



Aisling centre

Hope Healing Growth



Annual Report

2016-2017



Your local Counselling,
Psychotherapy and
Well-Being Service



www.theaislingcentre.com

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Aisling
centre
Hope Healing Growth

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Chairpersons Foreward



This past year continues to see Aisling Centre thriving amidst ever increasing demand. The context for our counselling, psychotherapy, play therapy and well-being work is underpinned by local and national research, by clinical evaluation and measurement of outcomes and by feedback from our stakeholders, primarily our clients.

Over the past year we continued to see demand for our services rising amidst a challenging economic climate where funding remains of crucial importance. We are very pleased that the fund-raising committee continues to outperform and has raised significant monies over the past year, and equally importantly, in doing so has continued to raise awareness of Aisling Centre services in the community and beyond.

Our core work remains the provision of therapy services both at the centre in Enniskillen and from outreach venues around the county. Alongside our general counselling service we offer play therapy for children coping with loss and a dedicated counselling service for victims and survivors of the troubles and for victims and survivors of sexual abuse. We also offer complementary therapy, mindfulness meditation, support groups and workshops and programmes.

The Centre is also home to a range of services including a number of support groups for people living with addictions, people bereaved by suicide, carers, adults with ADHD, people living with depression and much more.

We believe in the importance of having strong governance and administrative systems in place to support our work so that we are transparent and accountable to our stakeholders including the local community. We are currently working on our Strategic Plan. Our long term goal is to create and sustain hope, healing and growth in our community. The core of this is the creation of measurable improvement in the emotional and mental health of the people of our community so that they can live hopeful, purposeful and fulfilling lives.

As we draw to the end of 2017 I would like to thank all those who have supported us financially, and also those who have worked tirelessly for the 'cause' of Aisling, be they my fellow Directors, staff, volunteers or 'friends' of Aisling. Without them we would not be here supporting the wider community. Thank you to all. I think I can safely say as we move into 2018, that the good ship Aisling is on a steady course for the future.

Dr Ann McDermott, Chairperson

Vision / Mission / Strategic Priorities

Vision / Dream

Positive Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being for All



Mission

To provide opportunities for hope, healing and growth in a welcoming and supportive environment



Values & Principles

Non-judgemental, Inclusive & Respectful of All

Providing a Safe, Welcoming & Confidential Environment

Sensitive to Current & Emerging Needs



Strategic Priorities

To promote positive mental health and emotional well-being for adults, young people and children in Co Fermanagh and the surrounding area through the provision of an accessible and professional counselling, psychotherapy and play therapy service.

To provide a range of well-being activities that will enhance and complement the counselling and psychotherapy work of the Centre and give additional value to clients.

To ensure that the Aisling Centre is an effective, accountable and transparent organisation that strives to meet the requirements of all stakeholders.

Centre Co-ordinator Report



It is always a pleasure to reflect back on another year in the Aisling Centre. The modest façade of the building gives little indication of the life-changing and life-saving work that goes on day and

daily behind the blue door.

This report will provide an overview of the quality service and volume of work delivered by a professional, skilled and dedicated team of staff, sessional therapists and volunteers as well as our committed Board of Directors.

The recurring theme throughout the report is the steadily growing demand for counselling and well-being services, set against the backdrop of a challenging funding and economic environment and a changing health sector. Despite this, Aisling Centre has remained constant going from strength to strength maintaining and developing its services. "It was a great help at a time of great need" said one client encapsulating the huge contribution the Aisling Centre makes in supporting local people at difficult times in their lives.

We do not do this work alone and are thankful to our many funders. We are also deeply grateful to the individuals, families and groups who have made

donations or organised fund raising events for the Aisling Centre, it is you who enable us to go the extra mile.

The Aisling Centre is also fortunate to be associated with the many wonderful organisations and their staff and volunteers, who work alongside us in the Centre. We are delighted to be associated with these services and thank them for their continued support.

I am also very fortunate to work with a committed team who hold the well-being of clients as central to their work. My heartfelt appreciation to all for your hard work, flexibility and dedication. I would also like to note my sincere appreciation to Chairperson Ann McDermott and the Board of Directors, for their support and guidance throughout the year.

As we move forward into a new year we know we will face many challenges, but there will also be opportunities. We look forward to another successful and productive year as we strive to keep the needs of clients at the heart of our work and offer a professional service in a welcoming and supportive space where people can feel safe and valued.

Bridie Sweeney, Centre Co-ordinator

Clinical Co-ordinator Report

During the past year the counselling, psychotherapy and play therapy service provided by the Aisling Centre has continued to respond to an ever increasing number of referrals for people old and young from every corner of Fermanagh and the surrounding areas. While mental health can still be and often is difficult to talk about, we are growing in our awareness that our health and well-being is not simply about our physical health. We should feel some satisfaction that as a community we are becoming increasingly able and willing to pay attention to it both for ourselves and for those around us.

In real terms this means that we are more willing to notice those small signs that make us wonder if a friend, family member, school friend or work colleague is struggling with something or not coping as well as he or she might. And more importantly, it means that we are willing to go that step further, to be courageous and ask “are you all right?” In doing this we are telling another person that it is ok to be not alright and we are offering assurance that somebody notices and cares.

In turn it means that more people seek help, with the consequent increase

in waiting times. To keep these times to a minimum and to ensure that clients are seen with as little delay as possible, our dedicated team that includes administration staff and therapists have continued to review and make changes to our work practices and we are committed to continuing to do this during the year ahead.



For us the ongoing challenge remains the same: to respond to an increasing demand, a demand that is always greater than the resources, and to offer a service that continues to make a positive difference to the lives of those who come to the Aisling Centre.

We have been privileged to be in a position to offer a “non-judgemental space” where clients could “feel listened to” and “allowed to understand and make sense of how they were feeling”.

John Bennett
Clinical Co-ordinator

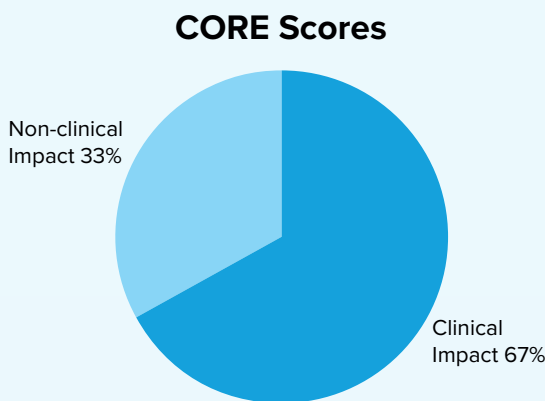
Adult Counselling / Psychotherapy Evaluation & Client Satisfaction Surveys

Counselling, psychotherapy and play therapy continue to form the core work of the Aisling Centre. Demand for services continues to grow and the year saw a 20% increase in requests for counselling. An average of 45 requests for counselling were received monthly. 96 sessions of counselling were offered per week (17% increase on last year). 507 people received counselling (18% increase).

