'Energy session' by Pro Fit Ballyshannon, relaxation session with Zia McClean and an inspiring key note session with Breifne Earley.

- Proudly supported by Donegal Local Development Company:



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DEVELOPMENT**
COMPANY LIMITED
Comhlacht Áitiúil Forbartha
Dhún na nGall Teoranta



EXAM STRESS WORKSHOP

Date: 18th & 19th October

Connect Mental Health procured the services of Karen Belshaw to deliver exam stress workshops for leaving certificate students in Magh Ene College, Bundoran, Abbey Vocational School, Donegal Town and Colaiste Cholmcille, Ballyshannon on the 18th & 19th October.

The 1 hour workshop covered the following topics:

- Understanding Stress and Wellness
- Training for Exams: The 5 Zones-(Study routine, sleep, diet, exercise, mental coping skills)
- Self Awareness: Attitudes: Mindsets
- Coping Strategies: Interactive exercises teaching mental coping skills
- Top Tips for the exam week

The aim of the Exam Wellness Workshops was to teach the students the necessary coping skills to manage pressure, time, and stress relating to exams. The cognitive exercises and methods of goal setting will be the tools that the students can use from the Leaving Cert through University and into whatever area of life they choose.

Karen Belshaw, bio:

Karen Belshaw, psychologist, CBT practitioner, stress management consultant, member of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) has worked nationally and internationally, as a stress consultant for over 17 years.

ONLINE ACTIVITY 2018



WEBSITE TRAFFIC

2018 Overview of website traffic on connectmentalhealth.ie

6,101

Sessions

5,036

Users

1.83

**Pages viewed
per visit**

01.17

**Average Visit
duration**

AUDIENCE

Connect Mental Health uses social media channels Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to promote upcoming events, workshops, fundraising events, local mental health services and educational content.



2,635

Facebook Likes



388

**Twitter
Followers**



175

**Instagram
Followers**

Facebook and Instagram are the primary channels used for promoting upcoming events to the public. Twitter is used primarily as a relationship building tool to interact with other mental health organisations and influential public figures in the field.

GOVERNANCE & FINANCES

2018



GOVERNANCE

Connect Mental Health is a registered charity run entirely by a core group of volunteers with the support of the HSE and DLDC. Membership of the management committee for 2018 comprised as follows:

Chairperson:

Ciaran McLoone

Secretary:

Bill Vaughan

Minutes Secretary:

Lauren Cleary

Treasurer:

Pauric Buggy

School liaison:

Jimmy Keogh

GOVERNANCE

Connect Mental Health has developed a collaborative approach that fosters participation and communication between state bodies, charities, community groups and schools. Our committee comprises the following organisations and representatives:

Abbey Vocational School

Patrice Rooney

Colaiste Cholmcille

Jimmy Keogh

Magh Ene College

Mary Patton

Foróige

Maura Gallagher, Josephine Warnock, Lauren Cleary

Jigsaw

Karen Duggan

Mental Health Ireland

Bill Vaughan

HSE

Anne Sheridan

Celina Muldoon, Ciaran McLoone,

SUMMARY: INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

The Following is an extract from the Statutory Accounts 2018

Income	
Balance brought forward from 2018	429
Christmas Football Tournament	450
Individual Donations	200
Slieve League Challenge	8,522
7 a side football tournament	971
Transfer of previous Mental Health Ireland Ballyshannon & Bundoran chapter	2,374
HSE Support	3,500
Total Income	16,445

Expenditure	
Facebook Advertising	374
Bank Charges	50
Website Development	692
Slieve League Challenge	1,050
7 a side football tournament	131
Stress Control Programme	600
Mental Health First Aid	849
Suicide or Survive Wellness Workshop	1073
Exam Stress Workshop	2,075
BHP Insurance	415
Inspire Hope Youth Conference	2,401
Total Expenditure	9,709

Funds Brought Forward	
Funds brought forward to 2019	6,736
Total Funds Brought Forward	6,736

GRANT AID:

DONEGAL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (DLDC)

Connect Mental Health received support of €2,210 from Donegal Local Development Company as part of their SICAP programme. DLDC administer their funding by directly paying suppliers for services Connect Mental Health received. This funding went towards delivering the Inspire Hope Youth Conference.

HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE (HSE)

The Health Service Executive provided grant aid of €3,500 towards the delivery of Connect Mental Health's 2018 programme of events.

In 2018 the Health Service Executive (HSE) partnered with Mental Health First Aid Ireland (MHFA) on a project to make Mental Health First Aid more widely available in Ireland. The HSE funded a number of courses nationally as part of this project.

Connect Mental Health partnered with MHFA Ireland to bring 2 of those courses to Donegal and co-ordinated the recruitment of the public to attend. Connect Mental Health covered venue hire and catering costs for the hosting of these workshops.

FUNDRAISING

We wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported us in 2018. Special thanks to those who participated in our fundraising events, including: the 55 brave volunteers who took part in the Slieve League Challenge, all teams who took part in our 7 a side football tournament at Christmas and during the summer and everyone who made personal donations.





Email: info@connectmentalhealth.ie
www.connectmentalhealth.ie

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 20150310



Connecting for Life Donegal