

Press Statement
8 May 2020

Fifth video released by psychiatrists for families of young people with mental illness restricted at home and without usual vital supports during Covid-19

Continued support, guidance and flexibility are needed for those with mental illness while protective and restrictive measures are in place for the Coronavirus.

With this in mind, and to alleviate the additional stress that families of young people with mental illness and neurodevelopmental disorders now face, the College has developed a series of short videos for them featuring senior specialists in Psychiatry.

The series, titled '[Supporting Families of Young People with Mental Illness During Covid-19](#)', provides coping strategies for parents and families with relation to a number of mental and neurodevelopmental disorders - **Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Eating Disorders, Intellectual Disability and Depressive Illness**. The video series also focuses on how parents can continue to mind their own health, both mental and physical with all including some useful tips for self-care whilst isolating at home.

Professor Louise Gallagher, who provides advice in one of the videos for families of young people with autism and mental illness, stresses that:

“In addition to using resources such as these videos and other on line supports families should not hesitate to reach out and ask for support and advice both in the community and from relevant mental health and other health services.”

In the latest video, released today, **Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Dr Louise Sharkey** provides advice for parents of children with an intellectual disability, some of whom may also have a co-morbid mental illness or additional neurodevelopmental disorders.

Dr Sharkey outlines achievable steps families can take to support their young person which includes creating, and sticking to a daily routine, utilising familiar communication tools like Picture Exchange, keeping to a healthy diet and doing some physical exercise to allow children to self-regulate.

All five videos in the series can now be viewed on the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland [website](#) or [YouTube](#):

- **ADHD - Dr Kieran Moore**, Head of Department, Crumlin Children’s Hospital Dublin
- **Autism and Mental illness - Prof Louise Gallagher**, Director of Research, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin and St James’s Hospital Dublin
- **Depressive Disorders - Dr Shauna McCarthy**, HSE CAMHS, South Tipperary
- **Eating Disorders - Professor Fiona McNicholas**, Professor in Child Psychiatry UCD, Lucena Clinic & Our Lady’s Children Hospital Crumlin, Dublin
- **Intellectual Disability and Mental illness - Dr Louise Sharkey**, Consultant in Child & Adolescent and Intellectual Disability Psychiatry, Psychiatry Out-Patient Dept, HSE Community Healthcare East, Dublin.

It is vital that people with mental illnesses continue to engage with their mental health practitioners and services during this period. Treatment and support are still imperative for many but may be delivered in a

different way when necessary to comply with the Covid-19 practices that minimise the spread and damage of the virus.

The College welcomes further suggestions of similar videos that families of those with mental illness may find useful. Suggestions can be sent to info@irishpsychiatry.ie