Literacy and wellbeing

This seminar is organised by NALA, ETBI and AONTAS as part of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) initiative.

Speakers:

• Dr Inez Bailey, National Adult Literacy Agency
• Professor Niall Moyna, Dublin City University
• Dr Anne Cleary, University College Dublin
• Dr Caroline Martin, City of Dublin Education and Training Board
• Saorlaith Ni Bhroin, AONTAS
• Clare McMahon, Education and Training Boards Ireland
Welcome and introduction to health literacy

Dr Inez Bailey, CEO, NALA
Outline

Health Literacy in Ireland
- Definition of health literacy
- Why is it important
- Government Commitment: Healthy Ireland + FET Strategy

NALA’s role
- Promoting health literacy in health and education settings
- Evolving responses and resources

Implementation
- Strategies to promote health literacy
What is health literacy and numeracy?

Health literacy and numeracy has two elements:

Health services communicate clearly and take account of possible health literacy and numeracy needs.

People understand health information correctly and can make an informed decision.

Your treatment is...

I can’t believe I have...

It is about mutual understanding
10.3% had inadequate health literacy
29.7% had problematic health literacy
Limited health literacy rate 40%
Adult Skills Survey 2013

1 in 6 people have a literacy difficulty in Ireland

18% of Irish adults are at or below level 1 of literacy – 521,550 people

25% of Irish adults are at or below level 1 of numeracy – 754,000 people

1 in 4 people have a problem with numeracy

15 out of 24 countries

18 out of 24 countries
Example

How much sugar is in this pot of yogurt?
Why is health literacy important?

One in five Irish people are not fully confident that they understand the information they receive from their healthcare professional (HCP).

43% of people would only sometimes ask their HCP to clarify the information if they did not understand something they had said.

One in 10 people have taken the wrong dose of medication because they didn’t understand the instructions.

66% of people have difficulty understanding signs and directions in Irish hospitals.

2007 Irish Health Literacy Research (MSD)
Why is health literacy important?

People with limited literacy and numeracy skills

- Have lower adherence to medical regimens
- Have poorer understanding of treatment
- Report poorer overall health
- Are less likely to make use of screening
- Are more likely to be hospitalised
- Present in later stages of disease

Reference: Rima Rudd, NALA Health and Literacy Conference, 2002
NALA’s HL role

Promoting health literacy in policy & practice

Linking health and education settings

Well now! A literacy friendly health and wellbeing course
Government Commitment

Healthy Ireland is a new national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of our country over the coming generation (2013 – 2025). Supported by HI Council.

It contains the first ever Government commitment to health literacy:

“Address and prioritise health literacy in developing future policy, educational and information interventions”

Framework is available here: [http://bit.ly/1i1tFCv](http://bit.ly/1i1tFCv)
4. Health Literacy

**Action 45** – Promote and provide national tools for training, resource development, and health literacy audits in services to raise standards of health literacy among patients, service users, and carers.

You can download the HSE’s plan on this link:
Strategies to promote health literacy

- **Capacity building / awareness raising**
  - Train healthcare workers at all levels
  - Use plain English, numbers and speaking
  - Use the right medium to communicate
  - Produce tailored, targeted programmes to promote health literacy

- **Knowledge development**
  - Develop the idea of health literacy
  - Improve how we measure health literacy levels and promote that information
  - Identify best practices in health literacy
  - Conduct more cost benefit studies of health literacy

- **Building partnerships and cooperation**
  - Integrating health literacy into all national health campaigns and screening projects – cancer screening
  - Development of strategic partnerships
In 2015 NALA, South Dublin County Council and An Cosán came together to design, develop and deliver a literacy friendly programme on health and wellbeing for older people. The programme promotes health and wellbeing among older people in a way that helps overcome literacy barriers. Topics covered in the course included Being active; Eating well; Communicating in health settings and using technology. The programme was shortlisted for the AONTAS Star Awards 2017.

NALA published the Well Now! guide in May 2017. This guide is intended for adult literacy and community education services who wish to provide literacy friendly courses on health and wellbeing for adults.
Conclusion

• New (ish) concept in Ireland
• Most activity to date at practice level
• New policy context in health and education – action plans exist in HSE and FET
• Challenge remains how this will be realised within the HSE and FET strategy roll outs
• Lobbying for policy and its implementation is a trajectory and needs to be critically followed
Literacy & Wellbeing
5th May, 2017

Health, Wellbeing & the Learning Environment

Dr. Anne Cleary
Research Programme: Funding Agencies

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

Teagasc
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

NDA

UCD DUBLIN
Education is good for your health!
Transformative Effect of Education

- Personal
- Emotional
- Structural
The Impact of Education

• Knowledge & personal development
• Education & Educating
• Performance & engagement
• Person based but societal impact
• Receptivity of adult learners
Emotional Literacy

- Education:
  - Building frameworks
  - Linking concepts & facts
  - Locating oneself socially
  - Understanding fluidity of identities
- Understanding emotions
  - Baseline for good personal & societal mental health
- Educators can facilitate emotional literacy
Socio-Emotional Health

- Social basis to health and wellbeing
- Gender differentials in mortality, morbidity & wellbeing
- Gendered discourse of suicide
  - Causation: *She died for love, he died for glory*
  - Process: Emotional predisposition and rational action
- The painful reality of suicidal action
  - Feelings and performance
  - Constraint, surveillance, narrowing options
Figure 1 Suicide Rate per 100,000 populations by gender 1980-2012.

Source: National Suicide Research Foundation
Educating for Health & Wellbeing

- Incorporate emotional awareness & understanding
- Use methods which facilitate emotional understanding
- Observe, reflect, revise
- Avoid gendered, binary, narratives of emotion
Re-Imagining Men & Masculinities

- Masculinity identity, emotional regimes, cultural context
- The complexity of men & masculinities
- Education - the freedom to think, to know, to feel
- Giving men the space to feel
Suicidal Behaviour

- Changing pattern of suicidal behaviour in Ireland
- Males predominate re completed suicide but rates of DSH amongst men increasing significantly
- Females have higher rates of DSH but gap is narrowing
- Rural environment less protective than urban
Deliberate Self Harm: Male, Female & Total Rates 2002-12
Suicidal Behaviour: Facts

• Lower SES categories/men more at risk
• Suicide rarely impulsive action
• Non-Disclosure key:
  – Disclosing problems is weakness; being a man is about strength, coping, certainty
• Lacking the knowledge, language & space to express
• Fearing difference
• The toxic mix: Distress, non-disclosure, Drink and drugs
Distress, Concealment & Alcohol

- Increasing levels of distress, self-medicating with alcohol
- Attempting to maintain semblance of ‘normality’
- Panic as options perceived to be narrowing
There were times where you just wouldn’t get out of bed, you know that way. Just feeling isolated all the time, wanting to scream and shout but you can't say anything. (Subject 49)

I felt trapped. I didn’t know what to do. That was the only think I could think of doing. It built up over a long time. It changed the way you look at things. Everything was kind of hopeless, grief. (Subject 28)

I was drinking a lot to combat that (anxiety) because I was self-medicating and I didn’t even know I had a problem with drink like. I didn’t have a problem with drink like, I had a problem with anxiety but I used to drink a lot to socialise and, it just basically, just to function normally, I used to take a few drinks like, you know, to go out and to socialise with people. (Rural Subject, 20s)
Educating, Prevention & Intervention

- Factoring in Wellbeing & emotional literacy
- Everyone is vulnerable to distress, mental health challenges
- Normalise problems to prevent abnormal reactions
- Educational environments/teachers key
- Creating the right environment for education and for wellbeing
Developing a Competent Community*

- Proactive approach to wellbeing & mental health
- Ensure staff are trained to recognise & refer
- Support staff
- Connect to services

*Professor John Kalafat, Department of Psychology, Rutgers University
Supporting the Mental Health of Adult Learners

CAROLINE MARTIN
CHIEF PSYCHOLOGIST, CDETB
Understanding the Mental Health of Adult Learners

MENTAL HEALTH

‘A state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.’

