The Magazine for Positive Mental Health
speak your mind
2015 VOL 9

INSIDE: Illuminate at Cork Film Festival;
How to be a better listener / Returning to College
Minding the Mind / Bird-Watching / Poems
IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN YOU AND THEM ANYWAY.
IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD.

IF YOU ARE HONEST AND SINCERE PEOPLE MAY DECEIVE YOU:
BE HONEST AND SINCERE ANYWAY.
WHAT YOU SPEND YEARS CREATING, OTHERS COULD DESTROY OVERNIGHT.
CREATE ANYWAY.
IF YOU ARE KIND, PEOPLE MAY ACCUSE YOU OF SELFISH, ULTERIOR MOTIVES.
BE KIND ANYWAY.
IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL, YOU WILL WIN SOME UNFAITHFUL FRIENDS AND SOME GENUINE ENEMIES.
SUCCEED ANYWAY.
IF YOU ARE HONEST AND SINCERE PEOPLE MAY DECEIVE YOU.
BE HONEST AND SINCERE ANYWAY.

PEOPLE ARE OFTEN UNREASONABLE, IRRATIONAL, AND SELF-CENTERED.
FORGIVE THEM ANYWAY.

IF YOU FIND SERENITY AND HAPPINESS, SOME MAY BE JEALOUS.
BE HAPPY ANYWAY.
THE GOOD YOU DO TODAY, WILL OFTEN BE FORGOTTEN.
DO GOOD ANYWAY.
GIVE THE BEST YOU HAVE, AND IT WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH.
GIVE YOUR BEST ANYWAY.
IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD.
IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN YOU AND THEM ANYWAY.
contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2
EDITORIAL
Letters to the Editor 3
MY DAY AT “SLI EILE”
Bill Murray 4
A BRIEF CHAT WITH DJ NIKKI HAYES 6
EXPOSING MY NAKED VOICE
Nicola Depuis 7
ILLUMINATE - CORK FILM FESTIVAL
Fiona Hegarty 8
INTERVIEW WITH TERRY MCMAHON 10
CAN I BE FRANK?
FEEL GOOD FILMS
David Horgan 12
SHINE DISCOVERY BUILDING, WATERFORD
Martin Matthews 13
LITTLE THINGS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE 14
ACCEPTING YOURSELF
Maya Rose 16
COGNITIVE REMEDIATION THERAPY
Dr Ken O’Reilly 17
A MENTAL HEALTH NURSE’S EXPERIENCE
Donal Scanlan 18
MINDING THE MIND
Sile Walsh 19
FLORAL ODYSSEY
Mary O’Brien 20
THE ART OF LISTENING
Nicola Depuis 22
PHOTOS BY AISLING LYNCH 23
AS I TOLD MY YOUNG LOVE
Dennis O’Sullivan 23
EMPTY BOTTLES
Izzy 23
THE FOCUS PROGRAMME,
NATIONAL LEARNING NETWORK
Yvonne Gaule 24
STAY
Sarah O’Herlihy 25
CORKMEN LOOKING TO BE HEARD
Jason Loughnane 26
MEMORIES
By Lori 27
WHAT AM I?
By Joan Boyle 27
PAINTINGS BY DERRIAGGHY CENTRE
27
PROFILES
Fiona Hegarty
Lilie Ferrari
Breda Larkin
Sile Walsh
Katherine O’Donnell
Muireann Holly
Diane Doherty
Tony Henson 28
CREATING BETTER FUTURES
Carmel Sharkey 31
RETURNING TO COLLEGE
John Kidney 32
PHOTOS BY KAREN LUNNON 33
THESE OLD SCARS OF MINE
Izzy 33
WIND
John Saunders 33
BOOK REVIEW – IN MY ROOM by JIM LUCEY
Edelle Notte 34
HAPPY DAYS IN CORK
Ian Huntley 35
BIRD WATCHING FROM YOUR ARMCHAIR
Izzy 36
10 TIPS ON HOW TO INCREASE YOUR HAPPINESS
Compiled by Nicola Depuis 38
VEGETARIAN RECIPES
Paul Francis 39
USEFUL CONTACTS
Compiled by Bill Murray 41
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the people who support and read our magazine. This is our ninth edition.

We are very grateful to all who have generously given of their time and skills to send us articles, poems and pictures. Particularly those who have shared their personal stories. And of course those who have shared their personal insights in their profiles.

A very special thanks to Nicola Depuis who joined our team for the last edition and has been a tower of strength generating an enormous amount of copy for this edition.

Our thanks to all at ‘Inspire Design and Print’ who have created the magazine for us.

Also thanks to the staff of St Catherine’s Ward, St Finbarrs Hospital, for their support.

I am pleased to say Tony is back on the team.

COMMITTEE

- Catherine Jackson - Editor
- Bill Murray - Treasurer
- Mary Connell - Secretary/Webmaster
- John Kidney
- Angie Bradley
- Nicola Depuis
- Tony Francis

FUNDING

speakyourmind magazine is distributed free of charge but we are in need of funds to pay our printing costs. We receive donations from the National Lottery; Shine and private donors have also given generously, but to maintain two editions a year we need your help.

If you were able to contribute €2 to cover the cost of your copy that would be great. You can send a payment to speakyourmind magazine, Glenmalure House, Blackrock Rd, Blackrock, Cork. Or there is a convenient donate facility on our website www.speakyourmind.ie.

Thank you for your support.

speakyourmind WEBSITE

The speakyourmind.ie website now has a complete set of all eight previous editions, the 2008 and 2009 editions being added since our last edition.

Mary Connell
Webmaster
Hello all, and welcome to another edition of Speak Your Mind, a positive mental health magazine based in Cork City. We have many written and visual delights in store for you this issue. Bill Murray tells us about his time with the Sli Eile community in Churchtown, Co. Cork. We have four film-related articles including an interview with Terry McMahon, director of the acclaimed *Patrick’s Day*, as well as with Lenny Abrahamson, director of the film *Frank*, starring Michael Fassbender. Maya Rose looks at self-acceptance, Sile Walsh looks at the importance of minding your mind, and John Kidney writes about his return to education. Also included are tips on how to be a better listener, how to be happy and how to bird-watch from your armchair! Add to this a collection of beautiful photos, poetry and recipes, as well as a book review, and you have the makings of the best mental health publication in Ireland...we like to think so anyways!

I leave you with this powerful quote from Nido Qubein: “Your present circumstances don’t determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start”.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

For the first time I came across your publication and there is some useful information in there for people with mental health issues. I found it interesting to peruse.

I was disturbed though by one particular piece for several reasons. I have been thinking about how to articulate my mail to you for several days. There are so many layers and I could go on for far too long. But I will be brief. I refer to the Girl Against Fluoride article.

1: There is no established connection between fluoride and mental health. It is bunk, and refutable, and indeed refuted. I feel it is irresponsible of you to publish an interview with a woman who is fomenting public fear with baseless and unscientific arguments, particularly when your target population is vulnerable people, most of whom are not scientifically articulate (which in fairness one would need to be, to sort the cherry-picked from the real evidence). Your readers are seeking guidance.

2: It is irresponsible to publish what is clearly an opinion postscript as if it is fact. Your journalist is entitled to state his/her opinion, but should identify it as such in a publication such as this. Eg “can you tell us a little more about how you discovered the link between your depression and fluoride”. This question implies a causal link that is unsubstantiated and based entirely on opinion. To frame it as it is framed in the article, implies a confirmed connection and offers false hope to people who are seeking relief from their depressed feelings. It will also create panic, which no doubt was the intention of this horrendously biased article. A reframe would be “what led you to believe that there was a possible link between your depression and fluoride?”.

3: Referring to a woman who refers to herself as a “girl” as “thoroughly modern” because she is willing to objectify herself to get “attention” is damaging and gives the wrong message, again, to people with mental health issues - your target audience. People who are possibly already struggling with self-esteem issues, body image issues etc. Indeed what she is doing is thoroughly old fashioned and a nod to sexism, objectification, sexualisation and misogyny. In other words, the root of much of what is wrong in today’s society. How does she represent the modern woman? She does not represent me, or any of my friends or colleagues. Does she represent you? Is this the kind of role model you wish to promote support in a mental health publication?

4: Are you aware that she also allegedly believes that “gayness” is contracted in the womb and can be cured? Statistically, 10-20% of your readers and staff are gay/bisexual. Are you comfortable promoting a person who holds and publicly verbalises these views?

5: Are you aware that she is has allegedly expressed anti vaccine views? This is dangerous stuff. The latest outbreak of measles in the US has been traced back to a single unvaccinated child. People die because of the anti-vaccine lobby groups. Fear is contagious, and you are helping to spread it. I would imagine that your interviewer too was caught up the drama as presented by this woman. It happens easily, I was disappointed though, to see a magazine for mental health enabling the spread of unfounded fear.

That said, I do applaud any positive efforts, like your magazine, to promote mental health.

With best wishes for future publications,
Sally O’Reilly, MACounsPsych, MIAHIP, SIAHIP, MEAP
Counselling Psychologist, Psychotherapist & Supervisor

Opinions and suggestions and any form of feedback is always welcome

Catherine Jackson
St.Catherine’s Ward
St. Finbarrs Hospital, Douglas.
cathjackson2001@yahoo.com
My Day at “Slí Eile”

BILL MURRAY

The Slí Eile farm at Burton Park, set in the beautiful rolling countryside near Churchtown, County Cork, was established as a living environment for people experiencing mental health difficulties; where safety and acceptance would in tandem with meaningful occupation and support help those people achieve their life’s goals. The William Glasser ‘Choice Theory’ model which underpins their practice, says that we have choices about how we behave and how we live our lives. I had been involved in the Slí Eile project in its infancy when it was a smaller more fragile project trying to do something as basic as getting a house set up in an urban area which would operate using a Therapeutic Community approach. However that was about nine years ago and many changes had happened since then. I knew from my work in the UK’s National Health Service and the therapeutic communities that I had worked in or visited over the course of 12 years there, while working as a Mental Health Nurse, that something really special was likely to be taking place in the operation that Slí Eile had now evolved to be. I also knew that the only way to get a direct view of this was to immerse myself in the community, to experience it firsthand. I spoke with Joan Hamilton, founder of ‘Slí Eile’ about the prospect of my visiting the community for a day with the aim of writing an article for the ‘Speak Your Mind’ Magazine. We were both enthused and after the community approved of my proposal I set aside a date for my visit.

I crawled out of my bed at 5.15 AM in order to get to Burton Park on time for the breakfast at 7AM, a quick bowl of porridge and before I knew it we were off in the mini bus heading for the bakery which was located a few miles away in a house. ‘Slí Eile Cuisine’ is a little enterprise which prepares a variety of delicious baked goods and delivers them to local businesses and shops. Four of the tenants, a support worker and myself made up the team who were going to get the work done that morning. The whole operation went like clockwork and everyone, apart from myself, knew the routine well. Each tenant was keen to show me how they prepared the various baked items, they made it looks easy and the results were delicious. By about 10.15 AM we were loading up the minibus with baskets of brown bread, scones, apple tarts and cheese cakes and once again we were out on the road. Off into Charleville then where two tenants were dropped with baskets of scones and brown bread for local businesses who had orders in for their staff. They weren’t going to get fresher produce than these freshly baked items. The rest of us headed for a local supermarket where we delivered more baskets of produce and loaded them onto special tables set aside specifically for ‘Slí Eile Cuisine’. Afterwards we all headed back to base at Burton Park.

After a quick cup of tea I was told that we were going out to do some ‘farm work’. Tenants of Slí Eile are supported in engaging in meaningful and purposeful living and the farm is another part of that aspect of that approach. There were potatoes to be weeded and herbs to be tended to, and when a typical bit
of Irish rain arrived we sought refuge in the polytunnel where we turned our attention to some more weeding and tending to the variety of produce growing there. There was a nice relaxed feel to our group as we carried out the work, we did a lot of work yet we also found the time to have some conversation. I felt that everyone here had mutual respect for each other, and I never heard any of the tenants use psychiatric labels to describe themselves - I was left understand each individual through their interactions with me as opposed to whatever labels they may have been given elsewhere. Jim Cronin - an expert organic farmer, spends a day each week on the farm with some volunteers and he too was ‘on board’ with the philosophy on the farm with some volunteers and he too was ‘on board’ with the philosophy of ensuring life was meaningful and purposeful here. He was already thinking ahead and planning what crops needed to be growing which the tenants could harvest and bring to local shops during the winter months.

Sli Eile community is a great place for someone to rebuild their life where they could be nurtured and encouraged to grow by the community

There is nothing as satisfying as seeing the results of your labour, especially when it is something as tangible as food. Our work in the fields was coming to an end as we approached 1PM and we all headed back to the house for a well earned meal. Dinner was bacon, cabbage and potatoes—simple fare but organic and oh so delicious. All prepared by one of the tenants who had been assigned cooking duties for the week. He had also baked our dessert—another yummy creation-orange cake with icing. After dinner some of the tenants went running or walking and I used the time to collect my thoughts on what I had seen so far. It struck me at this point that not everyone might like to be in the company of others all day and that a lot of people, me included, would yearn for a bit of space. However the tenants assured me that there was plenty of time for that too and I did spot one or two tenants enjoying their own bit of space whether that be off running around one of the fields with the community’s pet dog, spending a bit of time enjoying a smoke in the shelter beside the yard or on the computer in the lounge/TV room. Then at 3PM we had a self awareness group. Here everyone just gave an account of their day, an account which could include any issues that had arisen. After a quick cup of tea I went out with a tenant to milk the cows, or rather in my case to watch him milk their shorthorn cows. At present the milk is exclusively consumed by the cow’s calves. I’m sure that may well change if the community manages to get the pasteuriser I heard mentioned. I hope I will be able to savour some ‘Slí Eile Cuisine’ cheese in the future. After milking, the cows led the tenant back to the field, yeah these cows knew where they wanted to go and the tenant followed them to close the gap after they entered the field. There was a lovely natural feel to all this, the cows were relaxed and the scene wouldn’t have looked out of place in a 19th century landscape painting. I imagine similar scenes are to be found in the other communities which have been successfully established throughout the UK, Europe, Australia and the USA.

