



Recovery & Well-Being Education
in Mental Health

A circular inset photograph shows three women laughing joyfully. The woman in the center has curly dark hair and is wearing a bright yellow sweater over a white turtleneck. The woman to her left is partially visible, also laughing. The woman to her right has reddish-brown hair and is wearing glasses and a grey sweater. The background is softly blurred.

Annual Report

July 2023 - June 2024



Contents

03	Our Acknowledgements	50	Recovery Education HSE Day Services
05	Message from Head of Service	54	Training HSE Staff
06	Executive Summary	55	Introduction to WRAP Acute & Community
11	Message from ARIES Manager	56	Training Community Partners
12	Our Year in Numbers	57	Virtual Café Coffee & Connection
14	Our Team	58	Other Events
16	Our Vision & Mission	60	Spotlight: Digital Mental Health Conference
18	Why We Do What We Do	62	Development & Innovation
19	Our Stakeholders	63	Online Digital Self-Paced Learning
20	Quality Assurance	65	Spotlight: Perinatal Mental Health Partnership
21	Our Development Cycle	66	Perinatal Self Care - Taking Care of Me Programme
23	Recovery Education Community	67	Spotlight: Occupational Therapy Partnership
26	Online Community Workshops	68	Guide to Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery
31	In-Person Community Workshops	69	Getting the Best from My Mental Health Appointment
36	Hunt Museum Partnership	71	Live & Recorded Webinars
39	Recovery Education Acute Units	72	Our Messaging Social Media
45	Partnerships in Training 3rd Level	74	A Year of Engagement
46	Recovery Education Closed Community Groups	76	Engagement Year in Numbers
		78	Engagement Some Highlights



Acknowledgements

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Maria Bridgeman, Integrated Healthcare Area Manager, HSE Mid West

Nuala Kelly, Head of Service, HSE Mid West Mental Health

Senior Management Team, HSE Mid West Mental Health

The Staff of the Mid West Mental Health Services

HSE Mental Health Engagement and Recovery

Mental Health Ireland

Communications, HSE Mid West

Mid West Communities

Our Community Partners



Message from the **Head of Service**



I am delighted to welcome you to the Mid West ARIES Annual Report July 2023 - June 2024.

This past year has been one of remarkable growth and achievement for our HSE Mid West recovery education service Mid West ARIES. The service has once again demonstrated its continued commitment to empowering individuals on their journey toward mental wellness, equipping them with the tools, knowledge, and support necessary to lead fulfilling lives, whatever their personal circumstances. All with the key message that *recovery from mental health challenges is possible*.

I am particularly proud that the service has delivered on its ambitious expansion plan, extending its reach to include HSE Day Services, while bringing an "Introduction to WRAP" to those most in need. In addition, the ongoing training of our mental health staff in the principles and practice of co-production provides staff with the understanding and tools required to support their recovery focused practice. Meanwhile, key partnerships with Mental Health Occupational Therapy and the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team has proved incredibly rewarding with innovative projects being developed in response to identified needs; a great example of integration, collaboration and co-production for service improvement.

I also commend the team for their dedication to community development, as they strengthen their community partnerships and build new working relationships across the region with key partnerships such as the County Council Libraries and Family Resource Centres.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the team on their awards success for their online self-paced course "*Understanding Acute Mental Health Services for Families, Carers & Supporters*", awarded a "commended" citation by the HSE Excellence Awards 2023 and the HRB Digital Mental Health Conference 2023 Implementation Award. Given this year's achievements, I look forward to the team building on these successes.

Nuala Kelly

Head of Service - Mental Health

Executive Summary

Mid West ARIES is dedicated to supporting individuals, families, carers and supporters, and communities on their journey toward mental health recovery through education and skills development. This annual report for the period July 2023 to June 2024 provides an overview of our achievements and strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing our impact and expanding access to recovery education in the Mid West .



Year on Year Expansion

As a fully hybrid recovery education service we are committed to providing multiple, accessible learning pathways for those wanting to access and engage with recovery education. From in-person and online community workshops, to delivering recovery education workshops in the Acute Psychiatric Units and HSE Day Services, through to online self-directed learning, our aim is to meet people “where they are at”, promoting the key message that *recovery from mental health challenges is possible*. With the support of our HSE partners, including the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team and the Mid West Mental Health Occupational Therapy Service, we have developed and delivered first of their kind innovations in learning including a Perinatal Self Care Workbook (printed, online companion course and audiobook version) and the Online Guide to Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

EXPANSION OF RECOVERY EDUCATION – ENHANCING OUR OUTREACH & ACCESSIBILITY

Once again, this year saw a strong demand and interest in recovery education with unprecedented growth recorded. We are delighted to announce that this year saw a substantial increase in both the number of events delivered by our team and the resulting engagements. Overall, we hosted **402 events**, (*an increase of 12% on the previous year*) with **9,767 engagements** (*an increase of 69%*). This is as a direct result of a strategic decision made at the beginning of the year to expand our work streams while strengthening our partnerships and establishing new working relationships. This collaborative approach to delivering recovery education across the region has expanded our network and allowed for a more integrated approach. This directly benefits our learners as recovery education is now embedded right across the Mid West Mental Health Service.