As well as general counselling services for a broad range of issues the Aisling Centre also offers a dedicated service for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse, Victims/Survivors of the NI Troubles and Children Coping with Loss. The Centre also offered an early intervention service in partnership with 9 GP Practices from across the County. This year we also commenced a pilot project working with Probation Services in Enniskillen and Omagh. Counselling is available from the Centre in Enniskillen or from a number of outreach venues.

The Aisling Centre use CORE, a widely recognised tool to measure the impact of counselling. CORE measures the outcome of counselling using four indicators Well-being, Risk, Problems/Symptoms and Functioning. This gives an indication of the clinical impact of the therapy.

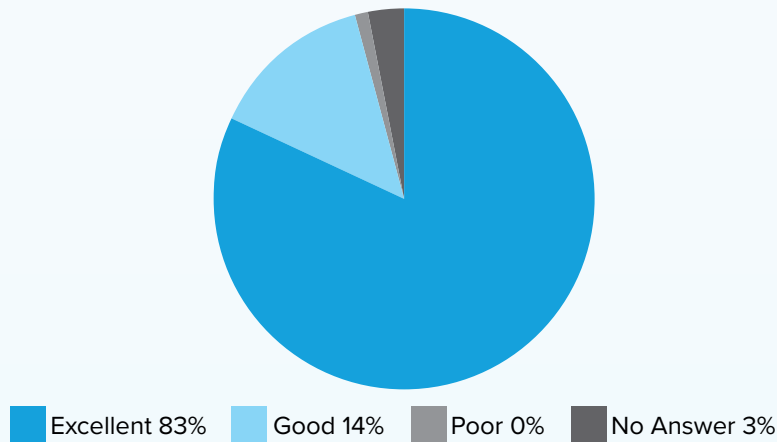
It is also important to the Aisling Centre that we hear from our clients directly about whether their experience of our service has been helpful to them. To this end, we ask clients to complete a client satisfaction form at the end of their Counselling/Therapy. The form asks people to answer 6 questions among which are their overall satisfaction with their experience at the Aisling Centre and what worked well for them during their time in attendance. These forms are anonymous and optional and not all clients fill them out, however out of a full response rate of 63% of people who completed counselling we have gleaned the following information.



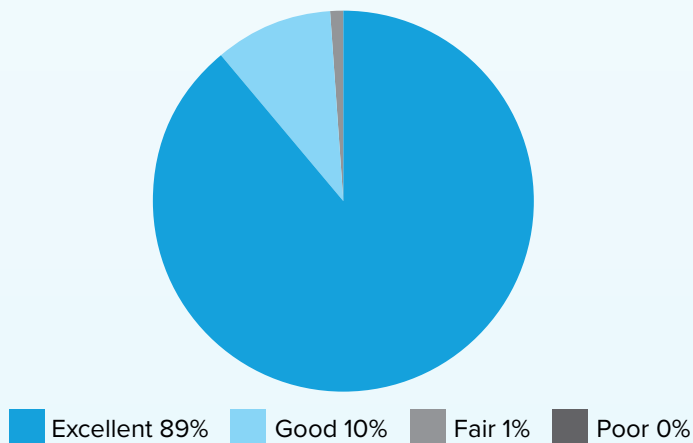
No of Sessions attended	
No of Sessions	No of clients
Less than 12	0
Total of 12	114
More than 12	53
No answer	4

Clients are also asked to rate the level of support they received; whether or not they feel positive about the future. Responses are shown below:

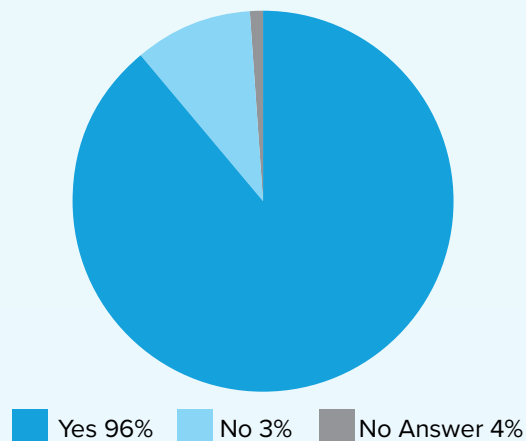
Overall experience of the Centre



Level of Support received



Clients feeling more positive about the future following counselling



Clients are also asked to estimate whether there has been a reduction in the level of upset/distress they are experiencing following the period of Therapy/Counselling.

Overall there was an improvement of around 93% shown over the whole client group.



What worked well for clients overall:

- ▶ Friendly, peaceful atmosphere in all of the building
- ▶ I have had a very positive experience, even the person manning the initial telephone contact was caring and extremely nice
- ▶ Being able to say my piece in a safe environment whilst receiving relevant and thought provoking feedback. Being challenged on deep seated beliefs
- ▶ I gathered a number of useful and positive techniques of how to deal with some of the problems I was experiencing in my life
- ▶ It was a great help at a time of great need
- ▶ A weekly session on the same day and at the same time offered me something to hold onto each week and gave me a routine
- ▶ My counsellor has got me to open about a lot of things I couldn't speak about. I really appreciate her honesty and helpfulness
- ▶ Having the opportunity to speak to someone who is non-judgemental and understanding
- ▶ Talking on a one to one basis to someone who could understand how I was feeling
- ▶ The support provided, the ability of the counsellors to listen, helped put things in perspective
- ▶ I felt I had someone who really cared about me there wanting to help me

Play Therapy Programme

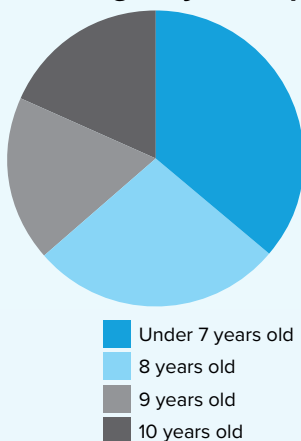
This programme works with children experiencing bereavement and/or loss in their lives. Children are seen either in the Aisling Centre with its fully equipped Play Therapy room or in their school where the Play Therapist provides a visiting service in response to referral. Bereavement and loss can affect a child's life at school, at home and with their peers. This service, funded by BBC Children in Need, addresses all aspects of a child's experience.

I feel that I am sad that my friends don't think that I not good enough I love them to think I better than that.

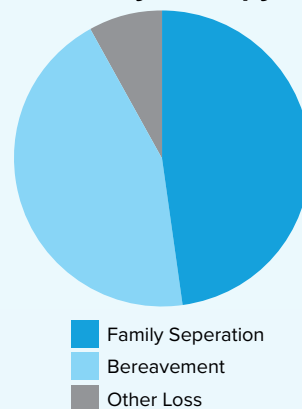
This year, 47 children were referred to the Play Therapy Service. Of these, 12 did not take up the service for reasons such as being outside the age the service caters for, not meeting the referral criteria i.e. directly affected by loss or bereavement or being referred on to a more suitable service following initial assessment.