While we were out milking the other tenants had a meditation group with a volunteer outside facilitator, this being just one of several groups and activities that take place here. A certain percentage of the profits from the sale of produce is ploughed back into the community through the provision of counselling, and a variety of activities. Just another part of that purposeful and meaningful approach. While this group was still on I had a bit of time left to take in the interior of the house. This house was originally built in the 16th century and is owned by the Ryan-Purcell family who lease it to “Slí Eile” housing association. I really wanted to have a go at the full size snooker table but had to refrain as I was running out of time. After meditation group we all met back in the kitchen for evening tea, minus Jim and his volunteers who had been with us for dinner earlier in the day. Here again was time to chat, afterwards there would be another Self Awareness Group. Bearing in mind that I was a stranger in the midst of this private yet welcoming group of individuals I guessed that if my visit had stirred up anyone’s feelings that they would have an opportunity to speak there. So I said my goodbyes before heading home. Hopefully the community’s experience of having me amongst them for the day will have been a positive one. I know that my day was well worth the early start and the work I did with the tenants, I found them welcoming and I think it was very generous of them to allow me to join them for the day.

The Slí Eile community struck me as a great place for someone to rebuild their life where they could be nurtured and encouraged to grow by the community in preparation for their lives in the wider community outside of Slí Eile. This growth is reflected in the developmental programme they operate which has four steps. Each step reflects the level of personal growth that has taken place within the individual, and formally recognises that with a variety of privileges and responsibilities.

If this article stirs up a few questions for you, perhaps you wonder if this approach may help you or someone you know, please feel free to contact Slí Eile using the contact details found at the back of this magazine.
Can you tell me about when you first started suffering with depression?

I first started suffering with depression that I could identify when I was 16. However, in hindsight I think it was a few years earlier, I just didn’t know it. Everyone said I was overly emotional and touchy. After I developed an eating disorder and attempted to take my own life because I just wanted out, no one could mistake it then. It was clear I needed help and needed to be hospitalised. I was being bullied because of my weight. I used to be called Anorexic Annie and stuff like that by the girls. I still don’t have very many female friends and to this day I’m still afraid of girls in large packs. A few years later I tried again to take my own life. I wasn’t doing too well in college. I was in a course I didn’t really want to be in. I felt very isolated, very alone. I didn’t really know where I wanted to be in life and I thought it would be easier to get out. But with this overdose, there were a lot more tablets involved and it affected me in a bigger way. In 2007 my father passed away and I didn’t know how to deal with it, which led to a breakdown. I partied for about a year. I thought I’d dealt with it. I thought life was getting back to normal and everything was going to be fine and then bang - I hit a big wall.

What has been the biggest help to your recovery?

It’s funny...I never think of myself as fully recovered. I constantly struggle with my mental health. I have good times and bad times but I’m just more aware of myself these days so I can get help when I need it. Conversation has been a big help and knowing it’s ok not to be ok. I realised that no one’s going to help me unless I try to help myself.

How do you keep healthy mentally and emotionally these days?

My fiance keeps the conversation going. He’s hyper sensitive to how I am and will question me if I’m off.

What kind of music puts you in a good mood?

I love Mark Feehily from Westlife, cannot wait for his solo stuff. His song ‘Talk Me Down’ about a bad time he was going through always helps me... I think to myself it’s going to be ok.

Do you think there is still a lot of stigma in Ireland re. mental health conditions? What do you think could be done to combat this?

I’m actually shocked it still is so taboo. I’ve buried friends. Medically, I myself should be dead, yet, still as a nation depression and suicide is a non-conversation goer . We need to kill this. We need to make it ok to talk.

What advice would you give to someone suffering with depression?

Talk. Keep talking. Don’t be ashamed... It really is ok not to be ok. Pick up the phone. I know its an old cliché, but the Samaritans are there. I remember emailing the Samaritans and they emailed me back because I didn’t want to talk to them on the phone. Reach out, there are people there who will talk to you and all it will take is that one person to be there and it just might stop you.
Earlier this year I decided to move on from my armchair activism, and to embrace the inconvenience of actually having to attend meetings in person. I shut down my Facebook account, took off my slippers and found myself sitting in a cold cafe every Saturday with the wonderful women of Cork Feminista. I gradually settled in, started voicing my opinions and ideas, but maybe I was voicing them a little too often as a few months ago I opened my emails to find a ticking time-bomb with my name all over it. Cork Feminista had invited me to be their guest panelist at the Trinity College Amnesty International Women’s Week panel on Women and Education. The adrenalin kicked in immediately. My heart thumped erratically. Stars blighted my sight. I felt sweaty and emotional, and needed to urinate urgently. And this was from just being asked to speak in public.

I’m one of the 74% of people worldwide suffering from speech anxiety. Has this held me back in life? Absolutely. My first book Mna na hEireann – The Women Who Shaped Ireland was published in 2009. After speaking at the launch in Waterstone’s, Cork, I found myself exhausted, unable to move from bed for at least a month afterwards, a culmination of the physical torture and stress I endure for weeks before a public speaking event. Therefore, I was unable to tackle any media queries, interviews, and missed out on huge opportunities. I was chosen as a finalist in a few screenwriting competitions but when it came to pitching my ideas in front of an audience, I’d seize up and wince my way through what I had condensed into a twenty second spiel in order to get off the stage as quickly as possible. Needless to say, I didn’t win. Sometimes the fear was so intense I couldn’t attend weddings, or funerals, and somewhere along the way I developed a tendency of drinking too much at social events in order to overcome my anxiety. Thankfully, this is no longer the case.

So, back to the panel invite. Four weeks previous to this invite I had started attending Voice workshops with Mary Doherty, as part of the Next Step programme at Camden Palace, Cork. Immediately drawn to this class when I first heard about it, I felt a change in myself, a noticeable internal shift. This was aided by the practise of witnessing in class, where each member of the group watches as you perform the mudras and The Seven Sounds of Love with openness and acceptance.

This sense of acceptance is key to why this practise has such a positive influence on public speaking. “It affirms the person as they are,” explains Mary. “You don’t have to go through the story of why the fear is there. Rather than looking at it from a mental place, you are seen and heard in a safe accepting place, and this acceptance sits into your body, making it reliable in every context. It deepens your relationship with the self and so your voice finds a place to come from.” Mary combines over twenty years of experience as a healer in the fields of massage, reflexology, acupuncture, IET Therapy, and Transference therapy, with her training as a Naked Voice facilitator. The Naked Voice was founded by singer and voice teacher Chloe Goodchild in 1990, and was the result of a transformative ‘no-mind’ experience in Northern India, inspired by the Indian luminary and saint Sri Anandamayi Ma. Goodchild describes The Naked Voice as “your original voice, fully-embodied, naturally-expressed, and free of self-consciousness. It is your authentic sound, as unique as your DNA or fingerprint.”

Despite my initial panicked reaction at receiving the invite, I bravely accepted the challenge and utilised all of the exercises I had learned at the Voice workshops. Sitting in Trinity College on March 4th, I found myself at one point looking around the room at the various receptive faces in the audience and being in awe that I had come so far in such a short time. There was no trembling, palpitations or sweatiness. My sight wasn’t blighted by stars. I did need to urinate just before the event started but I put that down to my rampant tea-drinking on the train. For the first time in my life I spoke in public with a clear even confident voice, with my own sense of humour, and with a passion for my beliefs in non-formal education and Cork Feminista’s Welfare to Work programme for single mothers. It was just as Mary had explained. Spending time in the accepting space of the Voice workshops helped me become more accepting of myself and from this my natural voice emerged. There was no thinking involved – the practise just settled into my body and became part of me. When I returned to Cork, there was no need to take to bed for weeks. Instead, I arose from bed the following morning singing my own name with a beaming proud smile on my face.

Mary Doherty facilitates Voice workshops every Tuesday from 7pm-8.30pm at 22 Patrick’s Hill, Cork. For further information you can contact Mary on 087-2970858
The Cork Film Festival, one of Europe’s oldest festivals, two years ago adopted the new motto and ethos of “Films-Music-Ideas”. This year for the 59th edition of the festival, the “Ideas” strand of that ethos rose to the forefront of the ten day event with the Illuminate series. Illuminate was a series of film programmes that focused on issues of mental health, the series consisted of many films dealing with themes of forensic psychiatry, youth suicide, OCD, and many more. The main feature of the Illuminate series however was a presentation of four carefully curated films, each followed by a panel discussion where leaders in many differing aspects of Irish mental health, filmmakers and artists were invited to respond to the film’s representations of mental health and to engage with the audience.

In 2013, the festival ran one such screening, a documentary entitled Not Criminally Responsible by Canadian documentarian John Kastner, and it was evident that Cork audiences were engaged with the subject matter; that there was a yearning in people to break the culture of silence and discuss these issues. The main purpose of the Illuminate series then was to not only showcase these important films but to provide a forum where people could come and discuss these issues. These forums exist in Ireland, but usually they occur behind the intimidating doors of academic conferences, or in specialised clinical settings - Illuminate provided a space where anybody could come and share their experiences, their stories, their passionate views, their concerns and their knowledge.

The first of the main Illuminate events invited John Kastner back to Cork with his powerful documentary OUT OF MIND, OUT OF SIGHT. The film is shot in the Brockville Medical Centre in Canada, a forensic psychiatry unit for patients who have committed violent crimes. The film follows the stories of four patients with vastly different backgrounds and stories but the main focus for the audience is the story of Michael, a young man suffering from Schizophrenia who tragically took the life of his mother. The documentary deals with the stories of these four people with unquestioning compassion and shines a light on a place and on people who are sometimes feared and demonised by society and who exist in the hybrid state between patient, perpetrator, victim and citizen. The film raises issues of capacity, culpability, legality, medicalisation but most of all compassion, healing and forgiveness. Invited to lead the discussion with audiences after the screening were Aíne HynesChair of the Irish Mental Health Lawyers Association and an experienced advocate in mental health law, John Kastner (Filmmaker), and Professor Harry Kennedy (Clinical Director of the Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum).

ROCKS IN MY POCKETS was the second installation in the Illuminate series. A feature length animation Rocks in My Pockets is a feature -length animation by US/Latvian director Signe Baumane. The film traces the legacy of depression and suicide in the lives of the filmmaker and her family. The animation offers a heartrending and deeply symbolic visual representation of depression and with a dark wit explores the depths of despair and the sometimes triumphs of hope. The post-screening panel invited Gretta Crowley (Operations Manager with the HSE), Dylan Tighe (Theatre Maker, Musician and former Service User) and Ali Rochford (Gateway Mental Health Project Worker) to rejoin in conversation with the audience.

Another highlight of the Illuminate series was the screening of PATRICK’S DAY. An Irish feature film by director Terry McMahon. Patrick’s Day follows the story of Patrick (Moe Dunford) a young man suffering from Schizophrenia who falls in love. Patrick’s mother (Kerry Fox) who is the main carer in Patrick’s life intervenes. The film explores issues of Capacity, ECT, and the right to self-determination for those suffering with mental health issues - it tackles these complex issues with a humanity that is sometimes lacking in public media and discourse. During the panel that followed both Terry McMahon and Moe Dunford spoke movingly and movingly about their motivations in making such a film and Dr. Pat Bracken and Dr. Ivor Browne shared their expertise and their immense benevolence with the audience. Many who were there spoke out about their own experiences and saw reflected in the film an incredibly human situation that many families deal with in their lives. The post-screening discussion allowed many of these families to have a voice and be heard and to have a space to exhale.

The Illuminate series of the Cork Film Festival ended with DISAPPEARING ACT, a series of short films which opened with locally made films by HEADWAY and Arts-Minds, and provided the service users involved in the making of these films their cinematic debut. Following this was a series of short films that focused on Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia examining the lives of those who suffer from these conditions and the effects upon those that love and care for them. Lindsay Goodall’s Irene a courageously honest portrait of her Grandmother who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease provided a powerful vehicle for debate and discussion after the screening with many of those present identifying and empathising with the work; seeing in it a reflection of their own lives and experiences. Vanessa Bradbury and Tina Leonard of the Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland spoke movingly on the need to erode the fear that exists around talking about these issues.

A culture of silence exists in Ireland around mental health, a throwback to darker days. There tragically still persists in Ireland a stigma surrounding these issues and indeed the concept of discussing them openly. As the name infers the Illuminate series aimed to take these issues out of the shadows and to discuss them plainly and honestly. Film is a powerful medium, it is an artform that possesses an immediacy; it has a capacity to make us feel and empathise when our vocabulary or our social conventions might constrain us and to provoke a feeling or belief in us that we may not have thought we had the ability to articulate. The films in the Illuminate series evoked these feelings and the panel discussions that followed them were a space for us to use that vocabulary and to articulate these feelings and experiences in an open forum. The audiences that attended the Illuminate series spoke passionately and movingly of their experiences of mental health in Ireland and of their hopes for it - hopefully it is a film series that we will see again.
Illuminate is a new film and discussion series exploring Mental Health.

The programme will showcase Irish and international films which deal with mental health, followed by extended audience interactive discussion sessions, with some of Ireland’s leading artists, filmmakers, clinicians, lawyers, psychiatrists and philosophers.

**INDIVIDUAL EVENTS: €10 | HSE STAFF: €8 | ILLUMINATE PASS: €30**

**Out of Mind**

*Out of Sight*

What happens to people who suffer from mental illnesses and commit violent crimes? Some are sent to forensic psychiatric hospitals – where they disappear from public view for years.