Key drivers of our expansion included:

- » Increasing the number of in-person community workshops facilitated (up 19%)
- » Increasing the number of 3rd Level Training inputs offered to students (up 100%)
- » Increasing the number of self-paced learning resources (up 125%)
- » Increasing the number of additional events hosted (29%)
- » Strengthening and expanding our partnership network (6 new Community Partners and 4 new HSE Mental Health Day Services Partners)
- » Adding new work streams:
 - HSE Day Services (9 Workshops)
 - Closed Groups for Community Partners (6 Workshops)
 - Training for Community Partners (4 Training Sessions)
 - Introduction to WRAP workshops Training – now delivered in both Acute Psychiatric Units and Day Hospital settings by HSE staff trained as Mid West ARIES Facilitators (34 Introduction to WRAP Workshops)

Recovery Education in the Community

Our in-person workshops play a crucial role in our outreach strategy, providing participants with the opportunity to connect directly with their peers, our experienced facilitators, and evidence based learning content in a safe, supportive, and interactive learning environment. **This year, we successfully delivered 38 workshops across 10 different locations in Limerick, Clare, and North Tipperary, resulting in a total of 389 engagements, an 18% increase from the previous year.** Additionally, we established valuable new partnerships with Kilmallock Library, Thurles Library, Foynes Library, and Killaloe Family Resource Centre. We are particularly excited to strengthen our collaborations with both the Library and Family Resource Centre networks, which will enhance our ability to serve the community effectively.

Recovery Education for Closed Community Groups

We had a number of requests from Community Groups to run closed workshops for marginalised groups who may find it challenging to participate in an open community workshop. We met this need by facilitating **6 workshops to 4 closed community groups** including Adapt House, Headway and the NLN Focus Group with a total of **43 engagements**.



Recovery Education Online

Our online workshops remained highly popular throughout the year, with **70 workshops** delivered and **471 engagements** recorded. Offering recovery education online enhances accessibility and reach, especially for individuals who may face barriers to attending in-person sessions due to their location, work or caregiving responsibilities, mental health challenges, disabilities, or limited access to transport.

Recovery Education in the Acute Psychiatric Setting

We consider the delivery of recovery education workshops twice weekly in both the Acute Psychiatric Units in Ennis and University Hospital Limerick to be our flagship service. As a result, we prioritise these workshops on our yearly plan. This year we delivered **164 workshops** in total with **1,427 engagements**. We are proud to report that this is the highest number of engagements for in-person workshops across all work streams.

Recovery Education in HSE Day Services New!

As part of our strategic plan to extend our reach and meet the needs of potentially marginalised populations in the region, this year we saw the first delivery of recovery education workshops in HSE Day Services. With the support of our trained mental health staff facilitators, we delivered **9 workshops** across 4 HSE Day Services with a total of **66 engagements**.

Coffee & Connection New!

Our connection café for residents in Acute Psychiatric Units and HSE residences transitioned into the "real world" this year with several in-person events held at the Ennis Acute Psychiatric Unit. These gatherings, guided by our Recovery Education Facilitators, offered essential opportunities for connection. Over the year, we hosted **8 events**, resulting in **135 engagements**.

Introduction to WRAP New!

The WRAP (*Wellness Recovery Action Plan*) has long been a tool used to support mental health recovery. This year our team reimaged the WRAP programme to make it more accessible to those residents in our Acute Units and HSE Residences. Delivered by our trained HSE Staff Facilitators, **34 workshops** were hosted with **228 engagements**.

3rd LEVEL

Our 3rd level partnerships with the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College are vital to the promotion and long term sustainability of recovery education. This year we doubled our efforts hosting **6 training events** (up 100%) for Allied Health students, NCHDs, Paramedics, Mental Health Nursing Students and Psychology Students with **258 engagements** (up 112%).



Recovery Education - Online Digital Self-Paced Learning

Since 2020 we have steadily built an online portfolio of accessible self-paced courses and resources. These courses offer individuals self-directed learning opportunities providing a flexible, accessible way to learn skills and strategies to support their mental health recovery. This year we added **5 additional resources** including:

- » **Getting the Best from My Mental Health Appointment** **New!**
- » **My Perinatal Self Care - Taking Care of Me** **New!**
- » **Guide to Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery** **New!**
- » **My Perinatal Self Care Workbook - Audiobook** **New!**
- » **Messages of Hope - Animated Perinatal Mental Health Shorts** **New!**

With the addition of these new resources, we had the ability to extend our reach and audience resulting in **4,889 engagements (up 387%)** across all **9 online resources**.

Webinars

Our monthly webinars in partnership with Mental Health Ireland continued to be very popular with **11 webinars** in total and **1,032 engagements** (live and recorded versions).

Additional Events **New!**

Our development strategy enables us to broaden and extend our working partnerships both within the HSE and within the community. To this end, we ran a total of **27 additional events (up 29%)** with **624 engagements**, an **increase of 35%** on last year. Highlights included presenting at the HRB Digital Mental Health Conference in UL in December 2023 and the Perinatal Mental Health workshops, ran in partnership with the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team.

HSE Staff Training **New!**

Staff training is a key work stream and this year we are particularly delighted to report that we delivered **16 training inputs** to staff with **163 engagements** covering new modules including Co-Production Training, TCI Training, Facilitation Skills Training and "Introduction to WRAP" Training.

