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Hello!



Mr Conor McCafferty is a psychotherapist and trainer with Zest: Healing the hurt Ltd.

Conor has been delivering workshops on 'Understanding Self-harm' for many years when he was approached by the Public Health Agency in 2012 and asked if he would like to be involved in the new Flourish! training initiative which had been set up in response to the Churches Research Programme. The programme was a part of an overall initiative to support clergy in working with suicidal behaviour and bereavement. The initiative was being promoted by Lighthouse suicide prevention charity and it is true to say that the energy from the team has successfully driven the Flourish! programme for many years.

Conor's role within Flourish! started by working in collaboration with Rev Mervyn Ewing, a Methodist minister and Rev John McClure, a Church of Ireland minister, to develop training modules covering the theological implications as well as understanding the suicidal person and the bereaved family. For Conor it was a perfect synchronicity as has an honours degree in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome, and is a registered psychotherapist working in self-harm and suicide as well as a fully qualified trainer/educator.

The group held 5 consultations with clergy and church workers, one in each of the Northern Ireland Health Trust areas to get the comments and opinions of the clergy in those areas. As a result of the excellent feedback, we were able to develop the initial training modules which were piloted in the same areas and were able to fine-tune the workshops to meet the identified training needs. As the training progressed, we were able to develop a Training for Trainers programme that supported members of the clergy and church workers to deliver the workshops to their colleagues.

Another very important issue was highlighted in the early days which was the critical need for self-care, not only in working with suicide and bereavement but also in the normal carrying out of everyday responsibilities. This, then, became a separate workshop that is still currently running. We have also just delivered the second Flourish Annual Conference which was held in February 2021.

Nine years ago, Conor felt really privileged to have been asked to join the Flourish! movement. Nine years later, it is still a huge privilege to him to be associated with this excellent initiative and to have the support and friendship of all the amazing people, past and present. *Mr Conor McCafferty: Training Developer, Training Mentor, and member of the Flourish! Working group*

Our work with the Public Health Agency

The Public Health Agency (PHA) has funded the Flourish! Initiative since the creation of the initiative in 2013 and continue to be a vital advocator of our work.

PHA's support has also included participating in the Flourish! working group, providing guidance to ensure Flourish! can deliver training to clergy across Ireland to help integrate training into their pastoral care and ensuring it meets with regional training standards.

The PHA continues to offer advice and support from other departments including communications and publications, which has enabled Flourish! to offer the most up-to-date literature and resources to clergy.

Upcoming events

To care continually for others, we need to ensure that we have a reasonable balance between personal and professional care.

Our Self-Care training offers members of the clergy and faith-based groups the opportunity to promote their own emotional wellbeing.

To register for our upcoming Self-Care Online training, click [here](#)

Check out our [website](#) for more training opportunities



Resources available



Flourish! Self-Care Toolkit – [Available here](#) A practical toolkit for churches on promoting emotional wellbeing.

Flourish! Sunday Worship Resources - [Available here](#) Is a practical Sunday Service handbook for churches on suicide prevention, supporting people bereaved by suicide and promoting emotional wellbeing.

Flourish! Pastoral Guidelines and Training Directory for Churches - [Available here](#) A practical handbook for churches on suicide prevention, supporting bereaved by suicide and promote emotional wellbeing.

There is lots of other information, contacts, and resources available by visiting www.wewillflourish.com

Feedback from events

In 2020 we were unable to hold face to face training events due to the pandemic so, rather than clergy missing out, we held the events online and have been overwhelmed by the response. Over 120 people took part in our online Theological and Self Care training events along with our first online conference.

Feedback from these events has been fantastic:

“Excellent insights into supporting families struggling to understand bereavement by suicide and managing stigma.”

“It was my first time to attend Flourish event, I am very pleased with the organisation, Presentation and delivery of the event. The session was a refresher for me and I needed it.”

“Both speakers gave excellent presentations which were informative and delivered with compassion and sensitivity. Thank you for arranging this event. The resources will be useful for future reference.”



And Finally....

I Hear Spring Breathing

*I hear Spring breathing softly,
her quiet respiration
rising and falling
through the heavy snowbanks
gurgling in the sunshine.
I hear the slow, steady intake
of mid-February air
stirring the awakening crocus.
I hear the sigh
of the oak tree's terminal buds,
warm wind stretching them out
beneath the turquoise sky.
I hear my own lungs
inhaling and exhaling
with renewed hope,
ready for the coming
of green and the shedding
of all that is grayed
with winter's feigned death.*

(Joyce Rupp: 'My Soul Feels Lean' – poems of loss and restoration)



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 LIGHTHOUSE

 HSC Public Health Agency

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