



The Family Voice

Guth an Teaghlach
Family Support Network Newsletter



WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the fourth edition of The Family Voice. In this edition you will find information on the launch of the Drug and Alcohol Family Support Network- Western Region, an upcoming conference to be hosted by the Specialist Support Agencies, race relations training, information on benzodiazepines and an overview of a report by Pavee Point exploring the use of benzodiazepines in the Travelling community. *Sadie Grace*, FSN Coordinator.

SPECIALIST SUPPORT AGENCY CONFERENCE

There are five Specialist Support Agencies, including the Family Support Network, that provide services to the 107 Family Resource Centres throughout the country. The five Specialist Support Agencies support the Family Resource Centres with their work in the following areas:

Blue Drum	Community arts
Women's Aid	Working to eliminate violence against women
Pavee Point	National Travellers organisation
Family Support Network	Supporting family members living with drug use
DESSA	Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency

Working in conjunction with fellow Specialist Support Agencies the Family Support Network has organised a one day conference for all staff and volunteers of Family Resource Centres throughout the country. Details of the conference are as follows:

Theme: Diversity, the Strength of Your Community?

Date: Wednesday, 21st September 2011

Venue: Gresham Hotel, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1

Time: 10:00a.m.–4:00p.m. (Light lunch served at 1:00p.m.)

Guest speakers will include:

Anastasia Crickley (Head of the department of Applied Social studies in NUI Maynooth)

Liz Sullivan, (Assistant Principle of the Family Support Agency)

The morning session will give delegates an insight into the present and future work of the Specialist Support Agencies. In the afternoon each Specialist Support Agency will facilitate a workshop for one hour. Attendees will be able to choose which Agency workshop they would like to attend, this choice will be made at registration in the morning.

If you are a staff member or volunteer working in a Family Resource Centre and would like to attend the conference, please contact Siobhán at the numbers below.



CONTACT DETAILS

Family Support Network, 16 Talbot Street, Dublin 1

Ph: 01-8365168 / Fax: 01-8747156 / E-mail: info@fsn.ie / www.fsn.ie

FSN MEETING WITH MIGRANT LED ORGANISATIONS

Sadie Grace and Irene Quinn introduced the work of the FSN to MyMind which is located in Ranelagh, Dublin. MyMind is a therapeutic centre that provides a variety of services to Polish, Eastern European migrants and to Irish people living with addiction and other mental health issues.

Irene, FSN integration worker, also recently met with CKU, the Centre for Addiction Counselling which is supported and housed within the Coolmine Therapeutic Community in Lord Edward Street Dublin.

Reaching out to migrant-led organisations continues to provide the FSN with an opportunity to offer support to migrant families living with drug use.



MyMind, May 2011;
Marta Biczowska, Psychologist,
Sadie Grace (FSN), Irene Quinn (FSN)

RACE RELATIONS TRAINING



Irene Quinn, Integration worker, with the FSN will run **Race Relations Training** for family support workers and family support facilitators beginning September 2011. The training will comprise of one day's training on race relations and the meaning of race relations within the working environment of participants. This training should be viewed as staff/volunteer development.

The training will provide practical tools in how to begin to build connections with local migrant led organisations and groups that are appropriate and beneficial to both the majority and minority cultures. At the end of the days training, participants will be able to develop an integration strategy for the organisation/group they are involved in.

Race Relations Training is about educating people about other people. 'Race' is often viewed as a discredited term. Participants will explore the meaning of 'race' and how the term has been, and is used to maintain prejudice and discrimination for example through the use of stereotypes and labels.

Participants' will draw on their own experience and knowledge of discrimination, privilege, power, difference and diversity. This will lead participants' to develop a clear and working knowledge of the meaning and practice of these terms in participants' own lives and beyond.

As part of this educational day participants will be invited to explore racism in the context of failures in the society within which we live.

The following topics will be covered in the Race Relations Training

'Race' and Racism	Power and Privilege
Political Implications	Diversity and Difference
Myths and Assumptions	Integration Strategies

For further information please contact Irene at irene@fsn.ie or phone 087 681 0140. An invitation to avail of this training will also be distributed through e-mail.



THANK YOU

Sadie Grace, on behalf of the Family Support Network, would like to thank Geraldine Halligan and Ina Gibson for their kind and generous donation to the Family Support Network. Geraldine and Ina volunteer their time to support family members affected by drug and alcohol use in Bangor and have worked tirelessly in this regard over many years.

DRUG AWARENESS

This article was written by Trevor Bissett, Community Awareness of Drugs on behalf of the FSN.

Mothers little helper's have evolved from the barbiturates that were common when the rolling stones sang about them during the 1960's to what are today called Benzodiazepines. Popularly known as Benzos, these drugs are sedatives which work by slowing down the operation of the brain, which results in relaxation, sleepiness and reduced anxiety. Some common Benzos include Valium (diazepam), Rohypnol and Librium.

Benzodiazepines have many uses ranging from the treatment of anxiety disorders to insomnia. They are also used in some cases for alcohol withdrawal. They are not recommended to be used for long periods, especially periods more than a few weeks. There are many side effects to the use of these sedatives, including drowsiness which is one of the reasons why people are always advised not to drive when taking them.