Panel speakers: **JOHN KASTNER** - Emmy award-winning director of Out of Mind, Out of Sight
**PROF. HARRY KENNEDY** - Clinical Director of the Central Mental Hospital and Lecturer in Forensic Psychology
**AINE HYNES** - Chair of the Irish Mental Health Lawyers Association and Mental Health Lawyer

**Patrick’s Day**

FRI | 1600 - 1900

Patrick, a warm, open, twenty-six-year-old virgin schizophrenic, is on leave from the hospital to celebrate his birthday. He meets Karen, a troubled older woman.

Panel Speakers: **DR IVOR BROWNE** - Former Chief Psychiatrist of Eastern Health Board & Prof Emeritus of Psychiatry at UCD
**TERRY MCMAHON** and cast
**DR. PAT BRACKEN** - philosopher, author and Clinical Director of West Cork Mental Health Services

**Rocks In My Pocket**

THURS | 1600 - 1900

Rocks in my Pockets is an award-winning feature-length animation which explores the legacy of suicide and depression within the filmmakers own life and the lives of the women in her family. With wit and grace the animation visually represents and explores one family’s battles with and sometime triumphs over depression.

Panel Speakers: **GRETTA CROWLEY** - HSE Operations Manager
**DYLAN TIGHE** - Theatre Maker and Musician
**ALI ROCHFORD** - Gateway Project Worker

**Disappearing Act**

SAT | 1700 - 2000

This programme of shorts will begin by showcasing two shorts made by Cork service users and local mental health organisations. Following this is “Disappearing Act”, a carefully curated programme which explores Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia.

Panel Speakers: **LINDSAY GOODALL** - Director of award-winning short Irene
**TINA LEONARD** - Head of Advocacy and Public Affairs at the Alzheimer Society of Ireland
SYM: Hi Terry, can I ask you why you first decided to go into film-making?
TERRY: To pay the rent...and for kicks. I was writing soap opera. It was enjoyable and there were great people involved plus it never interfered with writing screenplays, so all was good. But a regime change brought with it a deliberate and absurdly unnecessary pressure and that almost crippled all creative capacity so, in an act of desperation, I put a status on Facebook saying I intended making a no-budget film called Charlie Casanova and if anybody was interested they should make contact and I’d send them the script. It felt embarrassing and just as I was about to delete the status, somebody responded. Then over a hundred people reached out and within a couple of weeks we were on set for the first day of filming. We shot Charlie Casanova in eleven days and it ended up becoming one of the most controversial and reviled Irish movies ever made. Yet, even though I ended up broke and broken, I was hungrier than ever to fight to make another movie, and that manifested as Patrick’s Day.

SYM: Were there film-makers in particular you were influenced by?
TERRY: The two major Irish filmmakers I’d probably be influenced by are Joe Comerford and Jim Sheridan. Provocative, visceral and socially conscious, their films struck a deep chord. Beyond that John Cassavetes made a major impact, as did Billy Wilder, Jane Campion, Sidney Lumet, Krzysztof Kieslowski, John Huston, Ingmar Bergman, The Farrelly Brothers and Paul Thomas Anderson.

SYM: Where did the idea for Patrick’s Day come from?
TERRY: Many years ago I was a carer in an institution. There were many wonderful people working there and a few not-so-wonderful. I used to watch the parents or guardians of the residents visit at the weekend and there was always a lot of love but the moment any of those residents demonstrated an aspiration towards intimacy they were shut down as if what they yearned for was an aberration. I always wanted to write something about that repressive element of love.

SYM: How has the mental health community responded to the film?
TERRY: Patrick’s Day is a provocative experience so no doubt there will be detractors, but the film has generated remarkable champions including Professor Ivor Browne and The National Alliance of Mental Illness in America.

SYM: What kind of research did you have to do before filming?
TERRY: As a subject, Schizophrenia is profoundly contentious, so to ensure some kind of veracity we met with people on either side of the diagnostic divide and made the script available to anybody interested in reading it via mental health websites etc. The reactions were what we had hoped they would be - complex and powerful, with some loving it and some hating it. We took many of their insights onboard but you have to eventually reach a stage where you thematically decide what kind of movie you want to make and just begin the struggle to realise that movie. It’s never possible to please everybody, nor should you want to, frankly.

SYM: Do you think there is a still a stigma around mental health issues in Ireland? Why do you think this is?
TERRY: There are multiple ways of stigmatizing the vulnerable. Personal prejudices that may have been ingrained in the past seem to be thankfully shifting. However, the lack of empathy and escalating ignorance of government policy is deeply disturbing. A kind of banal dehumanization seems to be a prerequisite of their economic and political agenda. But when the needs of individuals become irrelevant, the long term impact will be devastating. The saddest part is that these policies are not accidental, they have been tried and tested multiple times in multiple cultures and proved horribly effective. So for reasons that are the antithesis of human rights or even basic humanity our current regime will continue to implement them, financially and governmentally.

SYM: What do you do to keep well mentally and emotionally?
TERRY: Writing and making a film pushes us way beyond what we think ourselves capable of doing, and we quickly learn the meaning of humility and heroism. What people are willing to do to facilitate the making of magic out of mayhem is the heroic part, and watching them do it for some dumb idea you had in your room one lonely day long ago is the humbling part. Friends are also gifts beyond measure. Plus I have a family who wake me early every morning and render every day exhausting but remarkable. We also have a dog. And a rabbit. And a gerbil. And another bambino on the way.

SYM: Congratulations Terry and family!
Irish director Lenny Abramson has followed up his award-winning films "Adam & Paul," "Garage," and "What Richard Did" with "Frank," a kooky comedy about a young musician, Jon (Domhnall Gleeson), who joins an avant-garde band led by the enigmatic Frank (Michael Fassbender), a musical genius who hides himself behind his large papier-mâché head and his scary bandmate Clara (Maggie Gyllenhaal). We catch up with Lenny on the set of his next project, "Room," the adaptation of Irish-Canadian author Emma Donoghue's bestselling novel.

SYM: Lenny, your work has generally dealt with characters on the edges of society. Is this an important aspect of how you choose a film to make?
LENNY: I am always moved by people who have to get by alone, people who are often not valued by the society around them. I'm drawn to stories which give dignity to their lives and their struggles. A character like Josie in "Garage" is easily written off but the film shows what depth of feeling he is capable of, the fullness of his humanity.

SYM: What kind of research did you do into living with a mental health problem before making "Frank"?
LENNY: We didn't do specific research for Frank, though Jon Ronson is a writer who has dealt a lot with questions of mental health, so he is very comfortable in that territory. For me, I was keen not to label Frank, not to define his difficulties. So I approached him like I approach every character, with as much openness as possible in the hope that I can show him in a rich and real way. Labels are necessary perhaps in some contexts, but in drama they are limiting.

SYM: Have you or anyone close to you dealt with a mental illness in the past? How has this shaped your film-making?
LENNY: I know many people, some very close to me, who have experienced mental illness, and I've had depression on and off since my teens. It's not something that has ever stopped me working and I believe it allows me some insight into other people's suffering which I may not have without that experience.

SYM: Frank wears a mask that allows him to be the man he wants to be. Does film-making do the same thing for you in allowing you to explore different personas?
LENNY: Yes, certainly making films is a way of inhabiting and exploring other people's lives.

SYM: What do you do to keep yourself healthy mentally and emotionally?
LENNY: It's an ongoing process but as I've gotten older I've learned a few things: being very mentally active, having things to think about which are hard to crack, subtle problems to solve, ideas to explore, all these are vital to me. And being physically active, also - being fit and exercising is really beneficial to me. Music is important, watching and re-watching great cinema. Being with my family, my wife and little son and daughter, takes me out of myself. Having children has made me less self-absorbed and way more easy going. We also have two dogs and I really love being around animals and out in nature. I'm fascinated by landscapes.

SYM: What projects can we look forward to from you in the future?
LENNY: I've been in Canada for a few months shooting "Room," a film based on the book of the same name by Emma Donoghue who also adapted the script. I think many people will know the book - it's very powerful and it has been a great challenge to dramatise it. I'll be editing and completing it in Dublin through much of next year. After that I'm planning to make a film based on another book, Sarah Water's "The Little Stranger," set in late-forties England. It's a very unusual ghost story. I'm also working on an American Civil War film based on Laird Hunt's "Neverhome."
Watching films is a universally cathartic experience for an audience. Of course the films people respond to is completely subjective; almost as much as one’s taste in music. While some people watch movies more than others, everyone gets swept up by movie magic. It’s not surprising then that they are used in the treatment of depression and some other mental disorders.

**Movie Therapy** - described by the Royal College of Psychiatrists as a ‘useful aid to counselling’ involves ‘prescribing’ a particular film suited to someone’s problem, then discussing the feelings it stirs up. Here are three films from a variety of genres that I’ve chosen to discuss.

**The Shawshank Redemption (1994)**
I’m sure everyone is familiar with The Shawshank Redemption’s plot: Andy Dufresne is wrongfully imprisoned for the murder of his wife and “spoiler alert” escapes. Upon the films initial release in 1994 its tongue twister title prevented it from setting the box office alight. But like all precious treasures, it refused to go undiscovered. Since then it has cemented its place as, not only one of the greatest movies ever made, but one of the most beloved. Its position at No. 1 on the IMDB’s Top 250 movies can attest to this. But why has this modern day classic touched so many people’s hearts?

I believe it’s because the main character, Andy, is a relatively silent and reserved protagonist. In fact the only distinguishing characteristic of his personality is his burning desire to escape his situation. This allows the viewer to project themselves into his struggle. The story is narrated by Andy’s best friend Red. The sound of Morgan Freeman’s voice is a feel good factor unto itself. But the affection, respect and love with which he speaks of his friend is how you would hope your loved ones would speak about you.

As for Andy’s actions, in the end he crawls through a literal tunnel of excrement to escape his confinement. This base allegory can distinctively be applied to any difficult situation one faces in their own lives. And finally, I cannot think of a vertebrate with silent cinema as Dracula is with vampires. The film touches on his battle with the American institutions and his questionable relationship with younger women. However, at it’s core the film is about a man whose singular desire was not only to entertain through laughter, but to reflect the tumultuous society around him. The highlight for me is a recreation of the famous speech ‘Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope can set you free.’

**Chaplin (1992)**
Chaplin is the story of Charlie Chaplin, a man as synonymous with silent cinema as Dracula is with vampires. The film shows his impoverished youth, his struggle to look after his mentally ill mother, his success as a comedy drunk on stage and his faithful journey to America to star in ‘the flickers. The movie touches on his battle with the American institutions and his questionable relationship with younger women. However, at it’s core the film is about a man whose singular desire was not only to entertain through laughter, but to reflect the tumultuous society around him. The highlight for me is a recreation of the famous speech ‘The Great Dictator’ appealing to humankind’s better nature. Also in the era of Robert Downey Jr’s extroverted charm and bravado as Tony Stark/Iron Man it’s comforting to see charm and likeability exercised through stoic nobility and ferocious dedication to hard work. Chaplin is available on iTunes.

**Happy (2011)**
‘Happy’ is a documentary about happiness. Not a truly ‘feel good film’ but it is such a fascinating exploration that I feel it is worth mentioning. The film depicts several anecdotal stories from a wide variety of societies including that of a communal living centre for families in Denmark which makes for an extremely interesting look at a modern day return to tribal living. Interviews with the children show them to be extremely happy to have so many friends to play with and more importantly that they feel safe because there are so many adults around to care for them. If they fall and hurt themselves one of the parents, or grandparents, will be there to pick them up. And not necessarily their own biological family members. On the same note a single mother counts her blessings that the responsibilities are shared between the group. Cooking meals and cleaning is alternated between the adults and children over the age of 14. She remarks that after work if she had to cook a meal and wash up every night she would have virtually no time to spend quality time with her children or have some time to herself. These stories are interspersed with insights from experts discussing ‘positive psychology’ – the scientific study of happiness. One of the facts that stuck with me is their claim that 50% of a person’s happiness comes from genetics, only 10% comes from circumstance whereas 40% comes from intentional actions. That is to say in the glass of genetics and on the coaster of circumstance, it really is up to us to see the glass as half full or half empty. Happy is available on Netflix.
There is an increasing and welcomed conversation developing around the idea of recovery from mental health issues. There are so many definitions of recovery that it can be very confusing as to what recovery really means to individuals, their families and friends and to service providers. The definition used here is one a Clonmel mental health discussion group decided defined recovery best, as they understood it:

"Recovery is moving on and learning. Being the best and the best that I can be with confidence"

Recovery is a very personal and individual experience for people, but regardless of your belief in recovery it is certain: Recovery and having knowledge of recovery is very important to people progressing and moving forward with their lives. Recovery and forward movement is best defined and developed by the person themselves. People report that they can find themselves stuck within that framework of recovery. Although they were in recovery from a mental health point of view, they were finding it difficult to participate in community and societal living as other people do.

"Recovery being a place with edges, which when explored, there comes a time to leave and explore the world."
(Kilkenny mental health discussion group, 2013)

Shine in the South East are developing a ‘Recovery Hub’ in the community as a resource for people with self-experience of mental health difficulties and their families and relatives. This ‘Recovery Hub’ will be based in the Shine Discovery Building in Waterford.

A ‘Recovery Hub’ provides people with self-experience and their family members and relatives with access to many activities, including for example: education, training, information, advocacy, practical support and self-development opportunities. Working in an inclusive, recovery focussed, strength based way, the Recovery Hub will support people to bring into focus and progress their own individual recovery journey.

THE PURPOSE OF SHINE DISCOVERY

The Shine Discovery Building service will provide time and space for each individual to identify and build on their strengths, and develop the understanding and skills needed to navigate life issues.