A total of 35 children engaged with the service. Age range and reason for children coming to play therapy are shown below.

Breakdown of age of children attending Play Therapy



Reason for children coming to Play Therapy




Children's Feedback

Children are asked to express how they feel in their own words/drawings at the start of therapy, and again at the end. This is to try and measure improvement from a baseline set by the child and in their own words/pictures.

Before

good enough (now)
A bit bad (at start)

Worried
Sad
Written by Eider and illustrated by Leah.
12/5/16



I was Scared

OVERALL
Think about all the things you have talked about and draw a picture or write a word or a sentence, in the space below, to show how you feel. Use the back of the page if you need more space.




Charlie explained that this picture is of him, showing how shocked he is about the death of his chobby.


After

It made me stronger


I realised Mark (ain't) is in a better place

OVERALL
Think about all the things you have talked about and draw a picture or write a word or a sentence, in the space below, to show how you feel. Use the back of the page if you need more space.

happy excited



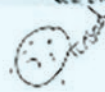
It helped thinking about things about Nanny ☺



I am happy


November 2017

OVERALL
Think about all the things you have talked about and draw a picture or write a word or a sentence, in the space below, to show how you feel. Use the back of the page if you need more space.



my sister she was sad because she was leaving tonight

you feel. Use the back of the page if you need more space.



Charlie said this picture means 'I am a bit happier!'

Parent/Caregiver Feedback

My daughter really appreciated the 'listening ear' and the strategies suggested her to use everyday

My child has become more aware of his behaviour and how to control his actions. Therapist gave some good tips for parents also!!

My child gained so much confidence and learnt how to deal with losing her father I can't be grateful enough for an absolutely fantastic therapist

Many thanks for helping our family cope better during a difficult few months. My child has learned many coping strategies as well as realising that events and things occur without reason. Something he challenged me on several times. He appears to be a more content happy child, with a lot less worries now. His angry outbursts have reduced, only having one episode since the start of the year. Thank you so much for this service and wish you every success in helping all other families in need.

Play therapy has helped my child gain more confidence, she finds it easier to

talk and confide in her family and talk about loved ones that have passed away with a better understanding. Thank you so much for making my little girl smile.

My daughter was heartbroken that her father left the family home two days before Christmas when she was just 6. The Therapist) gave my child goals to meet, and myself, and we really worked well together for a more positive outcome and (child) is now far happier in herself thank you.

Schools Feedback

Schools were asked to state what worked well for them about the Play Therapy Programme:

- ▶ The support given to the pupil.
- ▶ This pupil focuses much better in class, she opens up and converses to adults. This pupil informs staff of incidental facts about home life and things that are worrying her. None of these things happened prior to counselling.
- ▶ Support for children, approachable nature of staff and ability to have someone on hand to talk over issues/concerns with.

GENERAL SATISFACTION COMMENTS

The child has greatly benefitted from play therapy. He has stopped crying, he is now a lot happier and laughs often in school now. His sadness has gone from his face and actions. A great success. Thank you very much, this has changed this child's life! Need more play therapy

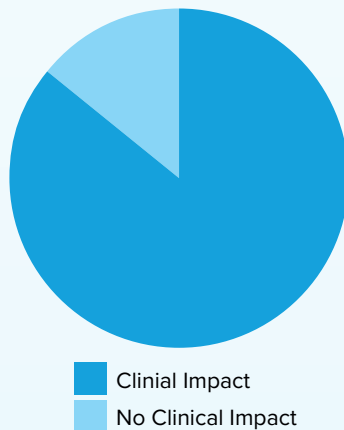
This is an excellent service which addresses an increasing need. The impact of the play therapy sessions enables a child to become aware of their situation and helps them manage their emotions and anxieties

Life Learning and Well-Being Programmes

The Centre offers a range of psycho-social and psycho-educational programmes which include Complimentary therapies, mindfulness meditation and support groups. Programmes and presentations were delivered on-site and on an out-reach basis with community groups and local businesses. 954 participant places were filled on 61 workshops/events.

Complimentary Therapy

MYMOP Scores



- ▶ **102 clients were referred for CT.**
- ▶ **52% were victims/survivors of the NI Troubles**
- ▶ **91% completed a 6-week programme of therapy**

Client Feedback:-

- ▶ “It has been pure joy; knowing that I had it to come to, give me a sense of peace for days on end”
- ▶ Sessions excellent. Therapist and the Aisling Centre very warm and welcoming. Sleep pattern

well improved and tummy settled down due to destressing”

- ▶ “Really enjoyed. I am a carer and it was me time. I also haven’t been well and session helped me relax and helped heal body and mind”

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness Meditation programmes can be beneficial for people living with stress, anxiety, depression, pain or illness. Mindfulness is about being awake and aware and living in the present rather than dwelling on the past, which can lead to a sense of regret and depression or worry and anxiety about the future. Weaving mindfulness into your life can help reduce stress and anxiety levels. Research has shown the benefits of incorporating Mindfulness Meditation into a busy lifestyle.

Mindfulness practice at the Aisling Centre include monthly drop in taster and practice development sessions as well as the 8-week MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) programme and the annual ‘All Day’ silent session.

Participant Feedback:-

Of participants who completed the 8-week MBSR programme:-

- ▶ 92% experienced improved feelings of well-being
- ▶ 97% felt the programme relevance/content and structure were suited to their needs
- ▶ 92% had a positive experience of working and learning in a group setting
- ▶ 91% found the CD and workbook materials to be useful

emotions and develop emotional resilience. The programme included a range of learning styles to ensure that all could participate – presentations, tactile exercises and games, large and small discussion groups, physical exercises etc. The facilitation of a supportive group was central to this course so that the participants could share, listen, learn and support each other. This was a new programme for the Aisling Centre and was received with enthusiasm by participants. Participant feedback:-

I can now confront distressing thoughts and feelings in a way which enables me to gain a sense of calm.

Mindfulness gave me the opportunity to examine myself and my responses to situations. While this was not easy and sometimes painful it was necessary to be able to practice mindfulness in a positive way. I have learned that it is ok to put yourself first sometimes.

The group environment and the leadership, encouraging atmosphere, no pressure, and therefore you felt you were more willing to share and participate. I have really felt the benefit of mindfulness, and this has been surprising, positive and uplifting.

I am a mother of four young children and have experienced a few unexpected mental health challenges in recent years including post-natal depression and post-traumatic shock. This course has helped lift a cloud of self-doubt, low self-esteem, and self-criticism off my shoulders....to know that there is an explanation for my anxiety and to recognise the symptoms is a great relief...I wish that I could have had this knowledge sooner.

Feelings don't have to control my life, I can manage them.

I liked that the facilitator is honest, exact, factual, and funny. She has given us a sense of feeling normal, not unusual.

I now feel that I can do a lot to improve my mental wellbeing and make the most of life. The group work is comforting.