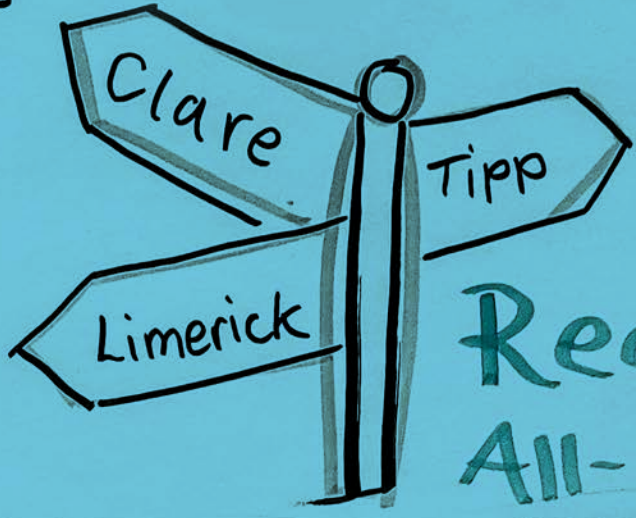
Community Partners Training **New!**

On foot of requests for training inputs this year, we delivered a number of important training modules to our Community Partners including Regari Recovery College, Employability Clare and the Thurles Lions Trust Housing Association. We delivered **4 training modules** with **42 engagements**.



Midwest

CARERS



This way...
a Clear Road
of Learning!

What happens
when you
ASK PEOPLE

And listen
to
Answers!

Reaching
All-over
Midwest...

Working together!

1 Accessible

2 Inclusive

3 Transformative

Message from **Mike O'Neill** **Manager**



This year again saw a strong demand for recovery education with unprecedented growth that saw a substantial increase in both the number of events delivered by our team and the resulting engagements. Overall, we hosted **402 events (an increase of 12% on the previous year)** with **9,767 engagements (an increase of 69%)**. Delivering a truly hybrid service our data shows a clear demand for both in-person and virtual engagements. We constantly look at removing barriers and increasing accessibility to recovery education by offering as many pathways as possible putting people at the centre of their recovery.

One of our many highlights this year was the success of our online self-paced course **“Understanding Acute Mental Health Services for Families, Carers & Supporters”**, it was awarded a “commended” citation by the HSE Excellence Awards 2023 and won the HRB Digital Mental Health Conference 2023 Implementation Award. This was a cross service collaboration from start to finish and demonstrates to commitment of everyone working in the mental health service to make our service better.

Looking ahead to the coming year, I am delighted to announce that we will soon launch the Mid West ARIES website, a project we have been developing over the past year. This platform will serve as a trusted hub for Mid West Mental Health, offering a comprehensive online library of resources and learning opportunities.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone working in the mental health service, our management and clinical staff, the HSE and all of our community partners who have contributed to our success. I would also like to thank my dedicated professional team in Mid West ARIES for their limitless dedication and support, I'm incredibly proud to work with you all.



Our Year in Numbers

We are excited to share details of our Year in Numbers, they reflect all of the hard work and dedication of our team as we grow and expand accessible pathways to recovery education in the Mid West region across a varied number of healthcare, community and online settings.

We are particularly proud of the unprecedented growth in our engagements, increasing by 69% over the period. Meaning that more people than ever have accessed recovery education.



Growing Year on Year

Working harder to meet the recovery education needs of people across the Mid West region and nationally.

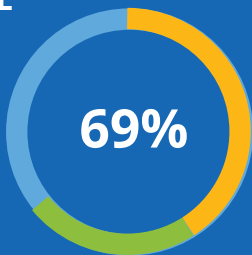
NO. OF ENGAGEMENTS



9,767

Increasing Our Reach

INCREASE



Year on Year Growth

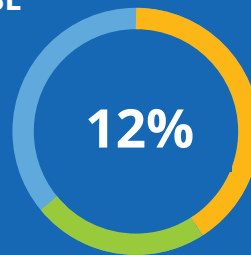
NO. OF EVENTS



402

Delivering More Events

INCREASE



Year on Year Growth



ACTIVITY	EVENTS	ENGAGEMENTS
Online Community Workshops	70	471
In-Person Community Workshops	38	389
Acute Psychiatric Unit Workshops	164	1,427
HSE Day Services Workshops	9	66
Coffee & Connection Online & In-Person	8	135
Introduction to WRAP Workshops	34	228
3RD Level Delivery	6	258
Community Partner Closed Groups	6	43
Mental Health & Wellbeing Webinars	11	1,032
Online Digital Self-Paced Learning	9	4,889
HSE Staff Training	16	163
Community Partners Training	4	42
Additional Events	27	624
TOTALS	402	9,767

Our Team



Mike O'Neill
Manager

The highlight for me is the significant increase in reach and engagement again this year. As leaders of co-production it clearly demonstrates how meaningful change can be achieved with better outcomes for all of our stakeholders.



Cillian Keane

Peer Education, Training & Development Officer

The highlight for me is seeing the positive changes and the difference made in helping people improve their mental health. Whether it's through a workshop or a new resource, you get a sense of accomplishment knowing that the work is instilling hope and making a lasting impact on someone's recovery journey.



Eileen Shine

Recovery Education Facilitator

There have been so many memorable moments such as the Foynes Library Journaling Workshop and the Hunt Museum Creativity Series. Each workshop providing a safe space for creative exploration and the positive impact on mental health. I am so privileged to be a part of this team and I never take for granted the impact, some known and some unknown that we have on people's lives.