"Discovering one’s strengths and capabilities and taking part in activities of interest helped reconnection with self, others over time."
(Y Kartalova-O’Doherty and D Tedstone Doherty)

People will be supported to recognise that they do have choices to make and then to manage their own choices. The Shine Discovery Building will work as part of a network of community responses, linking services and supports within the community. These will include adult and community education, housing supports, employment supports, adult literacy, money advice and citizens’ information services, or any other service the person deems appropriate.

The Shine Discovery Building will have the usual supports that the regional office currently provides in the South East.

Below is a visual display of the options available to people. An individual may avail of all or one. The only criteria set down is: In order to undertake the Personal Discovery Map, the individual must complete a one day Taking Control Workshop.

There are eight options shown below and within those options there will be many more layers and textures.

Taking Control Workshops will be offered to all attendees, this will ensure that they can partake in the “My Personal Discovery Map” Program.

MY PERSONAL DISCOVERY MAP

The Discovery Map is devised in order to promote discussion on topics and issues, which are encountered as part of daily living, reflective thinking, exploration and naming what has been discovered.

This is a highly interactive piece of work, which will be done in tandem with staff from Shine. When an individual has worked their way through a discussion point they will be encouraged to record the outcome in the form of a discovery statement, building up a series of statements which will enable the person to name their own strengths and skills of resilience, leading to having choice in participating in community and societal living as people, rather than people with self experience of a mental health difficulty.

References
Little Things Can Make A Big Difference

New mental health campaign from HSE National Office for Suicide and over 25 partner organisations

Littlethings is the new mental health and wellbeing campaign, launched by the HSE’s National Office for Suicide Prevention and a coalition of over 25 partner organisations. The #littlethings campaign highlights that we all experience difficult times in our lives, and that when we do, there are some simple, evidence-based little things that can make a big difference to how we feel. These #littlethings can help us to cope but there are also supports and services we can use if we need to.

#littlethings answers two key questions that we all need the answers to in order to be able to look after ourselves and others mental health. 

1. WHAT CAN I DO?

The campaign, developed in conjunction with mental health experts, highlights the evidence based #littlethings that can improve your mental health and wellbeing. The campaign showcases a selection of the #littlethings that are proven to protect and help recover good mental health and wellbeing – like keeping active, talking about problems, connecting with others going through difficult times, drinking less alcohol, eating and sleeping well.

2. WHERE CAN I GO?

A new online information resource, yourmentalhealth.ie, has been developed with the support of NOSP and funded partner organisations. This website is now the most comprehensive online directory of support services and information on mental health in Ireland. It is a great place to learn about mental health, and to find out how to support yourself and the people you care about. In addition, there is now one single emotional support freephone number, available at all times, from the Samaritans at 116 123.

The campaign features real people; Una -Minh Kavanagh, Robert Carley and Alan O’Mara, who generously share their mental health experiences in a series of animated films and radio ads, in order to help others who may be going through tough times. The campaign encourages everyone to know the #littlethings that are proven to work, and to share the #littlethings that help them.

The campaign was launched by Minister of State with responsibility for Primary Care, Social Care and Mental Health, Kathleen Lynch T.D., at an event where a wide range of voluntary organisations, from the mental health sector and wider society, pledged to support and promote the #littlethings campaign within their communities over the coming years.

Speaking at the launch Minister Lynch commented; “The commitment of Government to mental health has been set out clearly with 2014 seeing the largest investment to date in mental health and suicide prevention initiatives. I’m particularly pleased to be here to launch this campaign and it is now essential that we continue to build momentum as individuals, and as a community, to recognise the importance of understanding and protecting our mental health and to avail of the support that is available when it is needed.”

Gerry Raleigh, Director of the HSE National Office of Suicide Prevention, said “We are very proud of the partnership and commitment that has gone into the creation of this campaign. I would like to thank all of those who have supported its development and will bring the important message of this campaign to people and communities all over Ireland in the months and years ahead.

We know that when people like Una, Robert and Alan share their real experiences about how they steered through life’s storms, it gives others a sense of hope. Talking about what’s wrong, what helped, and about how others supported them – can help others to find the little things that will help them.”

Catherine Brogan, Executive Director of Samaritans Ireland, said; “We, along with the partner organisations, are delighted to have taken part in the development and rollout of this campaign. As one of the #littlethings says – there is strength in numbers, and all of us feel united behind this simple but powerful campaign, and our shared objectives of improving health and wellbeing and reducing suicide in Ireland.”

The campaign combines real stories, told through animated films and radio messages, describing Una, Robert and Alan’s experience of difficult times, how they felt, and what little things helped them through it. The ads are supported by a range of print and online illustrations of the #littlethings that are proven to protect and recover good mental health and wellbeing.

Here are the #littlethings that can make a big difference to our mental health and our wellbeing:

- Keeping Active – being active every day, something as simple as a walk, is proven to have a positive impact on your mood.
- Talking about your problems – problems feel smaller when they are shared with others, without having to be solved or fixed. Just talking about it will do you good.
- Doing things with others – Taking part in a group activity that you enjoy is proven to have a positive impact on how you feel, be it a game of football, joining a choir, volunteering.
- Eating healthily – A regular healthy, balanced and nutritious diet will help both your physical, but also your mental health, and have a positive impact on how you feel.
- Staying in touch – Catching up with friends and family is good for our mental health, reminding us that we’re part of a community, and has a positive impact on how we feel.
- Sleeping well – Getting a good night’s sleep of 7 or 8 hours, as often as you can, will have a positive impact on how you feel. Protect your sleep if you can, it will do you good.

To see the #littlethings that work for others, and to share the little things that work for you, see the @littlethingshub on Twitter and Facebook at www.facebook.com/littlethingshub. It’ll do you good, and could help someone else.

To watch Una, Robert and Alan’s #littlethings films visit www.yourmentalhealth.ie, where you will also find comprehensive national support service listings and lots of wellbeing and support tools and information.
Getting regular exercise is proven to have a positive impact on how you feel. The more you move, the better your mood. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

Eating healthy, balanced diet is proven to have a positive impact on how you feel. Your mental health is closely linked to your diet. Eating a healthy, balanced diet can help you maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of chronic diseases, and improve your mood. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

Being in touch and connecting with other people is proven to have a positive impact on how we feel. If a friend seems distant, catch up with them. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

Getting a good night’s sleep as often as you can is proven to have a positive impact on how you feel. 8 hours sleep make the other 16 easier. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

For the average Irish drinker, drinking less alcohol will have a positive impact on their health and mental wellbeing. Drink less and great nights become good mornings. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is proven to have a positive impact on how you feel. Your mental health is closely linked to your diet. Eating a healthy, balanced diet can help you maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of chronic diseases, and improve your mood. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

Being in touch and connecting with other people is proven to have a positive impact on how we feel. If a friend seems distant, catch up with them. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

Talking about our problems is proven to have a positive impact on how we feel. Lending an ear is lending a hand. Find the #littlethings that work for you. Little things can make a big difference.

yourmentalhealth.ie offers the most comprehensive range of online support services and information.
What does the term 'self-acceptance' mean to you? A really enlightened way of being? To be at ease and 'okay' with oneself? Total surrender with how it is and how it's all going to be? Some people think it's about accepting the parts of themselves that they don't like and turning off the parts of themselves that wants to change. Others think it's about digging around in the past and figuring out 'why' you are the way you are...But what does it mean to you? How does it feel in you?

Try it another way. How does it feel to consider accepting others? About the same, easier, or more difficult than accepting yourself? For me personally, there is no contest. I accept others unconditionally. I take them as they are, where and how I find them, and I decide whether I continue to be around them based on my own individual needs and values. Or do I? In theory, well yes...and no. In an ideal world where all wounds are healed

While this seems to be an obvious and somewhat conscious cycle, it proves to be unavoidable at times of crisis. Times of challenge. Times of change. And in these situations, much as endeavours are made to stay open and malleable, buttons may be pushed and fragile ego and esteem take a knock.

Ego and esteem have their valid place in giving us a sense of ourselves. Boundaries, morals and values are built on from this sense and a healthy identity is formed in our early years for protection. Armouring is often layered on from this and that can be problematic in terms of relating with others and the world. Defences and walls that go up through necessity or difficulties can be equally difficult to bring down in order to allow us to commune. This can also impede our sense of acceptance when we are protected so rigidly. Though related, self-acceptance is not quite the same as self-esteem. Self-esteem refers specifically to how valuable or worthwhile we view and hold ourselves. Self-acceptance alludes to a far more global affirmation of self. When we're self-accepting, we're able to embrace all facets of ourselves—not just the positive, more 'esteem-able' parts. As such, self-acceptance is unconditional, free of any qualification. We can recognize our weaknesses, limitations, and foibles, but this awareness in no way interferes with our ability to fully accept ourselves. It holds off on futile judgement and renders blame and guilt redundant. It allows.

In fully comprehending our current reservations about ourselves, we also need to add the disapproval and criticism we may have received from siblings, relatives, teachers and especially our parents and peers who, struggling with their own self-doubts, could hardly resist making fun of our frailties whenever we innocently 'exposed' them. I feel it's safe to assert and assume, largely based on my own experience, and from heart-sharing with so many others, that almost all of us enter adulthood afflicted with a certain negative bias and a hypersensitivity towards criticism. We share a common tendency to blame ourselves, or to see ourselves in some way defective. It's as though we all, to whatever degree, suffer from the same epidemic of self-doubt.

...SO HOW DO WE BECOME MORE SELF-ACCEPTING?

Perhaps more than anything else, cultivating self-acceptance requires that we develop more self-compassion. Only when we can better understand and forgive ourselves for things that earlier on in life became a necessary default setting, can we secure the relationship to self that up till now has eluded us. It is possible, I remind myself daily, to change and shift that old paradigm. Let's set a new template.

Accepting ourselves unconditionally would have been almost automatic had our guardians conveyed a predominantly positive message about us to us. If they had not taken our behaviours personally, were non-reactive (near impossible, let's face it) or at least took responsibility for their reactions as humans and were not afraid to show us this, their humanness, we would have learnt self-acceptance. But as this wasn't the case for most people, we need now to learn how to validate our essential totality. If deep within us we're ever to experience our natural state of being that is essentially love and freedom, personal fulfilment, efficacy and flow, we must first rise to the challenge of complete, unqualified self-acceptance or self-fullness as I have taken to call it lately. BE FULL OF YOURSELF. ALL OF AND EVERY THING THAT YOU ARE.

What's not needed and does not serve will spill over. You can never be too full of what you already are. I remember reading the following words some years ago. They disarmed me in a way that I'm still remembering in myself and my life in surprising new ways, some pleasant, some not so much, but all necessary. All we need to know is that we are LOVABLE and CAPABLE: "If we all felt lovable and capable there would be significantly less depression, anxiety or panic as diagnosable conditions. Urban legend has it that all of us wear an invisible sign around our necks that have the letters ‘I.A.L.A.C.’ on it. IALAC stands for; I am lovable and capable.” Julie Cohen

self acceptence (noun)
the ability to love yourself unconditionally, no matter what flaws and traits exist
Psychiatric medication has a robust evidence base for managing many of the core symptoms of schizophrenia such as troubling beliefs and hallucinations. However, recent research has brought into focus an additional set of difficulties experienced by patients. Patients with schizophrenia frequently experience problems with memory, concentration and problem solving. Additionally some patients have trouble negotiating and making sense of social relationships. These sorts of problems are grouped under the broad heading of cognitive difficulties.

Current research suggests that these difficulties first begin to occur in adolescence prior to the onset of psychosis. Importantly they occur before patients are first prescribed medication. However, often because key symptoms like hallucinations and delusions can be treated with reasonable success with medication, cognitive problems continue to play an important role limiting the return to normal functioning. Specifically there is evidence to suggest that difficulties with memory, attention and problem solving impact on patients’ ability to benefit from educational groups, live independently, day to day functioning and most importantly quality of life. Currently a number of kinds of psychological therapy are being developed to address these problems. One of these is cognitive remediation therapy. Preliminary research suggests that it has some ability to improve patients functioning.

At the Central Mental Hospital Dundrum the psychology service supported by medical and non medical colleagues are investigating whether Cognitive Remediation Therapy can be of value to our patients. To our knowledge this is the first clinical trial of Cognitive Remediation to be conducted within a forensic population around the world. The training programme is intensive and patients receive 56 sessions over 14 weeks. The programme involves patients practicing attentional, memory and problem solving tasks and also learning flexible strategies to help transfer these skills to their every day lives.

Patients report really enjoying the programme and that they are transferring skills they have learned to everyday challenges. However the robust evaluation process will take some time before we can quantify how much cognitive remediation helps our patients. It is hoped however that our training programme will play a role alongside the other interventions that we routinely offer so as to assist patients on their journey of recovery.

DR. KEN O’REILLY
Senior Clinical Psychologist at the CMH
and Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
Trinity College Dublin
B.Sc., M.Sc., D.Psych.Science
I AM AN ordinary married man, with three children, a semi-detached house in the suburbs and I commute daily to a job as a mental health professional.

I also have mental health issues. Does that surprise you? It surprised me, and I have worked in this area for over a decade.

I grew up thinking mental health was someone else’s problem. That it was that man in a bus shelter who talked to himself. That it was the ‘cat lady’ down the street who rarely set foot outside her home. I never realised that mental health touched my life and that it touched the people I loved.

My story is all too common, without celebrity or scandal. I was bullied as a child. It took me to a dark place in my head and I learned to hide it from the world on a daily basis. I would put a ‘front’ on; a mask that only I knew was there. A mask to hide the anxiety I felt going near school or other children, the low self-worth I was experiencing that kept reminding me I was no good. Soon the voices in my mind were negative enough to keep me down and I no longer needed the bully to help.

I quickly became an expert at hiding it
I kept the front up to make people believe I was strong and confident when inside I was scared and unhappy. I went to a dark place in my head more than once where I would have been more than happy to not wake up the next morning. I had a loving family who did not even realise it was going on because I quickly became an expert at hiding it.