Although these drugs have many valid uses, an article released in 2010 by the Irish Health Research Board, showed that the number of people entering treatment for problem Benzodiazepine use rose from 1054 to 1719 between 2003 and 2008. This increase highlights the major risk factor associated with these chemicals, that is, dependence. The highly addictive nature of these substances and how they interact with other substances such as heroin or alcohol makes them especially dangerous.

It is ironic that benzodiazepines greatest asset are also their greatest liability. They are widely regarded as being effective for short term use and they work to reduce symptoms quickly. However, this powerful combination of effectiveness and fast action also means that they are liable to lead to dependence.

Or to put it as Mick Jagger did almost 50 years ago;

"Life's just much too hard today
I hear ev'ry mother say
The pursuit of happiness just seems a bore
And if you take more of those, you will get an overdose
No more running for the shelter of a mother's little helper
They just helped you on your way, through your busy dying day"



EXPLORING BENZODIAZEPINE USE WITHIN THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

TIME FOR ACTION

Pavee Point Drugs Programme recently produced a report examining the extent of benzodiazepine use amongst the Traveller community following consultation with local Traveller organisations. The report highlights a worrying level of dependence on benzodiazepines as a mechanism to cope with various life circumstances with the issue being experienced in both rural and urban settings. A further point of concern is that over half of all respondents felt that the level of use amongst Travellers had increased during the past two years.

The report examines the prevalence and improper use of benzodiazepines by Travellers as well as the prescribing practices of clinicians. Alarming, each of the findings contravenes the guidelines published in the Report of the Benzodiazepine Committee in 2002.

The findings can be summarised as follows:

Improper Use:

- High level of self-medicating - adjusting daily dose depending on mood; taking more to feel better quicker
- Taking a month supply of medication over a much shorter period of time
- Sharing prescribed medication with others who appear to have the same symptoms
- Continuing the use of alcohol with prescribed medication

Prescribing practices:

- Full medical history not taken prior to prescribing benzodiazepines
- Large quantities dispensed at one time
- Treatment not reviewed prior to re-dispensing
- Patient not informed of proper use of medication
- Alternative therapies not discussed



PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLERS CENTRE

Following the report, Pavee Point Drugs Programme organised a national event with Traveller organisations and drug support services. The actions suggested at that event will be added to the original report and forwarded to Roisin Shortall, Minister of State with responsibility for Primary Care as well as the Drugs Advisory Group. To view the report go to www.pavee.ie/drugs

LAUNCH OF THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK – WESTERN REGION

On May 26th the Drug & Alcohol Family Support Network-Western Region was launched in the Clayton Hotel in Galway. The network was established in November 2010 and is made up of members of existing peer led support groups in the region and relevant agencies working in the field. The network, its new website and informational brochures were launched on the day and speakers included Sadie Grace of the National Family Support Network, a member of a local family support group and a member of the regional network.

The network aims to:

- Support local drug and alcohol family support groups in the region and
- Raise awareness of the need for support for individuals and family members affected by another's drug and alcohol use

Network objectives include:

- The development of local groups by advertising and promoting the groups within the region
- Identifying training needs and opportunities
- Helping groups obtain funding
- Ensuring the needs of family members are recognised and met
- Providing support to new groups and those wishing to establish groups



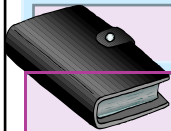
Support groups are currently running in Castlebar, Castlerea, Galway City, Tuam and Ballinsaloe. A number of other areas are currently in the process of establishing groups; these include Doughiska, Roscam & Ardaun and Connemara.

For further information on the regional network and local family support groups in the Western Region see the network website www.dafsn.ie. The network is funded by the Western Region



Linda Murphy, Liam O Loughlin, Orla Walshe & Sadie Grace at the launch of the Drug & Alcohol Family Support Network Western Region.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Event	Date	Time	Venue	Contact
Donore Community Drug Team Memorial Event	01.09.11	8:00p.m.	St. Teresa's Church, Donore Avenue, Dublin 8	Kay McEnroe, (01) 416 4339
Information session on Ballymun Family Support Group (service providers)	07.09.11	12:30pm	Axis Centre, Ballymun, Dublin 9	Siobhán Maher, (01) 8365 168
Information session for the public on Ballymun Family Support Group (open to the public)	14.09.11	7:00pm	Axis Centre, Ballymun, Dublin 9	Siobhán Maher, (01) 8365 168
Specialist Support Agency Conference	21.09.11	10:00am	The Gresham Hotel, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1	Siobhán Maher, (01) 8365 168
Limerick Service of Commemoration and Hope 2011	06.10.11	7:00p.m.	St. Augustinian Church, O'Connell Street, Limerick	Sorcha Keogan, (061) 459 260
Tallaght Hope and Remembrance Service 2011	20.10.11	7:30pm	Tallaght Rehabilitation Project, Kiltalown House, Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24	Grace Hill, (01) 466 4243

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