Margaret Keane

Education, Training & Development Officer

Out of a year of highlights, if I had to pick one, it would be the people I've met across the service and in the community. I've had the privilege of working on some fantastic, innovative, co-produced projects which would not have happened without their support, vision and commitment to co-production and recovery education.



Noelle Tanner

Recovery Education Facilitator

A stand out moment for me is the perinatal self care programme. How amazing to be able to reach so many women who need all the support they can get at one of the most exciting but challenging times in their lives. To be a part of this as a woman and mum is something that I will always be so proud of and grateful to be a part of.



Mags Clifford

Recovery Education Facilitator

Facilitating workshops in the Community and meeting people is such a joy, I always learn from the participants, shared learning about our mental health is so empowering. When a participant comes up to me after a workshop and shares their gratitude and their own personal experience of the learning, it is very fulfilling. It motivates me to continue this work and learn more.



Laura Carey

Recovery Education Facilitator

I am working with ARIES nearly three years and I thoroughly enjoy my role. This year in particular has been special for me as I was on maternity leave for a while and couldn't wait to get back facilitating groups with my amazing co-workers, empowering individuals to make positive changes to support their mental health recovery.



Thomas Cole

Recovery Education Facilitator

This past year has been both rewarding and challenging. I've learned new things and solidified what I already knew about wellbeing. In the field of mental health, the importance of self-care and mental wellness cannot be overstated. The rise in interaction is heartening, and I am looking forward to the exciting new projects planned.



Sylvia Kiely

Recovery Education Facilitator

One highlight of this year has been facilitating the "Creativity for Wellbeing" workshops. It is more often than not, that within this workshop, individuals remember those elements of self they may have forgotten or denied, and actively want to reclaim again. It is a pleasure to support and witness these experiences for others, especially in the acute psychiatric units.

We are a dedicated and compassionate team of professionals who believe that with the right support, knowledge and skills recovery from mental health challenges is possible for everyone.

Each member of our team brings a unique blend of expertise and experience, united by a shared passion for empowering individuals to overcome challenges and achieve lasting recovery through learning.

What We Do

Our Vision

To provide the Mid West Region with an inspirational, transformative and inclusive educational programme on recovery and wellbeing.



Our Mission



- To provide education and resources created and delivered by service users, family members, carers and mental health professionals.
- To inspire hope, create opportunities and foster the belief that recovery and wellbeing are possible.
- To promote education as a tool in mental health recovery.
- To make this programme available in Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary.
- To promote a culture of inclusivity, mutual respect and learning among all: service providers, service users, family members, friends, carers and anyone with an interest in mental health and wellbeing.





Our Work Streams



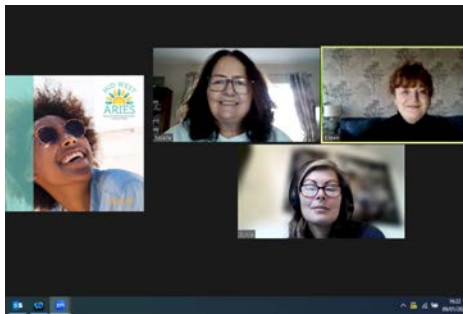
IN-PERSON & ONLINE IN THE COMMUNITY

Making recovery education accessible to all



ACUTE PSYCHIATRIC UNITS

Personal and clinical recovery working together



MENTAL HEALTH STAFF TRAINING

Supporting recovery focused work practice

COMMUNITY PARTNERS TRAINING

Skills development for community partners

HSE DAY SERVICES

Bringing recovery education to Day Service Users



3RD LEVEL TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

Making personal recovery part of the curriculum



DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION

Building and developing key partnerships to co-produce award winning innovative recovery education programmes & resources

CLOSED COMMUNITY GROUPS

Tailored workshops for marginalised groups.

COFFEE & CONNECTION

For residents in Acute Units & HSE residences

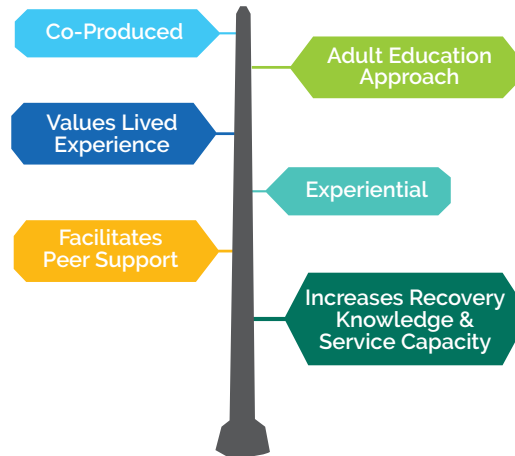
ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Promoting access for all to recovery education



Why We Do What We Do

Recovery education takes a strengths-based and adult-learning approach to mental health recovery. It focuses on empowering individuals by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to meet their own personal recovery needs and goals.



Central to this model of learning is lived experience, where people can share their experiences of what and who helped them on their recovery journey. This “peer-to-peer” learning fosters hope, builds resilience and facilitates peer support.



All of Mid West ARIES activities are guided by the National Framework for Recovery in Mental Health 2024-2028. In particular the four key principles which underpin a recovery orientated service.



Our Stakeholders

Co-production ensures that our workshop topics and learning content meets the needs of our stakeholders. It delivers more impactful, transformative and relevant learning outcomes for all.

Co-Production is...

a way for people who use the mental health services (including their families and carers) and community partners to work together with people who provide mental health services, to make those services better.