It was my own prejudice and fear that kept me from talking about it. This same fear kept me alone in my feelings when, actually, all around me there were supports that could have lessened my burden. I didn’t even understand what depression or anxiety was back then and until recently I believed these were things ‘other people’ experienced. It was my own sense of stigma that got in my way.

In 2012, research showed that 56% of Irish people surveyed would not want others to know about their mental health problem and 24% would hide it even from close family.

I don’t tell you this story to make you feel sorry for me. I tell it because fear, worry and self-doubt are feelings everyone can relate to and yet we continue to think mental health is someone else’s problem. The WHO uses statistics to show that 1:4 people will experience a diagnosable mental health problem at some point in their life. However mental health isn’t just about diagnosis. We don’t have to wait to have a heart attack to begin eating well or take regular exercise. We do it because it keeps us well.

The statistic should be 4:4; we will ALL experience a mental health problem in our lives. It has happened, or will happen when we have a problem at work, in a relationship, a grief issue, a financial worry or an anxiety about something. Surely we can all relate to being afraid, grief stricken, worried or feeling down about something.

I survived
I also tell the story to show I am OK, more than OK actually. I am loved by people who care for me; and I do my best to care for them. I survived this time and while like everybody else I continue to have my mental health issues, I take steps to take care of myself – to ‘mind’ my mental health. To take responsibility for my own mental health the same way we take responsibility for our physical health. I developed and nurtured resilience in my life and I didn’t even have the language to describe how I managed that. I had supports I wasn’t even conscious of.

Just like we all have physical health we all have mental health. At what point did we decide to treat ourselves as if our head and mind was not always attached to our body and that our mental health was something to be scared of?

I work for Saint John of God Hospital and See Change. Together with over 70 partner organisations we are supporting the fight to end stigma around mental health. I hope everybody reading this will start a conversation about mental health with their family and friends, their husbands or wives, and their children or colleagues, talk in schools with teachers, at home with parents and children, around coffee tables and board rooms. You don’t have to be an expert to show someone you care and are willing to listen if they are having a bad day, or even a good day. Let’s change minds about mental health, one conversation at a time.

Find out more at: www.greenribbon.ie
How do you mind your mind?

Your mind, my mind, everyone’s mind is a vital part of how we live our lives, how we navigate our days, and how well we can keep ourselves.

The mind is what continuously helps us navigate our lives. If it were a muscle, it would be pretty well worked out. I know that, like myself, a lot of people forget about their mental health until of course it causes us an issue. We work it every minute of every day and very often forget to service it regularly. We can take responsibility for mental health by minding our minds and by staying on top of what we need to do to maintain our mental health.

As a life coach, the biggest thing I can do is be part of the education and prevention process. You see we can’t control everything but we do have choices over a lot of things that can positively or negatively impact us.

We all know when we are gone past the point of managing our own mental health but very often there are signs long before that, signs we miss, signs that could point us to a quick service or check-up. That’s what I want us to think about today, that’s what I want this article to support.

The importance of Check-ups & Self Care

Check-ups can help us mind our mind more effectively. So what is a check-up? Check-ups can be different for different people. It could be a visit to your GP, psychiatrist, therapist or therapy group. It’s a way in which someone professional can give you feedback or support about your current well-being.

So take a moment now to list out what check-up resources you have available to you? Remember, a check-up helps you to understand where you are at and what you may need to be in optimal health.

When you have your check-up list sorted, another great way of minding the mind is to create a Self Care checklist. This is simply a list of things you can do for yourself on a regular basis that will support and help you to mind your mind. This list could include counseling, AA, mindfulness, meditation, breathing techniques, writing a journal, watching positive films, avoiding stressful situations, and taking your prescribed medication. Now take a moment to write out the list of ways you can support and mind your mind. You may want to take some from the list above or you may already have a really good personal list of your own. Write that list out & pin it somewhere to remind yourself of all the ways you can take self-care for the mind. These two lists can help you to mind your mind in such a simple way and can have a massive impact on your well-being.

Now that you have a list of ways to check up on yourself and a list of self-care techniques for the mind, the next step is to create a list of stressors or triggers and the management methods you have or may need for these. Write out a quick list of what throws you off or has a negative effect on your mental health, then beside it write one way in which you could best support yourself or manage these situations from now on.

The idea of these lists is to help you stay aware and empowered, so that you can make the best decisions for your mental health on a daily basis.

It is important to remember to focus your energies on the areas of life you can take more control over. Minding your mind is definitely one of these areas so get writing those lists!

Find out more about Sile’s work at: www.silewalsh.com
The motto of the “Association of Irish Floral Artists” (AOIFA) is “friendship through flowers”. It has certainly lived up to that for me because I have made so many friends at home and abroad through my involvement in flower arranging.

My interest in flowers can be traced back to my primary school days where I was fortunate to have had a teacher who taught us the names of the wild flowers. I began to get seriously involved when I joined Cobh Flower and Horticulture Club where I was a founding member in 1975. There my interest was nurtured and gradually blossomed over the years. I gained confidence by competing in shows in Ireland, the U.K. and further afield and eventually took exams.

The World Flower Show, described as the “Olympics of Flower Arranging”, came to Ireland for the first time in June last year. It is staged every three years and has been hosted in many countries around the globe. The previous one was in Boston. I was fortunate to have been a competitor and prize winner when I participated in Yokohama in Japan in 2005.
The World Flower Show afforded me a unique opportunity to represent my country when I was invited to stage the honorary exhibit for Ireland having won the "Floral Artist of the Year" title previously. Each of the thirty nations competing put forward a representative to depict their country. My exhibit was inspired by the beautifully ornate Ardagh Chalice.

Close to 700 competitive exhibits festooned the two huge exhibition halls in the RDS. Varied and challenging themes such as “On the World’s Edge”, “Forgotten Place”, “Flight Patterns”, “Illusion” and “Weaving Dreams” were depicted using plant material ranging from the exotic to the wild. It was truly an amazing sight.

I was very privileged to have been a member of the judging panel for this event. It was a rewarding and enlightening experience to have worked side by side with so many interesting people from so many diverse corners of the globe.

Once the World Flower Show was over my focus turned to designing the Festival of Flowers, entitled “History, Dreams and Memories”, which was held in St. Colman’s Cathedral, Cobh, in September, to raise funds for the restoration of the cathedral organ. I am now going to take a rest after such a busy year but am looking forward to the next World Show which is due to be held in Barbados.

Pictures of the World Flower Show and the Festival of Flowers, Cobh can be viewed on www.aoifa.com.
Nicola Depuis explores the forgotten art of listening, and gives tips on how to be a better listener.

Here’s a scenario you’ll know well. You’re talking with friends or family members, telling them what’s going on in your life. Suddenly, you glance around to find that although the people around you may be nodding their heads in agreement or uttering ‘yes’ or ‘no’ occasionally, no-one is really listening to you. They’re too busy texting, checking their Facebook page, tweeting or perhaps even reading the newspaper. Although we have entered the Communication Age, our basic communication skills are sadly deteriorating. Now that we’re all logged on, it seems our listening skills have logged off.

THE BENEFITS OF LISTENING

‘Really listening is one of the greatest things you can do for another human being,’ Pio Fenton, Regional Director, Samaritan

Scientific research has found that we spend 60% of all communication time listening but we retain only 25%-50% of what we hear. This means we’re taking in less than half of what we’re being told. Hearing is one of our natural senses but active and reflective listening requires focus and attention. Active listening means making a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying, but more importantly, the message that is being sent. It means paying full and careful attention to the other person.

Listening has survival value. Back in the days when we sat around fires telling stories, we learnt how to hunt, how to escape from predators and which berries were safe to eat, all from listening. This greatly increased our chances of survival. Today, we learn not to stick our fingers in sockets, to stay away from the fire and to wait for the green man before crossing the road, all from listening. Active listening also benefits us in a number of ways from helping us take in more information during a class to being a more supportive friend during a crisis. The Samaritans were founded in 1953 after London vicar Chad Varah conducted his first funeral. The funeral was for a 14 year old girl who had killed herself after suffering from a sexually transmitted disease and taken her own life. The Samaritans have become a listening lifeline to many people and last year alone, they took over 412,000 phone calls in the Republic of Ireland. When someone feels truly listened to and understood, it is a great source of comfort, especially to those who may feel very isolated and in need of connection. Effective listening also develops empathy, which is the capacity for a deep understanding of another’s experience. In her essay ‘On the Fine Art of Listening’, Brenda Ueland writes that the people who ‘really listen to us are the ones we move toward, and want to sit in their radius as though it did us good.’

Dr. Ernesto Sirolli discovered the importance of listening when he worked as an aid worker in Zambia. When his Italian organisation began growing tomatoes in deserted land in order to feed the local people and help them instigate a means of self-reliance, he quickly found that the only locals being fed were the hippos. ‘Why didn’t you tell us about the hippos?’ he asked the local Zambians, to which they simply replied ‘you never asked.’ Since then Ernesto has helped start 30,000 businesses worldwide with this simple but passionate modus operandi: ‘I do something very very difficult – I shut up and listen to them.’

THE PERILS OF LISTENING

Active listening also means being aware of biases towards certain sources of information and peer pressure. In The Dynamics of Group listening and peer influence were revealed when psychologist Solomon Asch conducted a series of experiments between 1951 and 1956. Asch gathered student volunteers into groups and showed them a picture of three lines of varying lengths. He then asked questions about how the lines compared with one another in length and breadth. 95% of students answered every question correctly. Then Asch planted actors in the groups who confidently volunteered the wrong answer and the number of students who gave all correct answers plunged to 25%, which means 75% percent of the participants went along with the groups’ wrong answer to at least one question. Today with the help of brain-scanning technology and further updated experiments, we know that the presence of the group dynamic managed to change the individuals’ perception of the correct answer. Also, as Susan Cain explores in her book ‘Quiet’, those with louder voices and more extroverted, confident personalities are believed to be right more often than quiet introverted people. In 1963, Stanley Milgram, a psychologist at Yale University, conducted an experiment focusing on the conflict between obedience to authority and personal conscience. This was in response to the Nuremberg War Criminal trials where defendants maintained their actions were a matter of ‘obedience’ to their superiors, the main superior being Hitler. During the experiment men in white coats instructed volunteers to administer electric shocks to other volunteers in a different room. 65% (two-thirds) of participants, when given orders by a figure in authority, represented here by a white coat, were willing to administer lethal shocks to fellow volunteers. Asch and Milgrams experiments prove that peer pressure, extroverted personalities and figures of authority all impact on how we listen and who we listen to.

HOW TO BE A BETTER LISTENER

“Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly.” Plutarch

1. Develop the desire to listen: It will deepen your relationships with people, give you a greater understanding of life, and benefit your study and work practises.

2. Be present: Clear your mind of extraneous thoughts, and when listening to someone, don’t be half-present, thinking about what you’re doing later that day or what someone said on Facebook. Put your phone away, and dedicate yourself to fully listening. Sound expert Julian Treasure recommends that we each take three minutes of silence a day, to recalibrate our listening skills.

3. Safety & confidentiality: In certain situations it may be important that the listener creates an atmosphere of complete safety and confidentiality for the speaker. This will ensure that the person sharing will feel open to speak honestly and without reservation.

4. Listen with an open mind: M. Scott Peck defines the art of listening as ‘bracketing - the temporary giving up or setting aside of one’s own prejudices in order to experience the speaker’s world from the inside.’ Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. So, let go of your need to be right. Be prepared to change your mind. Defer judgement. Empathise.

5. Don’t interrupt: There’s an ancient proverb that tells us we are all born with two ears and one mouth, so that we hear more than we say. Unfortunately, human beings often do the opposite and talk a whole lot more than we listen, or pretend to listen but we’re really thinking about what to say next. In ‘The Lost Art of Listening’, Dr. Nichols tells us - “Listening means taking in, not taking over”. Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message. A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished. Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it.

6. Listen to more than the words being said: Non-verbal communication can help us listen better. Volume and tone are important, as is eye contact, posture and facial expressions. Research shows that we speak at a rate of about 125 words per minute, yet we have the capacity to listen to approximately 400 words per minute. Use that extra space in your mind to explore non-verbal communication.

7. Paraphrase: Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage the speaker to continue. Also, paraphrase what is being said so the speaker knows you are listening and that you understand what he/she is saying. Make sure you can repeat what you just heard, and if you can’t, ask for clarification.

8. Listening never includes advice giving: Exploring options is fine.
As I told my young love
Denis O’Sullivan
As I told my young love
You will always be
A sweetheart of mine
And always close to me.
For my heart will always
Be with you
Even though we’re
Miles apart
I will love you eternally
From deep within my heart.
And has she moved on
To marry
Someone of her own kind
Even though I loved her
I had to leave her behind.
And now I just
Want you to know
I’ll always be there
Memories that will never be
forgotten
Or a love
That we once shared

EMPTY BOTTLES
Izzy

Drown your feelings,
And strangle your sorrows,
For today is today,
And tomorrow’s tomorrow.

Push it further,
And further still,
I can’t take much more,
It’s making me ill.

Why am I like this?
A pathetic creature of woe,
Where can I run?
There’s nowhere left to go.
What is the Focus Programme?
The Focus Programme is a full time non-therapeutic training programme for people who have had an experience of mental ill health. Trainees are supported to gain the confidence, knowledge and skills to take more control over their futures. The Programme aims to assist the lives of participants in several ways: Health and Wellbeing, Personal and Social Development, Maximising Independence, Accessing Education, Learning, Training and Work Opportunities and Community Inclusion.

Who attends the Programme?
Individuals who have experienced a set-back in their lives from which they have not yet fully recovered. It includes people who want the confidence to get back to work, to develop interests, or to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Who delivers it?
A team of two full time instructors who offer a range of activities including creative skills, assertiveness, healthy lifestyles, communications, stress management and computers. The programme also benefits from the input of the local area manager, a psychologist and an outreach worker.

How many places are on the programme and how long is it for?
Each year there are fourteen places on the Focus Programme. The Programme is full time for a year. The hours are normally from 9.00 to 3.30pm. You get 24 days holidays plus bank and public holidays.

If I am receiving benefits or allowances for a disability, illness or injury, is that a problem?
No, the programme will not interfere with your existing payments. You may have to get a letter of exemption in certain cases but this has not been a problem in the past. There is also a weekly allowance paid to participants to help them with the cost of weekly outings to social and cultural events.

Where does the programme take place?
Co. Cork: Carrigaline, Midleton, Mallow, Clonakilty and Cork City Centre. Co Kerry: Tralee

OPEN DAY
The Focus Group are holding an open day at the Carrigaline Parish Centre on Wednesday 12th April from 10am to 1pm. The centre is located behind the Church of Our Lady and St. John at the Roundabout by the Carrigaline Court Hotel. You are very welcome to join us, to either learn more about the Programme or just for a cup of tea and a chat. We are looking forward to it!

TIPS FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH
Enjoy the beauty of nature or art: Studies show that simply walking through a garden can lower blood pressure and reduce stress. The same goes for strolling through a park or an art gallery.

Be a joiner: Join networking, social action, conservation and special interest groups that meet on a regular basis. These groups offer wonderful opportunities for making friends with people with common interests.

THE FOCUS PROGRAMME IS CURRENTLY SEEKING NEW APPLICANTS. HOW DO I APPLY OR SIMPLY GET MORE INFORMATION?
For Carrigaline, Midleton and Mallow phone Padraig Healy at 021: 4300144
For Clonakilty, phone Pat Murphy or Fiona Murray at 027 51027
For Cork City phone Noel Shannon at 021 4300144.
TERRY
From an early age I felt as though I was on the outside, making friends and enjoying life but always with a fear of being found out and exposed. I never knew what they’d find or expose but the fear lived with me for 40 years.

As a person who questions things, the Focus group has explained simply how everyday situations work. It has made me aware of how capable I was and can now put this into action to achieve the things I knew were ordinary but thought unattainable. Being in a friendly environment with like-minded people has made me realise normal is in all of us but being different has a lot more possibilities that can lead us to great things. Armed now with self-acceptance the future for me is limitless though still daunting. Focus has given me the ability to recognise this and an understanding on how to deal with situations, overcome them and proceed forward.

SINEAD
I suffer from depression, social anxiety and borderline personality disorder and before I started the Focus Programme, my life was a mess. I couldn’t sleep, I barely left my bedroom, I had isolated myself, I had to leave school and a college course and I became a different person than I used to be, but the Focus Programme changed that. I now have a routine, I’m out during the day, getting exercise, working towards going to college and learning a lot of skills beneficial to mental health recovery. It is changing my life for the better and I would highly recommend it to everyone who has experienced a setback due to mental health difficulties.

STEVEN
Focus has changed my life in just a few short months. What it has given me is a daily routine and some structure back in my life. I no longer stay in bed all day and up all night. I now sleep better, eat better and my confidence has grown and continues to grow, day by day. I no longer feel like I’m alone. I have met some wonderful people just like myself who just need someone to show them how to start living again. Mental health can be debilitating on any given day but it can also be overcome with help from family, friends and above all the self-belief that I can do it. By joining the Focus course I now feel that I am on the road to recovery.

PATRICIA
Focus was good for me because it gave me a structure to my day, a reason to get up in the morning. I also learned new skills such as coping strategies, cookery and computer skills. I particularly enjoy the Friday outings and these give a new dimension to my life experience and experience of Focus. In addition, I also made a lot of new friends and a new perspective on life in general.

JOHN
I enjoy excursions every Friday. I have met new friends and I am enjoying the course. I enjoy going swimming every Thursday and I hope to use the gym soon. I enjoy going to the sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi. I have learned a lot during this course on meditation and breathing techniques. I have enjoyed the guest speakers and enjoyed watching videos on YouTube and Ted TV.

FROM PARTICIPANTS ON THE FOCUS PROGRAMME

‘Stay’
BY SARAH O’HERLIHY

How life can go horribly wrong,
No joy, no words, not a song,
Can ease the pain inside,
Some people they just hide,

In a place so all alone,
They have no strength to phone,
To call out to family or a friend,
To ask if they could lend,

A helping hand or a hug,
Someone who could tug,
Them in a gently way,
Listen to what they say,

Without judgement or shame,
Tell them you’re glad they came,
To you for a shoulder to cry on,
Give them hope that it won’t be long,

Until Societies’ see what’s wrong,
With teaching our very young,
To avoid emotions at all cost,
Leaving their spirit to feel so lost,

Then believing that to be free of pain,
They have to get off this plane,
The very place they needed to be,
To learn the lessons and see,

They are wanted and do belong,
With each challenge faced they will get strong,
To live a life so differently,
To walk with pride and stride so confidently,

So please, to become the best star that you are,
Please do believe me, you’re not that far,
Please I know, for I was there,
And now I want you to know I care,

Please listen to me when I say,
Hang in there for one more minute, hour or day,
PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE STAY
With men’s mental health being increasingly looked at in terms of the high rates of suicides amongst young men, Cork based film-maker Jason Loughnane has produced two insightful and thought-provoking short documentaries about men coming from various backgrounds who utilise services in Cork to help them deal with issues of drink and drug dependancy, crime, and mental health issues.

*Let My Voice Be Heard* focuses on men who have committed crimes and spent time in prison. It explores the reasons they chose criminal activities, their susceptibility to peer pressure and the pressures of masculinity and reputation. “You get a great kick out of being on the drugs because you think its the right thing to do but its not really cos you’re slowly wasting your life away on drugs,” says one interviewee. Described by a viewer as ‘raw, emotional and inspirational’, *Let My Voice Be Heard* reveals the struggles these men have overcome, with the help of supports, to get to a place where they now feel confident and proud of themselves. “Working on my life to improve it as best I can,” says another interviewee. “I’m proud of myself for that and it does take a lot for me to say that.”

*Peeling the Label* documents the making of a one-act play directed by Áine O’Sullivan, devised, scripted and produced by members of Shine & members of the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG), and produced by SpeakOut! Theatre for Transformation. It is the result of a four-month project which saw members of both communities coming together to express themselves creatively through the medium of drama. The play is based on the experiences of Dual Diagnosis – the concurrent experience of mental health difficulties and substance use issues. Assistant Director Aiden O’ Brien says: “There should be no suicide ideally in our world but unfortunately there is. The rates are much, much higher for men than for women and I would suggest that one of the reasons for that is that men are less comfortable with showing or dealing with our emotions. Big boys don’t cry...or you gotta be tough in this world, you gotta be macho, you gotta be all these things...whereas inside men do grieve if something happens, if you lose somebody. In this group, there’s a group of men getting together from different backgrounds, and not that we’re getting into emotions in a big way, but we are hanging out together, we’re not in a pub, we’re not taking something to get us to open up, we’re just ordinary guys getting together, doing something creative. You have this diagnosis and that diagnosis but at the end of the day if we were children we wouldnt see difference, on the playground we’d just all be there playing”.

For his next documentary, Jason will be looking into men’s mental health through trying times. “I’d like to look at the choices available for men when leaving a relationship where children are inevitability placed in the care of the mother, and how the Irish system prevents fathers from seeing their children and being a part of their lives,” says Jason. “As a result, various mental health problems can occur with men; issues such as depression, anxiety, isolation and loneliness.”

The documentary will follow four men on an exploration into discovering what it means to be in this difficult situation. “To help them through this process we will use various techniques such as Meditation, Shamanism, talk therapy and various other forms of alternative therapies,” adds Jason. “The focus would be to assist and develop the core inner strength of these men so that they then hopefully gain a resilience to the emotional pressures of such a trying situation.” Jason says in order for this project to go ahead he is hoping organisations interested in developing this project with him will get in touch. Jason can be contacted on his mobile at: 0879920554 or by email at: jasonloughnane@gmail.com.

To watch the documentaries *Let My Voice Be Heard* and *Peeling the Label*, look for Jason Loughnane’s channel on Youtube.
Paintings From The Windows Art Project Derrigthy Centre

Elaine Gillespie
Elaine Gillespie
Brenda, Carers Advocate

Tommy Kerr
By a Member
Ruth McCutcheon

Memories
By Lori

Softly whispers in the wind
Falling tears in the rain
but sunshine our happy memories
in our heart for loved ones
we have loss
and who we will meet again.

... What am I?
By Joan Boyle

As the sun
beats down...
I begin
to drift
into a blue
blue sky
at one with the clouds
and the wind
and the sun
my personality merged
into the natural forces
of our breathing planet...
I am a drop of moisture
in the cloud
I am a vibration
in the wind
I become one
with all things.

And what is death
but a merging and a forgetting...
a pulse beating
in the void...

SPEAK YOUR MIND
**Fiona Hegarty**

**OCCUPATION:**
Special Events Producer with the Cork Film Festival

1. **What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months?**
I went on a road-trip with two of my best and oldest friends, which I’ll remember for a really long time – definitely the highlight.

2. **If you were to have a superpower what would it be?**
It would be interesting to be invisible…but only for a little while!

3. **List three of your best personality traits?**
I think I’m a good friend to people • I think I’m generous
A good listener

4. **What do you value most in your life?**
My family, for sure.

5. **Is there one thing you would change about yourself?**
Loads!

6. **If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be?**
Cuba, I was there several years ago and have always wanted to go back. It’s a really beautiful place, it’s full of music wherever you go and the people are some of the happiest and friendliest I’ve ever met.

7. **Name one thing you miss about being a child?**
Kids aren’t afraid of anything and there’s a huge freedom to do things.

8. **If you could have three wishes what would they be?**
Umm… I feel like I should say “World Peace”. But seriously, I guess we all really wish we could do more for others and there is an awful lot of suffering and injustice in the world so I would wish for the ability to help people more. I would wish for life to be better and simpler for a lot of people that I know and love. But I would also definitely wish for three more wishes….

9. **What is your favourite song of all time?**
My favourite song of all time, I’m one of those people that say that at least twice a day about totally different songs…… so I won’t even try to answer.

10. **What is your favourite book or author?**
The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy

**John Dolan**

**OCCUPATION:**
Journalist. Features Editor of the Cork Evening Echo and editor of the annual Cork Holly Bough:

1. **What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months?**
Wow! That’s a tough starter! I guess I should say my family and I staying in good health, but I will go for my team Manchester City winning the Premier League.

2. **If you were to have a superpower what would it be?**
Oh, the ability to do DIY... and my wife would certainly concur. I just have a total blank when it comes to plugs, screws and nails.

3. **List three of your best personality traits?**
Mmm, this is bound to sound arrogant and some might disagree, but I’ll plump for loyal, good-humoured and industrious.

4. **What do you value most in your life?**
The health of my family and the welfare of my three sons.

5. **Is there one thing you would change about yourself?**
See DIY above... I’d like to be able to relax easier too, I’m always on the go and I sometimes envy people who can put their feet up and not get the nagging sense that something needs doing.

6. **If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be?**
I’ve been lucky enough to visit some great destinations, Australia, Sri Lanka, A few U.S cities... but I do want to see Rome before I croak.

7. **Name one thing you miss about being a child?**
That pile of toys on Christmas morning. I still get a pang of regret now when I compare my kids’ presents to my small bundle of socks and hankies. But my mum is coming for Christmas this year so maybe I will get to relive my childhood days, if she isn’t too busy spoiling my boys that is!

**Katherine O’Donnelli**

**OCCUPATION:**
Director UCD Women’s Studies Centre, School of Social Justice, University College Dublin

1. **What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months?**
I got to travel a lot: New York City, Provincetown, Cape Cod, Tokyo and the Sky Garden in Lissard were highlights.

2. **If you were to have a superpower what would it be?**
That would have the power to make every human exist in a state of universal loving kindness - for themselves, other humans and the planet. That is probably a super superpower: so more modestly - that I could make it possible for everyone I met to be able to move towards and remain in that state.

3. **List three of your best personality traits?**
I think that I only have two! Optimism and generosity. These have also proved to be weaknesses as there are times when I have been unable to balance them for more skilful responses to people and events.
8. If you could have three wishes what would they be?
A long and healthy life. That my children have fulfilled and happy lives. That Manchester City win many more Premier Leagues!

9. What is your favourite song of all time?
Wow, a different answer 365 days of the year to that. I'll pick an enduring song from my younger days which I still love now - The Stones Roses, Fools Gold.

10. What is your favourite book or author?
I'm not a great one for fiction, but I devour factual books, especially history ones. I'm going to cheat and say The Holly Bough - a Cork institution at Christmas since 1897, it's packed with great historical stories written by 'ordinary' Cork people, which I never fail to find fascinating.

Lilie Ferrari

OCCUPATION: Writer

1. What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months?
I went to Cuba, my favourite place in the world (so far).

2. If you were to have a superpower what would it be?
The ability to keep those loved ones alive who went before a reasonably allotted time.

3. List three of your best personality traits?
Nosy! (If you're a writer, you have to be) • Opinionated! (How can you engage with life if you don't think about it…?) • Kind (I hope)

4. What do you value most in your life?
At the moment, my dog Dixie (a collie). She gives a pattern to my days.

5. Is there one thing you would change about yourself?
My habit of speaking without thinking first.

6. If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be?
I went on a tour of Ireland in my camper-van. I brought my one woman show to a town in every county and it was a brilliant experience. Two of my sisters got married this year and both days were beautiful. I got to dress up and look glamorous, especially history ones. I'm going to cheat and say The Holly Bough - a Cork institution at Christmas since 1897, it's packed with great historical stories written by 'ordinary' Cork people, which I never fail to find fascinating.

