



Press Statement

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019

## **Is There a Crisis in Crisis Intervention?**

### **Key Topic for Discussion on the Second day of the College of Psychiatrists Annual Winter Conference in Belfast Tomorrow**

A joint conference with the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Northern Ireland, the two-day programme of the College Winter Conference, themed ***Psychiatry and Conflict***, aims to explore issues around conflict in many and varied contexts.

A focus on crisis interventions in both jurisdictions (Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland) will feature tomorrow afternoon, Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November, with delegates discussing the current issues and how to move forward.

Dr Anne Jeffers, Clinical Lead for the HSE National Clinical Programme for Self-Harm Presentations to Emergency Departments, and Prof Vincent Russell, Associate Clinical Professor, RCSI, Dublin will explore the role of mental health services in crisis intervention in the Republic of Ireland in a session entitled '*Is there a Crisis in Crisis Intervention in the Republic of Ireland*'. This will follow on from a session by Dr Philip McGarry, Belfast Home Treatment Team, who will describe Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) as a treatment for those who present to emergency departments in acute crisis and having self-harmed which has been introduced in Edinburgh.

Challenges and opportunities for future service development will be presented for delegates to review and discuss with a view to identifying solutions - what needs to be done and what can be done in a climate of increased populations and numbers suffering with mental distress or illness seeking supports and assessments, gaps in services both at hospital and community level, the recruitment and retention crisis and a mental health service that is still underfunded.

Dr Jeffers will provide an update on the preliminary results of the programme (Clinical Programme for Self-harm Presentations to Emergency Departments) for 2018. Of the 12,318 patients who presented to Emergency Departments, 90% received a full biopsychosocial assessment before

leaving the hospital and 47% of those who presented had suicidal ideation (suicidal thoughts) but had not self-harmed.

*“While it is important and welcome that people come for help when they are suicidal there is an urgent need to develop other community supports so that people who are suicidal would not need to go to the emergency departments,” emphasises Dr Jeffers.*

*“Community supports such as a Suicide Crisis and Assessment Nurses working from a GP surgery, rapid access to a mental health nurse or social worker from a Community Mental Health Team and open access clinics and crisis resolution teams are just some examples of how people in distress and urgent need of support could be helped in an environment that is less busy and more private,” she explained.*

Psychiatrists and other health professional colleagues are doing their best to provide effective, fit-for-purpose supports and services to those vulnerable in our society in under-resourced mental health services. The College remains concerned that if the major gaps in services and supports are not addressed by government urgently, crisis presentation levels will continue to increase with detrimental outcomes for our society and its vulnerable population.

*Prof Lord John Alderdice as a keynote speaker in a President’s lecture session will present to delegates on Conflict, Co-operation & Complexity on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Other topics include ‘What Crisis? Global Opioid Conversations’, by Dr Cathy Stannard, NHS Gloucestershire, and award-winning filmmaker Mr Terry McMahon on ‘Are the central tenets of psychiatry unashamedly stolen from the cathartic constructs of theatre?’.*

See full conference programme [here](#)

**Ends**

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**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 2006 national policy on mental health services A Vision for Change in line with recommendations for adjustment 11 years on.

There are four [National Clinical Programmes](#) (NCPs) for mental health all at various stages of design and implementation. The Mental Health Clinical Programmes are a joint initiative between HSE Mental Health Services, and the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland. The overarching aim of the NCPs is to standardise quality evidence-based practice across the Mental Health Services. These include: (i) Assessment and Management of Patients Presenting to Emergency Departments following Self-Harm, (ii) Eating Disorders Service (spanning Child and Adolescent and Adult Mental Health Services), (iii) Early Intervention in Psychosis and (iv) ADHD in Adults.