‘not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’


RESILIENCE

The ability of the individual to handle various challenges.

“Bounce-back-ability”
‘YOU CAN’T STOP THE WAVES BUT YOU CAN LEARN TO SURF.’
(JON KABAT-ZINN)
Disease Burden across Age

- Other
- Musculoskeletal
- Injuries
- Chronic respiratory
- Neurological & sense
- Mental disorders
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular

(Age: 0-80) (McGorry, 2007)
Risk Factors in Mental Health (WHO, 2012)

- Communication Deficits
- Caring for Chronically Ill
- Child Abuse & Neglect
- Chronic Pain
- Emotional Immaturity
- Failure at School
- Low Social Class
- Complications Around Birth
- Substance Misuse
- Exposure to Aggression or Violence
- Exposure to Trauma
- Family Conflict or Disorganisation
- Loneliness
- Medical Illness
- Parental Mental Illness
- Personal Loss/Bereavement
- Poor Work Skills & Habits
- Sensory Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities
- Lacking Social Skills
- Stressful Life Events
- Learning Difficulties
- Parental Substance Misuse
Adult Resilience Programme

• Adult Intervention programme
• 5 sessions of 2 -2.5 hours (flexible)
  • 5 techniques
• Based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
• Aims to reduce anxiety and depression
• Promotes positive mental health
• Evidence based
  • Less affected by stress
  • Able to achieve long term goals with greater ease
  • Less anxious in approach to life
• Endorsed by WHO, DES.
Student Support Teams

Care Teams

Student Support Teams

Support Teams?

Trans-disciplinary Teams?

Integrated Model of Support
- Identification of concern.
- Employ/review procedures
- Reflect
- Action Plan

Working alongside Colleagues
- Learning from & contributing to learning of peers
- Increases professional development
- Increases self-efficacy
- Reduces likelihood of burnout

Recognition & Value
- Setting
- Refreshments

• Frequency
• Communication
• Duration
• Composition
Critical Incidents

• “Any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school/centre” (NEPS, 2016).

• Consider impact of cumulative stress on staff as a predictor of a Critical Incident.

• Critical Incident Planning & establishing a Critical Incident Team.

• CISM – Critical Incident Stress Management.
Protective Factors in Mental Health (WHO, 2012)

ABILITY TO COPE WITH STRESS
ADAPTABILITY
AUTONOMY
EARLY STIMULATION & BONDING
GOOD PARENTING
SOCIAL SUPPORT OF FAMILY

SOCIAL SUPPORT OF FRIENDS
LITERACY
EXERCISE
FEELING SAFE
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
POSITIVE TUTOR-STUDENT INTERACTION

SOCIAL SKILLS
SELF-ESTEEM
FEELINGS OF MASTERY & CONTROL
SKILLS FOR LIFE
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL GROWTH

‘ONE GOOD ADULT’ ➔ ONE WELL ADULT
Thank You!
LEARNING TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

2015 - 2017
LEARNER VOICE

ACTIVITY 1
INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE

ACTIVITY

Find your education & training options in sixty seconds

My age is
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRACTITIONERS

ACTIVITY 3
SHARE BEST PRACTICE AT SEMINARS
Harnessing the Power of a Story
ACTIVITY 5

ELECTRONIC PLATFORM FOR ADULT LEARNING IN EUROPE

Using EPALE to host the documentation from the PAG
Sharing of best practices on EPALE
Sharing of blog articles on EPALE
TRANSNATIONAL VISITS
Thank you

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