7. Name one thing you miss about being a child?
That I die in my sleep.

8. If you could have three wishes what would they be?
That my grandchildren all live full and happy lives.

9. What is your favourite song of all time?
‘Wuthering Heights’ by Kate Bush. I don't use this word lightly but she is definitely a genius.

10. What is your favourite book or author?
‘Beware of Darkness’ by George Harrison. I don't use this word lightly but she is definitely a genius.

Breda Larkin

OCCUPATION: Performance Artist

1. What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months?
I went on a tour of Ireland in my camper-van. I brought my one woman show to a town in every county and it was a brilliant experience. Two of my sisters got married this year and both days were beautiful. I got to dress up and look glamorous, which I surprisingly very much enjoyed. Also, in the last three months I started to really enjoy my own company.

2. If you were to have a superpower what would it be?
Invisibility.

3. List three of your best personality traits?
I will talk to the wall • I don’t judge • I like to make people smile.

4. What do you value most in your life?
My health.

5. Is there one thing you would change about yourself?
My gender, ha! I'm joking! No nothing, I'm happy with my lot.

Muireann Holly

OCCUPATION: Musician/Trainee Psychotherapist

1. What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months?
This year, my 3 siblings each fell in love with people as amazing as they are. Seeing them so happy brings me great peace.
SPEAKYOUR MIND

6. If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be? Africa.
7. Name one thing you miss about being a child? Team sports.
8. If you could have three wishes what would they be? That the world wasn’t run by self-serving megalomaniacs. That people would feed their children proper nutritional food. That Mary Robinson was Taoiseach.
9. What is your favourite song of all time? I fall apart by Rory Gallagher
10. What is your favourite book or author? Mna na hEireann by Nicola Depuis.

Diane Doherty

OCCUPATION: Fulltime Student
1. What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months? Graduating from college, never thought I would really get there!
2. If you were to have a superpower what would it be? To be able to shape shift and feel how another being or thing feels.
3. List three of your best personality traits? Compassionate • Loyal • Honest
4. What do you value most in your life? Peace of mind
5. Is there one thing you would change about yourself? I wish I could stop comparing myself to others
6. If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be? South East Asia, all of it!
7. Name one thing you miss about being a child? The freedom to express myself without worry of judgement
8. If you could have three wishes what would they be? Inner peace • Peace for the ones I love • World peace
9. What is your favourite song of all time? Always by Erasure
10. What is your favourite book or author? Books, I have loads… I have a different favourite book depending on where I am at. I wrote a book called Self Care An Authentic Journey & I do love that!

Sile Walsh

OCCUPATION: Holistic Life Coach
1. What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months? Just one … I started a H Dip in Coaching Psychology… Moved house … spent 3 months in the USA & have learnt ALOT about myself this year!
2. If you were to have a superpower what would it be? I do, its passion! I believe with passion you can make things happen, what better super power than making things happen?
3. List three of your best personality traits? Compassionate, sometimes my compassion is a hard statement & other times it is soft but I love people & find it hard not to feel connected to them & in that compassion for their situation.

Tony Henson

OCCUPATION: Job Coach, Employability Cork
1. What was the best thing that happened to you in the last 12 months? My 2 daughters starting new jobs and my son getting in to UCC.
2. If you were to have a superpower what would it be? Better hearing would seem like a superpower to me!
3. List three of your best personality traits? Tenacity • Patience • Well, I think I’m funny!
4. What do you value most in your life? My partner and children
5. Is there one thing you would change about yourself? Better hearing!!
6. If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be? I’d go to France for the UEFA European Football Championship whilst meanwhile dining my way around the various cities.
7. Name one thing you miss about being a child? Having the serenity to be able to stare out of my bedroom window for hours simply observing passers-by on the street
8. If you could have three wishes what would they be? Socialism, a sustainable environment and better hearing!!!
9. What is your favourite song of all time? Rikki Don’t Lose That Number by Steely Dan
10. What is your favourite book or author? Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky
Carmel Sharkey CPC shares her reflections with us about her trip to Kenya last July with local Cork Charity Friends of Londiani (FOL).

Myself and a group of 7 other volunteers headed to Kenya on a three week project. This was my third trip to Kenya, I was as excited this time round, as I was the first time.

The aim of the Harambee is to continue to create better futures for the local Kenyan people through working together and sharing experiences.

The projects that I was involved in were varied. I registered as a nurse, which afforded me the opportunity to participate in an outreach childhood vaccination programme. This gave me an insight into the challenges parents’ face, namely the lack or absence of vaccinations in remote areas. At the outreach clinics I was able to share my knowledge with the staff regarding hand hygiene/protection and sharps safety. In return the local staff shared their knowledge of vaccinations and I saw firsthand true holistic care in action.

I was also involved in delivering a 5 Day Life Skills Course. This was co-ordinated by local Kenyan staff, and it was delivered in a small drafty wooden church. It was a mixed group of gender and age, people walked long distances to attend. The course addressed many topics, namely how couples and families can communicate positively; what lies behind people’s value systems; sexual development/adolescence. In Kenya, most boys are circumcised at puberty. Until recently many girls were too. Female circumcision is now banned. Nevertheless it still occurs in certain areas, including some communities in the Londiani area. It is for this reason that we explain the dangers of female circumcision, also known as female genital mutilation, and speak of the Alternative Rite of Passage Programme that FOL has been introducing across the area. This programme promotes and supports a community’s celebration of a girl becoming a woman — but without the cutting. Other topics included were living with HIV/AIDS, a major killer in Kenya; nutrition; positive Mental Health and childbirth. What will stay with me forever was the dedication the participants brought to the course. Most days there were 3, 4 or 5 children waiting with their mothers, and there was always a baby attached to a mothers’ breast.

The final day was a day filled with celebration, when the participants received their Certificates, they sang, danced and clapped. Individual participants spoke about what they had learned from the course and how they would bring the information to their families and communities. It was truly was an emotional day, which will stay with me forever.

I was also involved in building smokeless stoves. In this part of Kenya locals use a traditional three-stone fireplace using firewood collected in the forest. It is the female who walks to the forest for the wood. She can spend many hours making a round trip up to three or four times per week. The girls and women carry the firewood on their backs in bunches of 40 sticks per load, each of which they have to pay for.

When the fire is lighting, the kitchen fills with smoke. Things are even worse in the wet season, when it is difficult to dry the wood. The inhabitants suffer from streaming eyes; chronic coughs and the risk of burns.

However, by replacing the traditional fireplace with a smokeless stove made from bricks, mortar made with clay and water and an aluminum chimney which removes all the harmful smoke from the building (all of these materials are sourced locally), post stove installation surveys have identified huge health benefits for the whole family.

The woman of the house is so happy to see the first smoke come out of her chimney. She then sets about finishing the plastering of her stove.

Another project I was involved with was delivering wound care and plaster cast information at the Continuing Medical Education sessions in the local hospital. I delivered two sessions with 37 participants from nursing, Laboratory, hospital Doctor and medical support personnel. They welcomed the information I had to share with them and there was good discussion.

Since Londiani’s infrastructure has developed, i.e., they now have a tarred road, there has been a significant increase in road accidents. This has put huge pressure on the hospital and staff, who have very few resources to manage the situation.

So, I’m back at my day job with memories and photos aplenty. Volunteering is a wonderful experience, and I would urge you to consider what you can offer communities whether that is at home or abroad.
I could not believe I was actually being paid money for the privilege of receiving a Third-Level Education. During my first year I actually expected a tap on the shoulder by security to be told I did not deserve my place.
THESE OLE SCARS
OF MINE

IZZY

Scars,
Like a red wine stain
On an ivory dress.
They stain my Ivory skin,
And yet,
I wear them proud.
They are my medals,
Earned in war.
In love.
In hate?
In hatred of who?
Me or you?
They offend you,
Your eyes can’t lie like your mouth.
They scream the truth.
As do these,
The truth is I suffered once,
I hurt once.
You think me weak,
But I am strong,
You shame me,
You are wrong.

WIND
BY JOHN SAUNDERS

Those giant propellers, vroom. Suck the energy.
Jack ‘not in my backyard’ Ryan objects.
He says they damage – stir up the electrons – he’d know.
On a clear morning they gleam with whiteness.
Dance in formation – a beautiful sight.
Soak up that gale. Turbines ready.

They shovelled for over a year. Lorry loads taken away. Moss peat, top soil. Left gaping holes.
Must be a body hidden somewhere.
Many’s the ancient and modern secret.
They know the last meal from the stomach contents.
Now the wind is stolen – exported as spark.

They say there is a cable to the coast.
Your man in the House has it all worked out.
Good commerce – boost the export figures,
Improve the Balance of Trade.
Money for fresh air.
He knows how to tell it. All wind.
BOOK REVIEW
by Nicola Depuis

In My Room:
THE RECOVERY JOURNEY AS ENCOUNTERED BY A PSYCHIATRIST
by Jim Lucey
Gill & Macmillan, 2014

Containing fifteen real life stories from Professor Jim Lucey’s 25 year years working with patients towards recovery, In My Room is a must-read for anyone with an interest in the human experience. Interspersed with Lucey’s thoughts and musings on the current mental health service in Ireland (‘Neglect of mental distress and alienation of those who seek help is still commonplace’), suicide (‘It is an act carried out by people who are objectively and measurably unwell.’), and confidentiality (What blood is to a surgeon, clinical information is to the psychiatrist: a psychiatrist must never unwittingly allow the information to spill or to leak.), In My Room also includes the poetry of Emily Dickinson, Raymond Carver, Philip Larkin and Susan Coolidge amongst others.

As a psychiatrist and Medical Director of St. Patrick’s Mental Health Service in Dublin, Jim Lucey writes empathetically and with sincere concern for the troubles of his patients, a term he tells us ‘is used as a humane acknowledgement and a universal term signifying one of us who is suffering.’ We meet Carmel, diagnosed with bipolar disorder, who remarks ‘There is a problem of language as well. When we talk about “depression”, we are all talking about different things and there is so much confusion.’ Then there’s Richard, a Quantity Surveyor who’s agonised with anxiety and depression. Liam has lost the ability to read numbers, a condition known as anarithmetria. However, following thorough medical testing, he is found to be suffering from Hashimoto’s encephalopathy, an rare autoimmune disease. Once he is treated for this, his ability to read numbers is restored. We meet Alyson, diagnosed with a personality disorder and PCOS, who is troubled by seeking help in her community ‘because people might talk’. Colm and Alex whose lives have been taken over by their Obsessive Compulsive Disorders, Dorothy who suffers with Dementia, and Margaret, a PTSD sufferer, who says ‘I feel like I’m knitting myself back together again.’ Kathleen describes her manic psychosis as ‘motorised misery’ and Eddie describes his torment as being ‘like a car crash going on inside me. I have a physical sense of being torn apart from the inside; like a physical wrenching within me.’ The family of Mrs Jones, a patient of Professor Lucey’s who took her own life, seek out his help again when Mrs Jones grandson is finding it difficult to come to terms with the loss of his beloved grandmother. He tells them: ‘Clinical depression is a brain disorder. Paul needs to know that his granny was overwhelmed by this disorder in the same way that someone might be struck with a cancer or another terminal physical illness, and so she was swept away.’

Readers of Oliver Sachs will love this book. It is thought-provoking, insightful, and Jim Lucey skilfully pulls off that rare thing in books of this nature – he imbues it with as much heart as he does head, making it as accessible to the everyday reader as it would be to a practising psychiatrist.

The author’s earnings from sales of this book will be given to the St Patrick’s Mental Health Foundation, Ireland, in support of the Walk in my Shoes campaign that is raising funds for services for young people with mental health problems in Ireland.
Cork girl Edelle Notte is on a mission to make people Happy. Her first step has been the establishment of her very own Happy page on Facebook, an idea that came when Edelle became frustrated with the negativity she was encountering online. “I was tired of reading people’s pointless rants on my newsfeed,” explains Edelle. “If I see someone aimlessly complaining or bullying others on their page, I delete them immediately: I only have room for positivity in my life now.” Edelle also put together a recent Happy event on Nov 30th at Joseph’s Hair Salon in Glasheen, Cork, during which five stylists and many volunteers gave 18 people in need from local charities Penny Diners, Dress for Success, and Cork Simon, a day of pampering featuring free haircuts, head massages, hugs and food, the first of a series of monthly events. “The idea for this first event came to me when someone tagged a similar event to my Facebook page,” says Edelle. “A very kind hair stylist in the States spends his days off cutting homeless people’s hair on the streets, so he inspired me to run my own event. I approached Joseph’s hair salon and he immediately said yes. Four of his stylists also volunteered. Over the years I have been endlessly fundraising for lots of charities and have found 99% of people to be nothing but generous. It just shows that there really is so much good going on around us. We just hear more about the bad stuff! That’s why I don’t watch the news before I go to bed. I don’t sleep well if my head is filled with so much negativity.” Edelle plans to run monthly Happy events in Cork. “I love nothing more than helping people,” says Edelle. “My plan is to make a ‘Happy Brand’ for which I’ll apply for funding; the idea in the long run being to have schools, youth clubs and charities book fun filled Happy days.” So, what is it that makes this industrious Cork girl happy? “I would have to say family, friends and fun. Smiley faces, love hearts & hugs...oh and my pooch Socks (love her!).”

You can find out more about future Happy events by going to Edelle’s Happy page on Facebook.
I like watching birds. They are fascinating, beautiful creatures that raise my spirits every time.

I’m not a twitcher - twitchers tear off to see rarities wherever the birds appear, at whatever cost to life and limb - I just watch out for birds wherever I happen to be. I live in the South of England and, every Friday morning, I walk in the New Forest with a group of like-minded individuals and look out for birds.

My wife isn’t so lucky, in that she can’t go on these walks, and she has developed her own way of watching birds. I’m sharing this with you, as you too may not be able to get out and about to enjoy them.