Mid West ARIES co-produced definition



People With Lived Experience of Mental Health Challenges

Mental Health Staff



Families, Carers & Supporters



Community Partners



Quality Assurance

We continue to maintain and enhance the quality of our recovery education service, ensuring that all development is underpinned by our National Framework for Mental Health Recovery Education Toolkits.

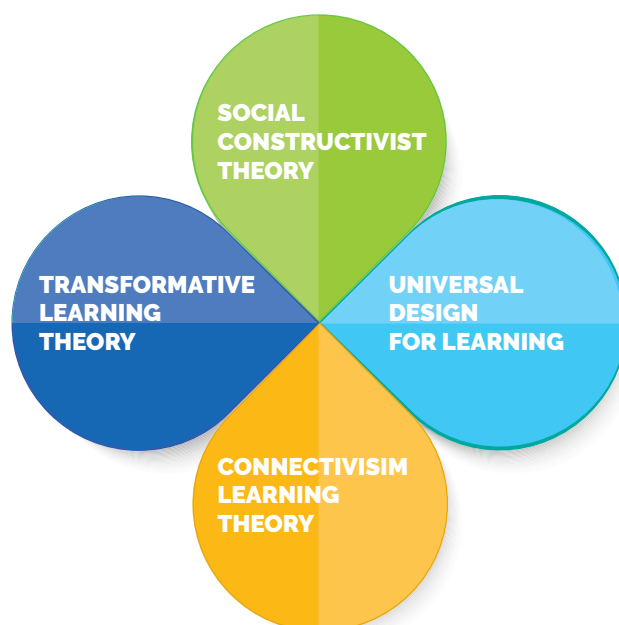


Our values, principles, guidelines and strategies are essential to maintaining the quality of our service. They serve to promote best practice, standardise our delivery, ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements are met, and ensure that our team is clear on their roles and responsibilities.

With a dedicated team of three full-time and six part-time staff, we consistently offer ongoing professional development opportunities for our staff. Our **Community Development Work Core Values** and **Core Communication Principles** play a pivotal role in fostering strong partnerships across the Mid West region.

Our development process is guided by the “Resources to Support the Development and Implementation of Recovery Education 2020-2025” and the “Toolkit to Support the Development and Implementation of Recovery Education 2020-2025.” Additionally, we have created a comprehensive range of in-house guidance documents on key areas, including the development cycle, staff recruitment and training, GDPR, communications, and promotion. These resources ensure that quality assurance remains a cornerstone of all our initiatives.

Incorporating the “Co-Production in Practice Guidance Document” (2018-2020) and our team’s expertise in design for learning, we deliver impactful learning content built on best practice instructional design principles and advanced technologies, further enhancing the reach and effectiveness of our programmes and resources.

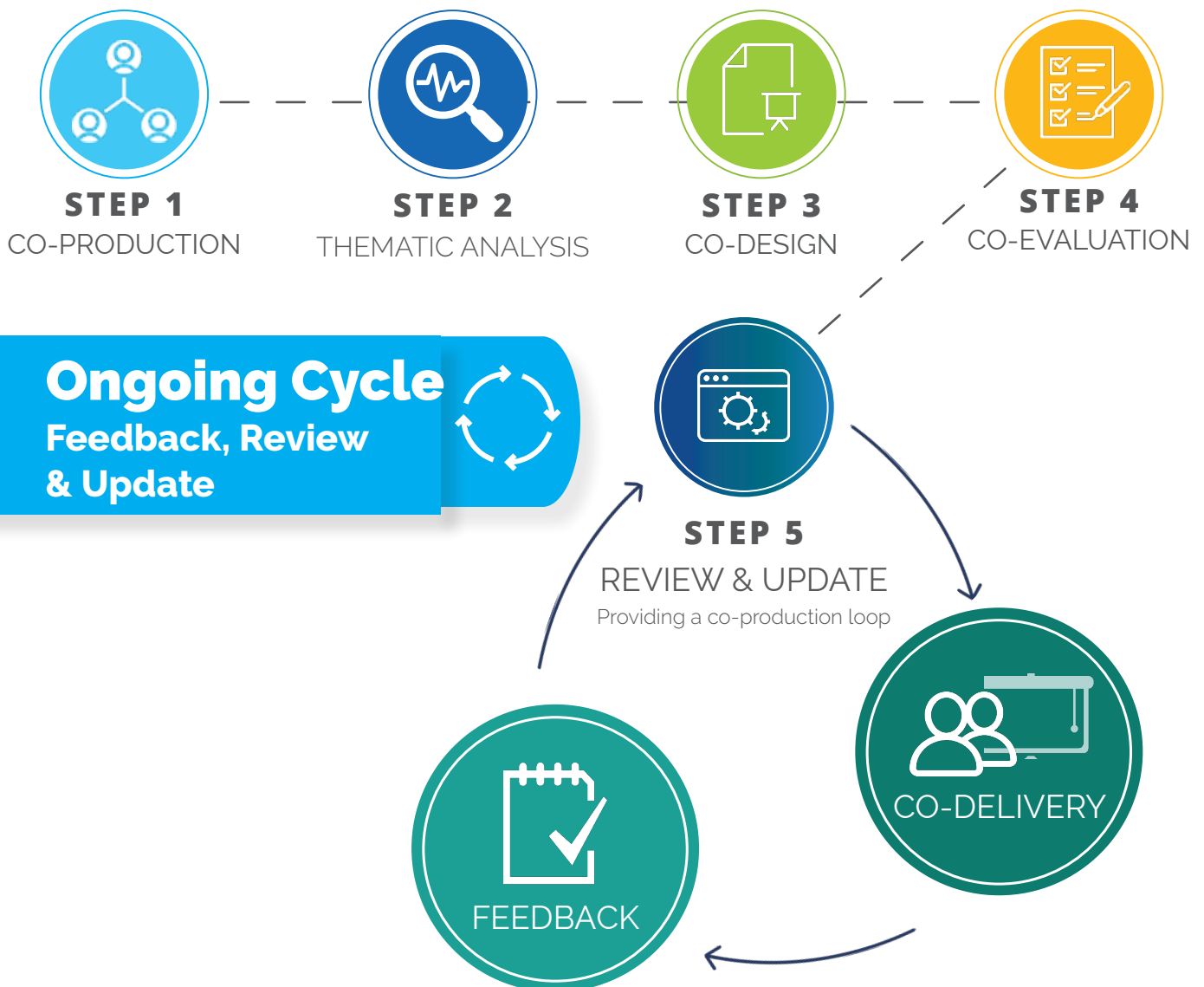


Built on Evidence-Based Adult Learning Theories



Our Development Cycle

All of Mid West ARIES' educational content, from workshop topics to learning materials, follows a rigorous development cycle rooted in co-production. This process spans from initial creation to co-delivery and co-evaluation, ensuring a collaborative approach at every stage. Additionally, we gather and document continuous learner feedback, establishing an ongoing co-production loop that drives the evolution of every workshop and resource. This cycle ensures that learner input remains central to everything we create.



"I really appreciate the opportunity to learn the skills I need and getting to talk to people who have been and are in the same place as I am."



What People Say **About Our Workshops**

Recovery Education **Community**

We work with communities across the Mid West to provide a comprehensive, co-produced and co-delivered educational programme on recovery and well-being to those aged 18 years and over.



ONLINE

Events **70**

Engagements **471**



IN-PERSON

Events **38**

Engagements **389**

Our community workshops are at the heart of our monthly offerings. This year, we are delighted to share that we hosted a total of **108 workshops**, reaching **860 participants**.

We are particularly happy to report strong growth in our in-person workshops with **38 workshops** delivered to **389 participants**, representing an **18% increase in engagement** from last year.

At the same time, our online workshops remain as popular as ever. Over the year, we hosted **70 online workshops** with **471 participants**. We are dedicated to continuing these online sessions, as they offer crucial accessibility for those who may face challenges attending in-person, whether due to location, mental health, or disability. Our commitment to removing barriers to recovery education drives everything we do, and we will keep expanding access to meet the needs of the communities we serve.



Co-Evaluation

Co-evaluation of all workshop content and delivery is key to maintaining a quality assured recovery education service. At the end of each online or in-person community workshop, an anonymous feedback form is shared with participants. This takes the form of both quantitative and qualitative questions.



QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK

We use two 5-point Likert scales to evaluate each workshop. The first scale evaluates participants' satisfaction with the facilitation and delivery across 11 statements, capturing participants' overall satisfaction with the learning experience:

1. *The process of becoming involved in the session was straightforward and trouble-free.*
2. *I felt welcomed by the facilitators to the session.*
3. *The technology used was adequate. (Online) OR The venue was comfortable with adequate facilities (in-person).*
4. *The aims and objectives of the session were clearly explained.*
5. *My involvement and contributions were supported and facilitated well.*
6. *The involvement and contributions of other group members were supported and facilitated well.*
7. *I felt respected and my opinions were valued.*
8. *The facilitators were knowledgeable.*
9. *The facilitators communicated effectively.*
10. *The structure of the session helped to achieve the stated aims.*
11. *I would be happy to participate in a future ARIES session.*

The second scale is based on the 5 key aspects of personal recovery identified by the **CHIME Framework: Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning and Empowerment.**

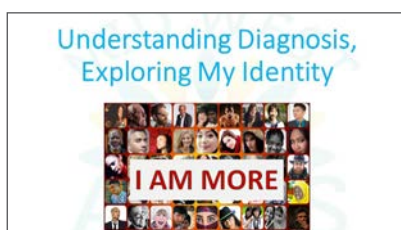
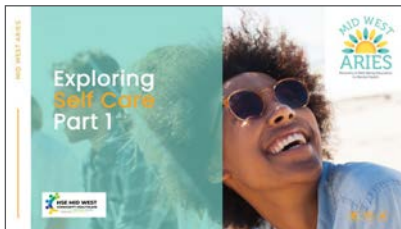
1. *I felt connected to the activities and processes in this session*
2. *I feel hopeful about Recovery after taking part in this session.*
3. *I feel my identity was recognised and valued in this session.*
4. *I feel that the material delivered in the session is meaningful to me.*
5. *I feel more empowered after taking part in this session.*

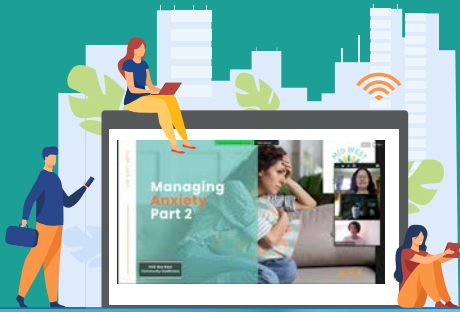
QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

We also gather qualitative feedback by asking what worked best and what worked less well or could be improved at the end of each workshop delivered. All of this feedback is then used to evaluate, reflect and update our learning content and delivery, in line with our co-production development cycle.



Community Workshops





Community Workshops Online

Our online community workshops continue to be a positive choice for learners, offering a flexible and accessible way to connect. We are dedicated to providing meaningful, transformative learning experiences online, and our skilled facilitation team has developed exceptional expertise in virtual delivery. Every workshop is designed to meet best practice instructional design standards ensuring an engaging, impactful and relevant learning experience for all.



Events 70
Engagements 471

This year our team facilitated **70 online community workshops** with **471 engagements**. The online learning space provides a welcome alternative to those who, for reasons of disability, accessibility and time constraints, cannot attend our in-person events. After the live event, all attendees receive a comprehensive learner pack with additional learning resources including the workshop responses to support their on-going learning and personal recovery goals.

Online Community Quantitative Feedback

CHIME Online Community



OVERALL SATISFACTION

We are delighted to share that our respondents have once again expressed outstanding **overall satisfaction (98%)** with their overall learning experience. This reflects the quality of our online workshop content and the exceptional virtual group facilitation skills of our Recovery Education Facilitators, who are committed to making the online experience as engaging and impactful as in-person learning for all participants.

PERSONAL RECOVERY - CHIME

The CHIME framework provides us with compelling metrics to evaluate how our workshops have supported an individual participant's personal recovery journey. This year, as in previous years, we can report consistently high levels of positive responses across **Connectedness (97%), Hope (92%), Identity (99%), Meaning (97%) & Empowerment (92%)**.

Online Community

Sample Feedback



The open discussion was really good and hearing other people's thoughts and ideas.



I would like to thank you for welcoming everyone and making us feel included and heard. This workshop gave me so much more than what I expected.



The information provided and the experiences shared was very insightful.

The presenters were the highlight of this workshop, the way they delivered general information in a meaningful way that took the meaning of creativity and wellbeing to another level.



I was so impressed by this workshop and how it was run. All of the facilitators were great.

Everyone was friendly, interactive and kind with their words.

It's my first participation, I enjoyed the course, looking forward to attending more.

I love the interaction the facilitators have with each other and with the group. They create a very warm atmosphere enabling people to open up and share.



I think everything was great. I wish more people have opportunity to visit these type of workshops.

Online Community

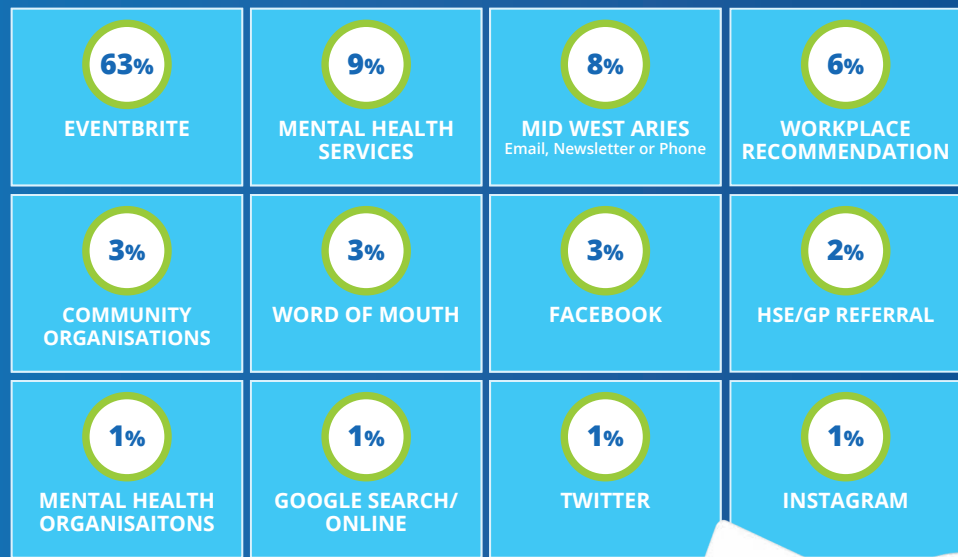
Where Did You Hear About Us?

Our Sources

158
Respondents

Top 3

Eventbrite 63%
Mental Health Services 9%
Mid West ARIES 8%



***Please note: percentages are rounded up*

ONLINE COMMUNITY PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

Understanding how participants discover our educational programmes is essential for refining our online community workshop promotional strategy and identifying areas to broaden our reach.

This year Eventbrite remained our primary source of attendees, contributing 63% of our online workshop registrations, a 23% increase from last year, demonstrating the platform's growing impact.

Notably, referrals from the Mental Health Services continue to play an important role, accounting for 9% of attendees, while workplace referrals, word-of-mouth recommendations, and support from community organisations also significantly drive online bookings. Social media, however, experienced a decline across platforms, providing insight for future strategy adjustments.

"It was timed well, no rushing, with a nice balance of information, group work and practical elements."



What People Say **About Our Workshops**

In Person Community



Community Workshops In-Person

This year our dedicated team traversed the Mid West, facilitating workshops across 10 key locations, including Kilrush, Kilmallock, Limerick City, Shannon, Thurles, Foynes, Killaloe, Nenagh, Roscrea, and Hospital. Through new community partnerships, we also expanded our reach by adding 4 additional locations, further extending our impact and accessibility across the region. We could not deliver our recovery education programme without the support of our amazing community partners who provide venues and additional supports to ensure that the people they serve have access to recovery education.

