



Press Statement

Friday 31st January 2020

College develops and hosts first co-produced educational event for member psychiatrists and trainees on conversations in signposting that matter for Recovery

The importance of advocacy, social prescribing and empowerment were all key themes that emerged at a recent symposium and workshop on “The Monetary Impact of Mental Illness: Conversations that Matter in Signposting”, developed and organised by the College and its REFOCUS* group.

Originally arising from discussion at REFOCUS meetings exploring what would support medical professionals when taking into account the effects of social and life issues on a person’s ability to put their recovery plan into action, a dedicated workgroup was set up to explore the various issues and themes. This culminated in the patient/service users, psychiatrists and family member/carers in the group devising an event for Specialists and Trainees in Psychiatry focused on providing practical up to date information and time for discussion on supports for financial issues, education and skills and employment that are instrumental in a person’s recovery.

The potential negative consequences of mental illness on a person’s employment/employability, finances, housing and education can sometimes be forgotten during recovery planning, or can be difficult to address due to lack of resourcing within the mental health services. Over the course of the day it became clear that while these consequences can severely impede recovery, there are practical achievable ways in which Psychiatrists and their teams can ensure people are presented with a recovery plan that fits the biopsychosocial model.

Presentations and panel discussion featured consultant psychiatrists who have successfully incorporated some of these elements into their practice, as well as speakers from the Irish Mental Health Lawyers Association, the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), Educational and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and CPsychI REFOCUS.

Key takeaways from the day included recognising the importance of creating small, actionable steps towards recovery, the difference a supportive advocate can make and the sense of value an individual

gains from meaningful employment; all of these combine to allow a person a greater sense of self-esteem and confidence and empowers them to take control of their personal journey to recovery.

Attendees were not only provided with useful and practical information to take back to their practice, but given the opportunity for self-reflection and open sharing in groups.

The feedback from delegates on the usefulness of the day and meeting intended objectives was overwhelmingly positive. It is hoped to run this event in other locations incorporating suggestions from delegates for an enhanced agenda.

[See the programme for the symposium /workshop 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.

** **REFOCUS** stands for Recovery Experience Forum of Carers and Users of the Services, reflecting the strong belief of the forum in the wellness and Recovery philosophy. REFOCUS is a forum where the views of people with experience of using the Mental Health Services, and family members and carers of those who have used the services, aim to inform and influence all aspects of College business particularly the training experience of young future psychiatrists and identifying ways to improve the mental health services with psychiatrist members. This ties in with the College mission to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry including advocating for better services.