

# September 27<sup>th</sup> 2017

## College of Psychiatrists of Ireland

### ***‘A shared journey is what it’s all about, and ultimately a shared humanity’***

**Families and carers of those with mental illness connect with psychiatrists to encourage recovery**

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland (CPsychI) hosted their third annual conference with Shine on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September in Waterford with a focus on the role of family in promoting recovery. The day was full of insightful presentations and panel discussions with the event hashtag #FamilyCare trending in Ireland throughout the day on Twitter.

Co-chair and CPsychI Director of Communications and Public Education Dr Miriam Kennedy praised the focus on the voices of those who use the services and their families at the event, and noted the positive appetite for collaboration between professionals, families and service users:

*“It was a very enriching day with the experiences of families with loved ones who have suffered mental illness taking centre stage. Their experience, advice, and willingness to share their suggestions for service improvements were made in a most open and constructive manner, with psychiatrists present reporting to have found the day beneficial and helpful. A shared journey is what it is all about and ultimately a shared humanity.... As one service user said; ‘It’s about discovery even further than recovery.... Through illness and getting my life back I discovered more about myself that added to my life.’”*

The conference offered family members/carers and service users the opportunity to discuss their needs and issues during panel discussions with various key stakeholders such as Patricia Gilheaney (CEO Mental Health Commission) Liam Hennessy (Head of Service User, Family Member and Carer Engagement in the Mental Health Division, HSE), Prof Patricia Casey (Consultant Psychiatrist, General Adult Psychiatry, Professor of Psychiatry, UCD & Mater Misericordiae University Hospital), and Gina Delaney (Managing Partner, ARI) and Susan McFeeley (National Training, Support and Awareness Team Leader, SHINE). Unique perspectives were also highlighted by members of CPsychI REFOCUS\* Committee and Shine who stressed the importance of listening to family members/carers and their role in recovery.

Presentations were given on Confidentiality and the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 and their impact on those caring for persons with a mental illness. Speaking on the importance of embedding family recovery in the services through local engagement Liam Hennessy stated that the HSE are hoping to have a national guidance document on family involvement in care by early next year and implemented by the end of 2018.

Shine CEO John Saunders highlighted the tangible air of hope and positivity throughout the day:

*“I was very encouraged by the positive tone of the proceedings. There was a strong sense of willingness for change expressed by Psychiatrists, other mental health professionals, family members and service users. The deliberations of the day showed that all groups share common concerns and that progress can be made through constructive discussion. These events are an integral part of the journey towards truly recovery orientated services. Shine looks forward to an ongoing collaboration with the College of Psychiatrists in pursuit of improved mental health services.”*

**ENDS**

Mary Hayes  
Digital Communications Administrator

College of Psychiatrists of Ireland | 5 Herbert Street | Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 -634 4374  
Email: [mhayes@irishpsychiatry.ie](mailto:mhayes@irishpsychiatry.ie) | web: [www.irishpsychiatry.ie](http://www.irishpsychiatry.ie)

**Notes for the Editor:**

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland was formed in 2009. It is the professional body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland. The Mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry. The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the sole body recognised by the Medical Council and the HSE for the training of doctors to become specialists in psychiatry and for the continuing assurance of the career long competence of specialists in psychiatry. The College supports the delivery of mental health services in line with the recovery model and supports the delivery of the national policy on mental health services A Vision for Change.

\* In 2011, The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland established REFOCUS, (Recovery Experience Forum of Carers and Users of the Services) a forum where the views and experiences of service users and family members/carers would inform and influence all aspects of College business and, in particular, the training of young, future psychiatrists.

**Photo 1:** Barbara Brennan, See Change ambassador, speaking about the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act and advanced directives from her own perspective.

**Photo 2:** (L-R) Gina Delaney (Managing Partner, ARI), Liam Hennessy (Head of Service User, Family Member and Carer Engagement in the Mental Health Division) take part in a panel discussion on local engagement and family recovery.

**Photo 3:** (L-R) Dr Miriam Kennedy (CPsychI Director of Communications and Public Education ), John Saunders (CEO Shine), Prof Patricia Casey (Consultant Psychiatrist, General Adult Psychiatry, Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, UCD & Mater Misericordiae University Hospital) speaking on Confidentiality and its effect on families.

Photos: