

Press Release 09/09/15: Immediate Release

College of Psychiatrists of Ireland Calls for Increased Frontline Mental Health Resources

On World Suicide Prevention Day, 10th of September 2015, College of Psychiatrists of Ireland stresses the importance of reaching out and saving lives.

Without 24/7 access to multi-disciplinary mental health assessments and interventions, preventable loss of life can occur, this is not acceptable.

Dr John Hillery, Director of Communications and Public Education of College of Psychiatrists of Ireland says; *'Suicide is preventable and help is available, but further support through education and service provision is needed'*.

The College reiterates the need for increased **frontline mental health resources** to ensure professional support is available nationwide 24 hours a day and seven days a week to people of all ages experiencing psychological distress. Greater investment in education aimed at prevention, recognition and resolution of personal mental health problems will also have a positive impact on the occurrence of suicide and suicidal behaviour in our communities.

In the national policy document *A Vision for Change* it is stated that arrangements should be made for the provision of 24/7 multi-disciplinary crisis intervention for those in psychiatric distress. We know that many who attempt suicide have sought help unsuccessfully in the preceding period. The lack of 24/7 access to multi-disciplinary mental health assessments and interventions still affect the rights of people in mental distress.

Dr. Ciaran Corcoran, Chairman of the **Faculty of Adult Psychiatry** of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland says: *'Suicide can be prevented -it is important for those experiencing suicidal thoughts to reach out to family, friends, supports in the community or professionals. Mental health problems can be treated.'*

Dr. Mia Mc Laughlin Old Age Psychiatrist and Chair of the **Faculty of Psychiatry of Later Life** emphasises the importance of acknowledging older people in their time of crisis: *'many older people develop mental ill health after a lifetime of good health but there is often an ageist view that it is 'acceptable' to feel depressed given a person's age and circumstances. We all should remember that while loss events and physical aging are inevitable, the mental ill health experienced is very treatable.'*

Dr. Helen Keeley Chair of the **Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** commented saying *'The inadequate resources that have been allocated towards Mental Health Provision are now well recognised. As a society, we seem not to value supporting our mental health as much as other developed countries with less of our budget being allocated in this direction. This is a pity, as the good news regarding suicide prevention is that there are many straightforward and simple things that have been proven to be effective in reducing suicidal behaviour in young people. A general mental health programme delivered in schools has been shown to reduce self-harm'*.

ENDS

Dr John Hillery, Director of Communications and Public Education, is available for comment or interview on World Suicide Prevention Day, 2015.

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