Take 5 & Thrive

A psycho-educational programme designed and facilitated by Mary Daly to help understand and manage

Steps to Well –Being & Stress Management Workshops

A series of stand-alone workshops were delivered. Topics covered including understanding mental health, anxiety, depression, self-esteem, self-care, bereavement, remembering and access to services. Workshops used discussion, meditation, movement, storytelling etc as a means of sharing experiences and developing coping skills.

Participant feedback:-

- ▶ 57% reported reduced anxiety levels
- ▶ 86% experienced increased feelings of well-being
- ▶ 94% felt the programme relevance/content and structure were suited to their needs
- ▶ 95% had a positive experience of working and learning in a group setting

Journeying Together Support Group

A facilitated support group for people who live with/have lived with a loved one's addiction met fortnightly

Participant feedback:-

I find the group has strength and commitment towards each other and when you go home you don't feel you are coping on your own.

Without it I don't know where I would go for support. There are no other groups like this one in the area.

It is a safe haven and I look forward to it every week it is on.

The group allows me to talk freely, to express anger and frustration. It allows me to say what I think; not what society expects me to think.

Schools for Hope – Pilot Project

The 'Schools for Hope' Programme was designed in the United States by the International Foundation for Research and Education on Depression (iFRED). It is based on the central idea that hope is a teachable skill, and that teaching it to children at primary 5,6,7 level is a preventive measure to combat mental health issues that arise later for teenagers, including suicide.

'Schools for Hope' was championed in the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCCT) area by Marie Dunne, Health Promotion Officer, who set up a pilot programme evaluated by Ulster University under Dr Karen Kirby. Marie offered the Aisling Centre the opportunity to participate in the delivery of a Pilot Programme in 2 Fermanagh schools to bring a rural dimension to the pilot.

Two members of the Aisling Centre team (Edel McGuinness and Mary Daly) undertook facilitator training and delivered the programme in Derrygonnelly PS (14 participants) and Killyhommon PS (16 participants).

Through the programme children learned about how our brains process emotional reactions and how we can develop our skills in managing emotions. They also learned about goal setting, what hope means and how to maintain it, experienced meditation, visualisation and group games and discussed all aspects of the programme, sharing their own experiences. Each child created a scrapbook and planted a sunflower seed as part of the programme. The sunflower is the symbol of hope hence its centrality in the programme. The feedback from the overall pilot was very positive and it is to be hoped that funding will be sourced to ensure that many more children can benefit from the programme.

Examples of Feedback from Fermanagh participants:-

Learning – the difference the programme made in my hope journey

- ▶ Now I am not as cross and angry because I calm myself down
- ▶ It helped me understand that we have to work for hope and be confident
- ▶ To face the obstacles along the way
- ▶ The Programme has made me want to go for my dreams more. I have got more confidence in myself



What I learned about hope

there will always be obstacles

we couldn't live without it

it gives me a wee bit more confidence

it doesn't just come you have to give it to yourself

you are not born with it hope can be cultivated

sunflowers are a symbol to never give up

hope is an indestructible feeling

that not everyone has hope

no matter how big or small hope is always there when you least expect it

never give up and never stop believing. Reach for the stars

keep trying

to achieve any goal you must have hope.

Hope doesn't always come easy but Mary and Edel have tried to give us hope

everything i need to know

I learned how to give other people hope

hope can grow anywhere like a sunflower

there will always be obstacles

It has made me more confident about my dream

I learned about who I am

it taught me about our purposes

"Thank you for coming to our school. You have really brightened up my week and I always look forward to Monday Afternoons. You have helped me to believe in myself and have that little extra hope in my life. I have learnt so much that will stay with me through life.

Thank you for helping me to believe".

Case Studies

Case Study – Brian

Brian is an 8 year old boy who lives in a rural area with his mother. Brian has not had any contact with his daddy since he was 4 years old. He has one half-sibling with whom he has no contact. Brian was referred to Aisling Centre by his health visitor due to concerns around how he was coping with the absence of his father.

At the assessment session Brian and his mother spoke openly about the parental separation and how this has impacted on Brian. Brian presented with a lot of anger and resentment towards his father and, as the sessions progressed, it became clear that this was impacting on many areas of his life, eg friendships, school, home life, and social activities. Brian explored, mainly through writing and drawing exercises, feelings of rejection, worthlessness, shame and blame as well as coping with the stigma of it in such a rural area. Brian experienced low self-esteem as a direct effect of believing that he wasn't enough for his father. Brian struggled to believe that the reasons for his absence could be anything but that his daddy just had no interest in seeing him. This made it very difficult for Brian to value himself. He once stated in a session that he felt like the therapist was his 'right hand woman on a Monday' as he described the sense of feeling supported by therapy. Through the

therapy process Brian was helped to look at his strengths, wants and needs; he was able to explore his feelings and begin to focus on what would help him to feel better. Brian became more able to value himself with an acceptance that he is not to blame for his daddy's absence and that he can choose how he lives his life. Brian was able to think more positively about the other important people in his life as well as discover his own purpose in life.

During his therapy, Brian had a very special occasion in his life. Both Brian and his mother were anxious about this as Brian had 'went to pieces' at a previous special occasion, unable to cope with the absence of his father. As he worked through his therapy and this particular experience, Brian and I explored strategies to help him with overwhelming feelings around times like this in his life. Brian celebrated his special occasion differently this time, determined to enjoy it and value the presence of those there. Afterwards he told the therapist that it was having the support prior to the event that helped him to enjoy his day. He also talked about the realisation that he can enjoy things and feel special despite the absence of his daddy in his life. His mother was delighted that he was much more able to cope with his feelings and that he was able to enjoy his special day.

When children leave them therapy the therapist always give them a card. Brian's mum rang the therapist the following day to tell her that she went into Brian's room to find him reading the card and crying, but was able to tell his mother that while he was going to miss the therapist he knew he would be ok!

Case Study – Peter

Peter is a 45yr old builder/farmer. In January he started feeling low in mood and was finding it difficult to get motivated to get up and out for work or farming. For the first couple of weeks, he put this down to feeling low after the Christmas festivities. Over the next few weeks, he began struggling more with motivation and everything seemed like a huge effort. He began having thoughts like “I am not good enough”, “Everyone else has a better life than me”, “I'm going no-where”. Since everything was such an effort to peter, he began doing less and less. He began to feel hopeless about the future, his mood became worse and his wife urged him to take some time off to “try and sort himself out”. He went to his GP and was prescribed an anti-depressant medication. Three weeks later, nothing had changed and Peter realised he had to do something.

When I met Peter for assessment in March, he told me how his problems had developed over the previous three months. Peter completed some questionnaires to gage the severity of his depression and he scored in the moderate – high range. I discussed the process of therapy with Peter and we

agreed to meet initially for 6 sessions followed by a review.

We began to look at understanding how the problem had developed and was being maintained. This allowed Peter to have better understanding and self-compassion for himself as well as identifying areas that may require attention in therapy. We talked about a number of events that had happened in the last six months of Peter's life which helped make sense of why he was feeling low, such as the loss of a very old friend suddenly by suicide, his oldest child leaving home for college among other events. Peter learned that while none of these events alone explained his low mood, together they prompted a life review which resulted in him having thoughts that he was stuck and not moving on. These thoughts triggered feelings of low mood and lack of motivation. We also spoke about issues that were maintaining the low mood such as not going out, not been involved in family activities, not seeing friends and his constant self-critical thinking.

Absence of activity was identified as one of the main factors in his depression. We looked at Peter's thinking about activities and what he enjoys and finds worthwhile and began working on increasing these in a regular way that felt manageable for him. Engaging in these and other activities resulted in a significant improvement in his mood.

We then looked at Peter's way of thinking. He was having a lot of self-critical thoughts. These thoughts were having a negative impact on his mood

and self-esteem. We worked on his self-critical thinking and increasing self-compassion. This work focused on learning to identify negative and self-critical thoughts, evaluating the truthfulness of these thoughts and developing more balanced and helpful ways of thinking. Peter realised that he was constantly telling himself off, even for things that were not his fault and that speaking to himself in this way was holding him back. By developing a more balanced and kinder way of thinking, he focused on what he was doing well and his mood improved. By learning new ways of managing stressful situations like Mindfulness, deep breathing techniques etc. Peter not only felt better but also had the skills to manage any future incidences of low mood and was very pleased with the outcome of therapy.

At the final session Peter completed the same questionnaire and his scores showed that he had minimal depression.

Case Study – Amanda

Amanda, a woman in her 30's, self-referred to the Centre as she was finding it difficult to cope with the demands of her young children. Amanda felt that this situation had arisen from the stress and anxiety caused by the death of her parents. Both of her parents had died in recent years after short illnesses. Amanda felt lost after their deaths and felt that she hadn't had the opportunity to grieve for them and to accept that they had gone. The day-to-day demands of family life, financial worries and

working in a stressful environment had exacerbated her situation and she felt overwhelmed by it all. Her CORE questionnaire completed in the first session indicated difficulty in all aspects of her life.

From the first session, Amanda was very engaged with the process and worked hard to address the issues that had brought her to therapy. When speaking of the loss of her parents she would become overcome with grief and she felt unable to deal with the challenges of daily life. She spoke of her experiences of trying to manage anxiety – constantly worrying and developing obsessive behaviours to try to keep intrusive thoughts at bay.

Amanda felt her experience of being a mother had suffered due to the loss of her own parents. At times the grief and loneliness she experienced was overwhelming. She had always had a very close connection to her parents and missed them desperately. She felt cheated that they had both died at a time when they should have been enjoying their retirement and their grandchildren. She missed their support and found it difficult to identify who she could rely on to help and support her. Much of her anxiety related to concerns about her ability to parent effectively. She had grown up in a very loving environment and had a happy childhood and she wanted her children to have the same. Her husband experienced serious health difficulties and she did not want to put more pressure on him.

At each session the client looked at different aspects of her life where she could bring change on a practical level. We reviewed these changes as she went along and I encouraged her to feel proud of the positive changes she had made. This encouraged her to feel empowered in her life. We also looked at how she communicated with her husband, family and colleagues and looked at ways that would encourage positive interactions. We also addressed the behaviours she had relied on to deal with stress. Amanda was able to step back from these and assess objectively whether they were helping or not. We also explored distraction techniques and breathing exercises to manage changing this way of being. The use of breathing techniques, visualisation exercises and positive self-talk allowed Amanda to bring slow, steady change to her day to day life.

As therapy progressed and her day-to-day coping and self-care had improved, Amanda felt more able to really look at the experience of losing her parents. She had felt unable to grieve for them up until now and realised that she needed to address this situation and work towards accepting their deaths. Although she felt very sad and emotional about her experience, she felt she could connect with her pain and sadness without being so overwhelmed that she felt unable to cope.

In her last session, Amanda expressed her gratitude for the opportunity of therapy. She spoke of her apprehension that she would no longer have therapy to support her but she felt that the

skills and awareness she developed and the improved communication with her husband and family would enable her to cope and to build on what she had achieved so far.

Amanda attended 17 sessions over a 4 month period and was very engaged with the process of therapy. She completed CORE questionnaires at various stages of her therapy. These reflected her improvement and she was delighted that her hard work was paying off. Her last CORE questionnaire showed significant improvements in all areas.

Case Study – George

George a man in his fifties was referred to the Aisling Centre by his GP due to depression and lack of motivation. George had experienced a traumatic event the previous year. In general, he had previous good health and did not wish to take medication.

George was very anxious and embarrassed coming to therapy, but felt he needed to do something as his business was “going down” and he was finding he was failing to follow up work due to lack of motivation, sleep disturbance and wanting to withdraw .

George related that by chance he had come upon a suicide. While he called the emergency services and returned to work later in the day, he stated that “his life had changed” from that day. He had become very agitated and withdrew from life. He also expressed that he felt very weak as a man and this kept him from talking to others, especially his family.

Having listened to his story, some psycho-education was given about trauma, the impact of trauma and the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress. This helped him put his experience in context, to understand how normal/natural it was to be impacted by such an experience. He was able to admit and identify emotions and symptoms generally experienced after trauma. This brought a sense of relief and acceptance he was “normal” rather than “going crazy”.

In time, he was able to identify triggers and flashbacks and given tools to manage these experiences- body awareness, bringing his attention back to the present, mindfulness, and relaxation. He had a desire to return to the place of the incident and we discussed the pros and cons of this visit. He decided to visit the place and was able to share his experience at next

session – recognizing and accepting his vulnerability and his resilience.

In the course of therapy, other difficult/traumatic experiences were recalled. We looked at how he managed/survived these events. We explored what helped and looked at the positive outcomes, while also noting the ongoing triggers and vulnerability.

George’s mood and sleep pattern began to change – in particular after two nightmares he shared. He also gradually began to talk to his family about what he was experiencing and began to regain interest in his business. He made a few decisions about life/work balance and began thinking about the future of his business.

After eight sessions George felt that “life had come back to him” and he could move forward with a different outlook/approach. He is also aware that triggers may arise in the future.



New look Head Street Entrance

Thanks to FODC for capital grant which enabled improved access for people with disabilities and general clean-up of the area including a designated smoking area and the installation of bicycle stands.

Enjoying Poetry

If you popped into the Aisling Centre some Tuesday afternoon, you might happen to find an adult group gathered to enjoy poetry. We are there to listen, to read, to be caught up into the magic of the poetic imagination. We have discovered that poetry casts its own spell, once it is freed from the shackles of examinations.

We come with our adult selves, our life experiences, our maturing awareness of the pattern of our days and our relationships. Poetry holds up a mirror to our lives, and offers a pathway to new insights and challenges, to reflection, to inner quiet, to wonder.

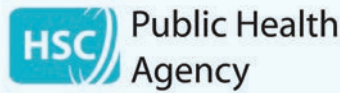
These Tuesday sessions have proved most enjoyable. There is a sense of

shared friendship and respect for each one's understanding. There is no compulsion to speak, yet many feel drawn to comment or share. The lively ensuing conversation can prove thought-provoking, inspiring and bonding. The atmosphere is friendly, and this is helped by a cuppa midway through each session. In an easy relaxed way we have dipped into the richness of our poetic heritage down the centuries, and have, hopefully, been transformed by the wisdom and vision of our gifted writers.

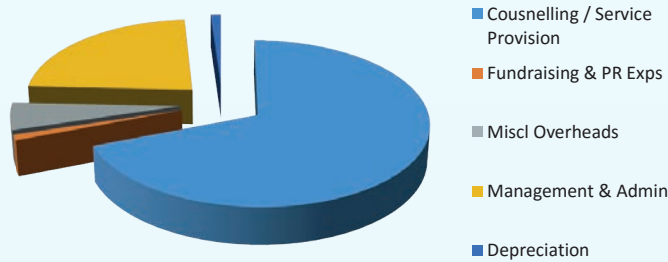
Our next poetry sessions are on Tuesdays, October 3rd, 10th and 17th. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome to drop in.



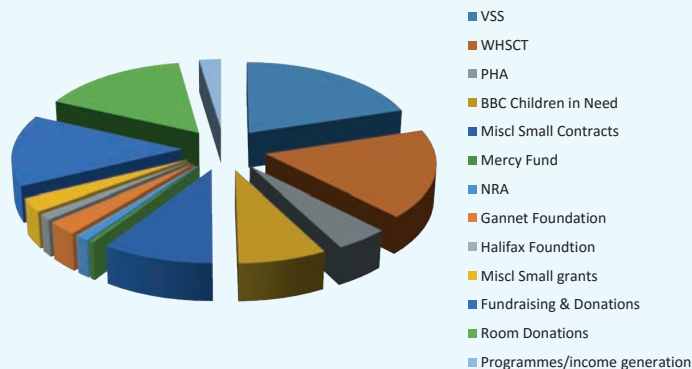
Funder Acknowledgements



Expenditure 2016/17



Income 2016/17



Treasurers Report



It was an honour to be nominated for the post of Treasurer for the Aisling Centre 2016-17 and I am delighted to report a healthy Treasurer's Report for the year. There can be little doubt that the prevailing

economic and political climate brings many challenges but the Aisling Centre continues to provide vital services to the community of Fermanagh and beyond with professionalism and care.

Overall the trading year has been successful with an income of £350,400 and expenditure of £334,024 resulting in an operating profit of £16,376. This operating profit can be attributed to fund-raising/donations and is ring-fenced for counselling.

Being able to operate at a surplus demonstrates the tireless work of the fund-raising committee and the growing public awareness of the work of the Centre and its role in the Community. The Centre has also benefitted from donations (including those in memory of loved ones who have died), and by contributions made by groups who use rooms.

Aisling has been fortunate to be awarded funding from a wide and varied funder base. This funding is the life-blood of the Centre and allows vital work to continue in

a seamless and consistent way. To these funders we remain indebted and we look forward to continued support in the years to come. Funds have been received from the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Victims and Survivors Service, BBC Children in Need, Public Health Agency, the Gannet Foundation, the Halifax foundation, Belfast Cathedral Sit-Out, the Mercy Funds and Neighbourhood Renewal.

Looking forward to 2016-17 Aisling has been fortunate to have secured a three-year contract with the Victim and Survivors and the Western Health and Social Care Trust. The Centre also has two more years of BBC Children in Need Funding. However, it is vital that funding streams continue to be explored and applied for on a regular basis while maintaining a focus on The Aisling Centre's core activity.

We take this opportunity to thank everyone who has given to the Centre's work through 'Local Giving' and 'Give Hope' to the many groups who continue to organize fund-raising events in so many ways and to the Sisters of Mercy for the continued use of the premises. We also thank our Accountants McNeary and Rasdale for their advice and expertise.

In conclusion I commend this report and look forward to the Aisling Centre's year ahead with confidence and optimism.

Neville Armstrong, Treasurer

Angela Remembers

Edel gave me a start. Why should I be surprised? A good Boho woman like my mum.

I was based in Mill Street, working on the magazine. I shared a desk with Jim Clarke. Lovely man. As well as designing the magazine I was driving all over the county delivering it in my fathers' little Diahatsu. It was lovely to rediscover Fermanagh, and I met some lovely people.

As well as this I was trying to get my dance movement therapy going and although I did a lot of work in that regard, on looking back at it now it seems that I was flogging a dead horse. I had been so enthusiastic and over the years that enthusiasm got dimmer.

I decided to train as a counsellor in the hope that I might get work. I trained in England and used to travel over there for one weekend in every month and two full weeks in the year, I was able to pay for it as I went along rather than having to have all the money up front at the beginning. This made the whole thing manageable for me. The training lasted three years and it was run in a very experiential way. This was very



demanding but I felt it was the kind of training that I needed.

I got another start then in the Aisling Centre. Theresa was going to America for a year and somehow I was allowed to fill the gap while she was away. After she came back I was kept on. I still don't know how that happened.

What I do know is that the Aisling centre has been very good to me. It gave me a bit of ground under my feet and helped me to earn a living. I can never forget that.

Angela Knight

50 years of AA Monday Night Meeting in Enniskillen



No-one chooses addiction as a way of life. Alcoholism is a disease. A compulsive and progressive disease which can affect physical and mental health and cause untold problems with family life, work and social life. Alcoholism is unstoppable until the Alcoholic is able to recognise and own the problem and, stop drinking.

Choosing to stop drinking sounds like a simple and straightforward solution but, it is no easy task for an alcoholic to stop drinking. It can be a difficult and painful journey and sobriety can be hard to sustain. And this is where AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) comes in, offering friendship and support from others with the same lived experience who understand first-hand the struggles

you are facing. With regular meetings, the 12-step programme and both group and sponsor support, members are helped on the path to recovery.

Established in America in 1935 AA held its first European meeting in Dublin in 1946 and its first meeting in Belfast in 1948. Today AA is a worldwide organisation. The Enniskillen Monday Night AA began meeting in the Erne Hospital in 1966 and is the longest running AA meeting in Co Fermanagh. At a special meeting to celebrate their 50th anniversary group members, friends and invited guests came together in the spirit of fellowship to acknowledge the highs and lows of their own struggle with alcoholism. They also paid tribute to family and friends who had lived with and loved them through the darkest days of their addiction and the long journey to recovery. With guest speakers from AL anon, Belleek AA and Addiction Counsellor Neily Hagan the meeting was a great success and a testament to the tenacity of the many people who through hard work and with the support of AA continue to remain sober.

AA meets in the Aisling Centre 3 evenings per week; Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Meeting are open to anyone struggling with addiction.

For further information contact the Centre on 028 66 325811

ADHD Support Group



Adult ADHD NI

Adult ADHD NI was established in November 2012 to support adults with ADHD in Northern Ireland. The motivation for starting the organisation came from identifying the lack of services for ADHD in Northern Ireland. However as our services developed it became clear that there were no adequate services for both young people and adults. For many young people with ADHD, as they move into adulthood there are many changes that they must learn to cope with, so it is extremely important that adequate support is available through-out the region. Adults with ADHD can find life hard to deal with and don't always have the strategies and insight to be able to cope with the condition.

Our purpose is to support those affected by ADHD, create awareness of ADHD, and to advance the education of professionals/public at a local and national level in Northern Ireland.

Our support groups were established in Enniskillen in the Aisling Centre, on the first Thursday of each month from 7pm until 8.30pm. Everyone affected by ADHD is welcome. We support adults with and without a diagnosis also family members and partners. We support parents of children with ADHD. We also facilitate information sessions and group work to reduce the symptoms of ADHD and support people on an individual basis.

**For further information
contact Niall or Emma on
02866322077/07724916770**

The Twelve Days of ADHD

A Christmas Carol Just For Us

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my
true love sent me

- 12 fingers drumming
- 11 misplaced gift cards
- 10 ADHDers leaping
- 9 inappropriate comments
- 8 unmailed Christmas cards
- 7 temper tantrums
- 6 good stiff drinks
- 5 misplaced things
- 4 mouldy cheese balls
- 3 missing presents
- 2 gifts without tags and a squirrel
in our Christmas tree!



The Health Benefits of Yoga

Western science is starting to provide some concrete clues as to how yoga works to improve health, heal aches and pains and keep sickness at bay. Once you understand them, you'll have even more motivation to step onto your mat.

1. Improves your flexibility -

Improved flexibility is one of the first and most obvious benefits of yoga. You'll also probably notice that aches and pains start to disappear. That's no coincidence.

2. Perfects your posture -

Poor posture can cause back, neck, and other muscle and joint problems.

3. Better your bone health -

It's well documented that weight-bearing exercise strengthens bones and helps ward off osteoporosis.

4. Makes you happier -

Feeling sad? Rise up into a backbend or soar royally into Dancer Pose. One study found that a consistent yoga

practice improved depression and led to a significant increase in serotonin levels.

5. Helps you sleep deeper -

Which means you'll be less tired and stressed and less likely to have accidents.

6. Encourages self-care -

In much of conventional medicine, most patients are passive recipients of care. In yoga, it's what you do for yourself that matters. Yoga gives you the tools to help you change. These results in three things: You get involved in your own care, you discover that your involvement gives you the power to effect change and seeing that you can effect change gives you hope. And, hope itself can be healing.



As you can see there are many benefits to Yoga. Why not come along to a weekly class in the Aisling Centre?

Mondays 6:30pm – 7:30pm
& Thursdays 6:30pm – 7:30pm

For information contact -
Alasdair McKay – 077 76290903

Thursdays 11.30am – 1pm

For information contact -
Jenni Brown 028 8954 1994



Westend Coffee Shop

Café & Outside Catering

Monday – Saturday 8:00am – 5:00pm

For information contact Barry

028 6634 0475 / 079 79975000



Island Artists

“Island Artists” is the working title for a group of people who express their artistic talents using a variety of media, style and subject matter. The group was established in The Aisling Centre around the turn of the century, that is around 17 years ago and although the title or name has changed, several times, the original enthusiasm has not waned.

The Aisling Centre accommodated the group in a warm and entirely suitable upper room, far from the usual image of the cold and sparsely furnished garret. Here a fly on the wall would have witnessed the passing of many happy hours, would have heard the laughter of the members as they shared stories, discussed matters of grave importance and got on with the task in hand. Words of encouragement and advice which travel freely across the room are always accepted in a graceful and grateful manner in the warm and friendly atmosphere. The fly on the wall would have thought, “How lucky I am to be here,” just as we all think.

Island Artists have a benefactor in the person of Declan Muldoon who allows us to display our work in the Westend Cafe, which is also very convenient for tea and coffee after our labours of the afternoon.

We meet twice during the week, on Mondays from 7.30pm to 9.30pm and on Wednesdays from 2.00pm to 4.00 pm; occasionally we invite a tutor or someone with an enthusiasm for different artistic skills to broaden our skills and create new enthusiasm.

Suzanne McElvoy Island Artists





We can all feel down or fed up at times but these feelings usually don't last and are a normal response to problems or difficulties in our lives. However when they don't go away, are more than we can cope with and your ability to carry out our work and have satisfying personal

relationships is affected, it may be depression, the illness.

Depression is very common and may affect as many as 1 in 4 people at some stage in their lives.

Aware offer group support for people affected by Depression or Bipolar Disorder. Through group support sufferers can find information, understanding and support from others who have personal experience of Depression.

Fermanagh support groups meets in the Aisling Centre. The group meets fortnightly on Tuesday evenings from 7.30pm.

Community Hub Services / Programmes

Counselling Services

ZEST – Healing the Hurt

SHIP – Counselling and support for people who self-harm.

For information contact your GP or contact ZEST on 028 71 266999 / www.zestni.org

Support Groups and Networks

AA - 3 meetings per week

For information contact the Aisling Centre – 028 6632 5811

ADHD - Adult support group

1st Thursday of the Month 7:00pm – 9:00pm

For information contact – Niall Greene or Emma Weaver
t: 07729618563 | 07724916770 |
e: niaadhd@gmail.com

AWARE- A self-help support group-for people who are affected by depression or bipolar disorder (manic depression).
Alternative Tuesdays 7:30pm – 9:00pm
For information contact - 0845 120 2961 - e: help@aware-ni.org

Cherish Sure Start - Crèche

For information contact Maeve Linton
– 028 6632 3153 or 028 6862 1970

Escapists - Support group for carers

Wednesday morning's 10:30am – 1:00pm
For information contact – Clare McGovern 078 3011 7766

Forget Me Not - Support group for

people bereaved by suicide
1st Monday of the Month 7:30pm – 9:00pm
For information contact – Colette Cullen 078 2653 5199

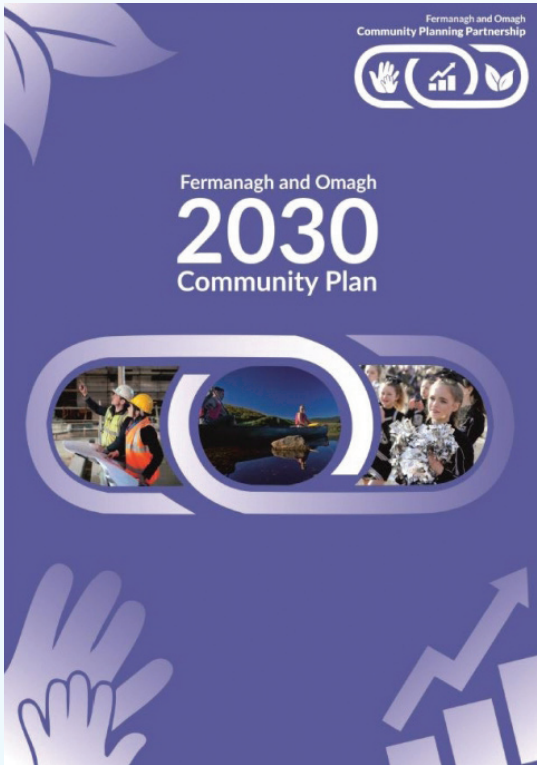
SWEDES (South West Enabling Deaf Encouraging Sign) - Deaf, hard of hearing,

hearing and signing social network
2nd Tuesday of the month 7:30pm – 9:00pm
For information contact – Joan Thompson 028 6632 5811

More than 50 different organisations have used Aisling Centre as base from which to deliver programmes & services we thank them sincerely for their on-going support

Fermanagh Omagh 2030 Community Plan

Fermanagh Omagh 2030 Community Plan

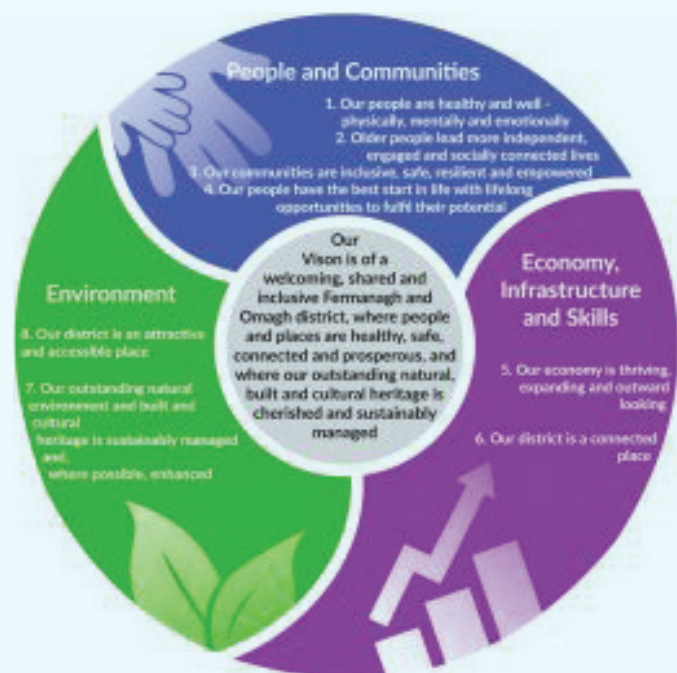


The Plan - is the overarching Community Plan for the Fermanagh and Omagh district, bringing together the knowledge, expertise and collective resources of a wide range of partners across the public, private and community and voluntary sectors - all working towards a single agreed vision for the area. The delivery of the plan is facilitated by the Lead Partners, Fermanagh Omagh District Council

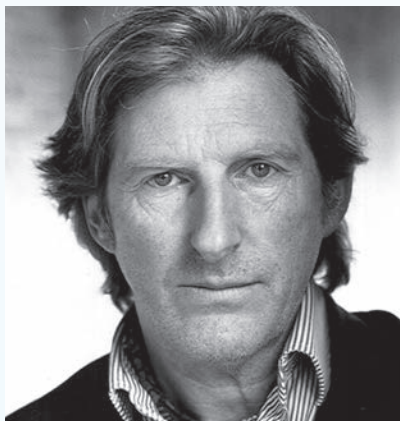
Community Planning Themes and Outcomes

Aisling Centre are one of the Community Voluntary Sector Forum members and one of the community representatives on the People and Places action.

Full Community plan available to download from FODC website or Aisling Centre Facebook page.



Meet The Team



Adrian Dunbar **Patron**

Board of Directors

Ann McDermott..... **Chairperson**

Alison Annan **Vice-Chairperson**

Mary Delacy **Secretary**

Neville Armstrong **Treasurer**

Directors

Aideen McGinley

Edel Bannon

Iain Kennedy

Mary Delacy

Pat Cassidy

Roberta Hamilton

Tim Morrison

Staff

Bridie Sweeney... Centre Co-ordinator

John Bennett..... Clinical Co-ordinator

Patricia Kelly

Admin/Facilitates Manager

Clinical Team

Sessional Psychotherapists

Angela Knight

Aine Wilson

Brenda Wynne-McKervey

Ann Farrell

Clare Love

Anna Frith

Edel McGuinness

Helen Murphy

Jackie Stretch

Holly Reid

Mary Carroll

Joni Crone

Nuala McGovern

Karen Whaley

Sharon Fitzpatrick

Nicholas May

Teresa Mckenna

Administration Team Group Facilitators

Gareth Kennedy

Aine Wilson

Joan Thompson

Mary Conway

Jimmy Britton

Mary Daly

Marie Greene

Sessional CT

Tracey Britton

Sheila Johnston

Volunteers

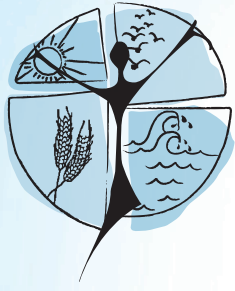
Adeline Gallagher, Bronagh Reilly,

Kate McArdle, Lauren Simmons,

Margaret Corrigan, Regina Henderson,

Rita Murphy, Katie O'Donovan

We would also like to acknowledge the role of our friends, too many to mention individually, who play an invaluable role in supporting the awareness raising and fund raising activities of the Aisling Centre.



Aisling
centre
Hope Healing Growth

**When you need someone to talk to...
We are here to listen**



Give Hope

Give 50p a Day

For 50p a day - less than the price of a pint of milk or a bar of chocolate - you can make a huge difference and help us to provide much needed services in a community where there is an ever growing need.

**Your local Counselling, Psychotherapy
and Well-Being Service**

www.theaislingcentre.com

Help us to help others

Resources available do not meet demand for services.

In the last year Aisling Centre provided an average of 100 sessions of counselling per week.

We need your help to sustain this much needed service.

Give Hope

Give 50p a Day

In difficult times and faced with so many important causes, it can be hard to decide who to support. By choosing to give a regular donation to the Aisling Centre, you can make a huge difference in the life of a person in distress or despair.



Over the year, your 50p per day could provide counselling to help save a life.

How will we use your gift?

We will make your 50p count. Every penny you donate will be used to support service provision.

Can't make a regular gift?

Other ways to help us offer this much needed local service e.g.:-

- a one off donation
- donate in celebration e.g. in lieu of birthday gifts, wedding favours etc...
- a bequest in your will
- nominate us as your work place charity
- undertake a challenge eg sponsored walk

To give please contact

Aisling Centre

37, Darling Street, Enniskillen
Co Fermanagh, BT74 7DP

Telephone: 028 66 325811

Email: info@theaislingcentre.com



Aisling
centre
Hope Healing Growth

www.theaislingcentre.com