First of all, we have a bird feeder outside our living room window, and are amazed at the number of species that drop in to feed. We keep a pair of binoculars permanently by the window, so that they are ready and available when needed – there’s nothing more frustrating than going to get the binoculars and finding that the bird has flown away!

Secondly, you can now watch birds live on the internet from various nature reserves – and it is this aspect which I want to talk about in this article.

Our favourite is the Lagoon on Brownsea Harbour. You can watch the birds there by going to the website BirdsOfPooleHarbour.co.uk (you might need to prefix this with www. if you are using an older browser).

At the time of writing (October) there are about 250 avocet on the lagoon, which is kept shallow especially for the wading birds, and there will be more as the winter comes. At different times of day, different birds will be active, and you may see godwits, terns, shovellers, dunlin and many other types of duck and wader. If there’s nothing there when you first look, come back later and try again - the webcam moves as well as the birds!

Of course, if it’s dark, you can’t see anything on a webcam - so try keeping track of some of our special birds as they migrate around the world. The Rutland Ospreys are lovely to follow on their page at Ospreys.org.uk – there’s a nesting platform on a pole in the water, to which they return to nest every year.
Following their progress as they migrate between Rutland Water and Senegal in West Africa is also fun – there are some lovely maps showing the osprey’s progress over the 11-day journey.

The Great Bustards have been reintroduced into the UK on Salisbury Plain and you can follow their progress at GreatBustard.org.

This makes a fascinating story - but nowhere near as cute as the Crane chicks from WWT’s Slimbridge, which have been released on the Somerset Levels. This is another reintroduction of a bird which was once common in these islands, but which became extinct as a result of hunting. You can follow this project at TheGreatCraneProject.org.uk.

In the Spring you can watch the young Peregrine Falcons on the roof of Chichester Cathedral with another live webcam at ChichesterPeregrines.co.uk.

It's quite a cliffhanger as you watch these young birds take their very first flight - it's a very long way down but, after several days of nervous tweeting, they seem to suddenly pluck up courage and take off, getting their act in flying order before they reach the ground. Like young kids, they then come back to the nest area to ask Mum and Dad Peregrine for food.

Finally, for the truly exotic, follow the fortunes of the spoon-billed sandpipers at Saving-Spoon-Billed-Sandpiper.com or keep an eye on the various birds that pass through the Isles of Scilly on their migration – there are some lovely images at ScillyWebCam.blogspot.co.uk.

Whilst you are doing all this web surfing, keep an eye out for the Robin outside your window. He’s very partial to cake crumbs and a drink of water, and will easily become your friend in return for a regular supply.
• Take care of your family life. Put time and effort into your relationships with the people you love and the people you choose to make part of your family.

• Choose your friends carefully. Good genuine friends are important but don’t waste time with people who aren’t your real friends. Respect your time and don’t waste it on people who aren’t good for you.

• Find a job that makes you happy and put your heart into it. Human instinct is to work towards something meaningful.

• Volunteer your time to a cause that will benefit others.

• Worrying is like a rocking-chair; it gives you something to do but it gets you nowhere. Worrying causes stress which leads to unhappiness and health problems. One way of dealing with this is to set aside 10 minutes of every day for your worrying time. When that time is over you’re not allowed to worry until the next day. My grandmother told me about a friend of hers who said that when he went to bed every night he left his worries in his shoes and when he woke up the next morning they were gone. Try to not let financial worries take over your life. Think to yourself: will I even remember this worry this time next year? Will it matter when I am on my death bed?

• Know yourself. What do you want? What are you good at? How can you benefit the world? Self-realisation and acceptance will help you achieve happiness.

• Appreciate nature. Taking a trip to the Lough, Fitzgerald’s Park, Farran Woods or even spending time in your garden watching the birds and the clouds in the sky can do wonders for the spirit.

• Keep Learning. Having an active mind will stand you well as you get older and it will keep your enthusiasm for life strong.

• What music makes you feel really happy? Find it and play it every morning as you begin your day.

• Never compare your life with others. There is a different plan for each of us.
INGREDIENTS

Skewers
• 1 courgette
• 1 red onion
• 250g Cherry tomatoes
• 200g Button mushrooms

Marinade
• 3 garlic cloves
• 1 hand full of coriander
• Juice of one lemon
• 100mls olive oil
• Salt

Fried rice
• Cooked basmati brown rice
• Courgette Chopped
• Red onion sliced
• 2 Peppers sliced
• A thumb sized peace of ginger
• Soy sauce to taste
• Chilli - seeds removed and sliced

METHOD
1. Put the veg on skewers.
2. Blend all ingredients of marinade together in food processor.
3. Brush marinade in a thick layer on to skewer (remainder will be used later)
4. Cook the Skewers under the grill for 10 minutes turning half way through cooking till golden brown.
5. For the fried rice, Fry garlic, ginger and chilli in oil on a hot pot.
6. Add onion, peppers and courgette.
7. Add rice to the pan and fry.
8. Add soy sauce, cumin, remainder of marinade and ground coriander.
9. Season to taste.

These recipes will leave all the meat eaters at a BBQ jealous. Delicious burgers, there is a bit of work but taste great

INGREDIENTS

• 1 red bell pepper roughly chopped
• 3 celery sticks roughly chopped
• 2 onions roughly chopped
• 4 garlic cloves
• 1 chilli (optional)
• 1 can of any plain beans
• 200g bread crumbs
• 2 eggs
• Chopped coriander
• Chopped parsley
• 10g cumin
• 10g ground coriander
• Salt and pepper

Garnish
• Burger bun
• Lettuce
• Sliced tomato
• Slices cheese
• Portobello mushroom
• Sauce of your choice

METHOD
1. Blend onion peppers, garlic, chilli and celery in food processor till very fine
2. Fry off the chopped veg, allow to cool
3. Mash the beans with a potato masher
4. Add the herbs, the cooled veg, cumin, coriander and eggs, season mix well
5. Add bread crumbs till sticky but able to hold together.
6. Shape in to patties and place on a lined and oiled baking tray.
7. Place in the oven and cook for 40 minutes at 180C
8. Once dry inside remove from the oven
9. Toast the bun
10. Layer with lettuce, tomato, cheese and sauce.
Asparagus & mushroom risotto

This meal is packed full of flavour

INGREDIENTS
• 200g mushrooms sliced
• 200g risotto rice
• 1 bunch of asparagus, woody ends chopped off, stems sliced thinly and tips left whole
• Lemon juiced
• 250mls of white wine
• 1l stock
• Garlic peeled and chopped
• Parsley chopped
• 2 onions sliced
• 50g parmesans grated
• Salt and pepper

METHOD
1. Fry onions in pot over a high heat
2. Add mushrooms
3. Add garlic
4. Add risotto fry for 2 minutes
5. Add white wine, once boiled again reduce the heat and cook till most of liquid is absorbed- still slightly wet. Stir occasionally
6. Add the some more stock once most of the wine had been soaked up; start to add the stock 300 ml at a time, each time waiting till the liquid is almost absorbed.
7. Cook to taste (al dente or soft) on the last addition of stock add the asparagus as well.
8. Stir in the parmesan holding some back for presentation.
9. Add lemon juice and season to taste
10. Finish with some whole steamed asparagus

Fried garlic mushrooms on toast

This is a simple recipe for a lunch and will leave no one craving more to their meal

INGREDIENTS
• Crusty bread
• Oil
• 20g butter
• 3 scallions sliced
• 200g Portobello mushrooms sliced
• 3 cloves of garlic chopped
• Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD
1. Fry mushrooms, oil and butter on hot pan
2. Once almost cooked turn down the heat and add the garlic and scallions
3. Season to taste
4. Serve on crusty white bread

Great hummus

This hummus is better than any shop bought hummus and is great as a snack or part of a larger meal.

INGREDIENTS
• 1 can of chick peas
• 200ml tahini
• One raw garlic clove
• 15g cumin
• Water and olive oil to get the right consistency
• Salt
• 15g Curry powder

METHOD
1. Blend garlic clove with
2. 30ml of oil
3. Add cumin, chick peas, tahini, oil and water to fix consistency
4. Season with curry powder and salt

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS FOR SUPPORT
Detailed on the opposite page are a selection of organisations that can provide help and support if needed or places of community and activity.

As was pointed out by one of our readers, in addition to these organisations your local church, regardless of faith or denomination, is also an excellent place to provide care and support. A person will always find a warm welcome and a non-judgemental listening ear. This is a place of sanctuary from the demands of day-to-day living and all its pressures.

Keeping the details of this list up to date is a challenge, if you see any errors or have a suggestion of other organisations that should be included we would be pleased to hear from you.
SPEAKYOURMIND

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS FOR SUPPORT

WORK / EDUCATION SERVICES
Community Employment (FAS)
Helps those who are long-term unemployed to re-enter work
021 4856200

Guidance Service
Offers a gateway service through which a person can explore a range of work / training options
021 4927100

National Learning Network (NLN)
This service offers a wide range of training options to a person with a disability of any kind or who may be otherwise disadvantaged
021 3000144 | 021 4391028

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
For those on Disability Allowance/Lone Parent Payment and those over 21 years and unemployed, this scheme allows for a return to full-time education.
021 4806800 | www.vtos.ie

ALCOHOL, ADDICTION & GENERAL COUNSELLING SERVICES
Alcoholics Anonymous
021 4500481 | www.alanon.ie

Alon/ Al One
Support group for family or friends of problem drinkers.
021 4311899

Arbour House
HSE service providing non-residential treatment for people with addictions
021 4968933

Bridge Enterprise
Provides rehabilitation for alcohol and drug misuse
021 4313411

Gamblers Anonymous
Gamblers Anonymous (GA) provides help to people through attendance at GA meetings
021-4279701

Matt Talbot Service
Provides residential treatment for teenage boys with a drug addiction
021 4896400

Narcotics Anonymous
Weekly meetings of people in recovery from addiction to any drug
021 4278411

Tabor Lodge
Provides residential treatment for alcoholism, and other addictions followed by a 52 week aftercare programme
021 4887110

COUNSELLING SERVICES
The following is a list of counselling services in the Cork area, which offer a free and confidential service.

ARC Cancer Support Centre
021 4276688

Bereavement Counselling
Service Support Programme for people who have suffered the loss of a spouse or partner through death, separation or divorce.
021 4274951

Cork Domestic Violence Project
One to one and group counseling for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence
021 4275678

General Counselling
Professional service covering a wide variety of issues for individuals and couples.
021 4274951

Harbour Counselling Services
For adults who have experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect in childhood
021 4861360 | 1800 234116

Marriage Counselling Centre
For couples, individuals and children experiencing marital breakdown,
Communication Programme,
Pre-Marriage courses, Family Planning
021 4275678

MOVE Ireland
(Men Overcoming Violence)
A national organisation that provides intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence at a range of locations.
086-0691834

Sexual Violence Centre
Counselling service for survivors of rape, sexual abuse and child sexual abuse. Legal and medical advice also provided.
1800 496 496

SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS
Alzheimer Society of Ireland
Provides support and services to people with dementia and their Carers
021 4316076 | www.alzheimer.ie

Aware
Aware is a voluntary organisation whose aims are to support those affected by depression.
021-4550027

Bodywhy
An Irish National Charity, which offers support, information and understanding for people with eating disorders, their families and friends.
Helpline 1890 200 444
www.bodywhys.ie

Brainwave (Irish Epilepsy Association)
021-4274774

Carers Association
The Carers Association is the national voluntary organization of family carers in the home.
021 4806397

Cork Mental Health Association
Local Mental Health association
021 4511000

Cork Deaf Association
Provides a wide range of services to the deaf and hard of hearing communities in Cork City and County.
021-4505944 | Videophone 021 4554214

Crisis pregnancy Services
(Positive Options)
Freetext LIST to 50444 or 021-4276676

Family Mediation service
State run mediation service offering professional mediation to couples experiencing difficulties
021 4252200

GROW
Is a mental health organisation which helps people who have suffered, or are suffering from mental health problems
021 4277020 | www.grow.ie

Headway Ireland
The National Association for Acquired Brain Injury
1890 200 278

Irish Advocacy Network
support and information to people with mental health difficulties by befriending them and offering a confidential listening or peer advocacy service
087 9830651 | 047 38918
www.irishadvocacynetwork.com

Linc (Lesbians in Cork)
Provide a safe and accessible resource Centre for the benefit of women who identify as Lesbian and Bisexual.
021-4608600

MABS
(Money, Advice and Budgeting Service) 021 4552080

Mental Health Ireland
Aims to promote positive mental health and actively support people with mental illness, their families and carers.
www.mentalhealthireland.ie

People with Disabilities Ireland 021 4551986

Post Natal Distress Group
Support group for young mothers. Services include ante and postnatal classes, parenting courses, creche facilities and home visits.
0214923162

Samaritans
Samaritans is available to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair.
1850609090

SHINE Supporting people affected by Mental Ill Health.
021 4949833 | www.shineonline.ie

 Basement Resource Centre 021 4226064

Email basement@shineonline.ie

Senior Helpline
Provides a listening service for Older people who are lonely and isolated.
1850 440 444

SPIRASI
The Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture - Is the only independent specialist centre in Ireland providing multi-disciplinary healthcare services to survivors of torture.
01-8396664

Southern Gay Mens Health Project
Provides information, support, and education on issues relating to sexual health and sexuality.
021-4278745

Suicide Bereaved (Of Irish friends)
021-4316722

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
Citizens Information Service
021 4222280 | www.citizensinformation.ie

Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
021 4319329

Department of Health and Children
01-6354000 | www.doh.ie

Department of Public Health
021 4923501

Department of Social and Family Affairs
021-4270055

Health Service Executive
021 4545011 | www.HSE.ie

Irish Government
www.irigov.ie