We wish to thank our Community partners for their on-going support including: the Hunt Museum, the Lighthouse Kilrush, Kilmallock Library, Thurles Library, Foynes Library, Nenagh Library, Roscrea Library, Shannon Family Resource Centre, Hospital Family Resource Centre and Killaloe/Ballina Family Resource Centre.



 
Events 38
Engagements 389

*(Includes Hunt Museum
Creativity for Wellbeing Series)*

We are pleased to report continued sustained growth and expansion in our in-person recovery education programme. We delivered **38 workshops**, achieving **389 engagements**, an impressive **19% increase** in the number of workshops and an **18% rise** in participant engagement compared to the previous year.

In-Person Community Quantitative Feedback

CHIME In-Person Community

278

Respondents

97%

The Learning Experience

**OVERALL
SATISFACTION**

95%

CONNECTEDNESS

Felt connected to the activities and processes in the session

91%

HOPE

Felt hopeful about recovery after taking part

96%

IDENTITY

Felt their identity was respected and valued

95%

MEANING

Felt that the material delivered was meaningful

93%

EMPOWERMENT

Felt more empowered after taking part



OVERALL SATISFACTION

To continually improve our in-person workshops, we invite every participant to complete a feedback form. During this period, **278 attendees** provided their feedback. They rated the content, delivery, and learning experience across **11 key metrics**. We are pleased to report an impressive **overall satisfaction rate of 97%**, reflecting highly positive experiences across all areas.

PERSONAL RECOVERY - CHIME

In line with our online community workshops, we ask in-person attendees to evaluate their learning experience using a 5-point Likert scale based on the **CHIME Framework**, i.e. **Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning, and Empowerment**. High positivity rates across these principles highlight the meaningful impact of recovery education for participants, underscoring the value of our educational programmes in supporting personal recovery journeys.



In Person Community



Sample Feedback



The best thing was meeting new people, lovely chat and nice environment.



I was happy overall with the workshop; the facilitators were very professional and presented the workshop in a way I could understand.



It was good having the space to meet and talk with people going through similar situations.

The workshop was really well presented and facilitated. The group was encouraged to be open and respectful and they encouraged participation.



Hearing different perspectives on the various topics was a great learning opportunity.

Lovely atmosphere and group. The time flew!

The team were lovely and very knowledgeable, the presentation was excellent, and everyone got to contribute.

I enjoyed being in a lovely group of people, good conversation, great atmosphere, exchanging information and experiences from our lives, always learning something new.

The best thing about the workshop was everyone's voice being heard and everyone taking part.



In Person Community

Where Did You Hear About Us?

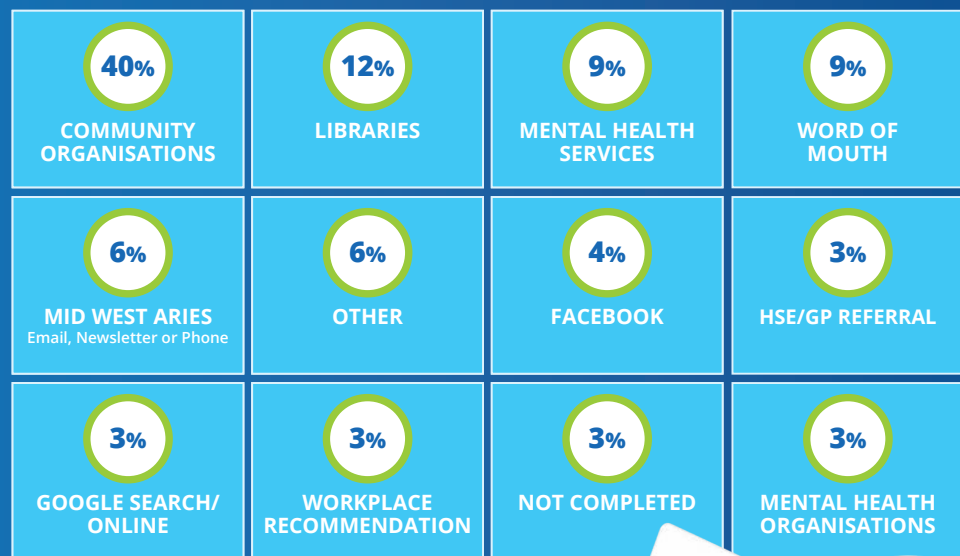
Our Sources

278

Respondents

Top 3

- Community Organisations 40%
- Libraries 12%
- Mental Health Services 9%
- Word of Mouth 9%



***Please note: percentages are rounded up*

ONLINE COMMUNITY PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

Our in-person community workshops are made possible through strong partnerships with local organisations across the Midwest region. These partners, including Family Resource Centres, libraries, and mental health associations, have established trusted connections within their communities, making them ideal collaborators in promoting our events through their websites and social media channels.

As a result, community organisations remain our leading referral source for workshop attendees, accounting for 40% of participants. Notably, 9% of attendees were referred by the Mental Health Services, underscoring the valuable role of these partnerships in broadening access. This year, we also expanded our collaboration with the Mid West Library Network (contributing 12% of attendees) and welcomed new partners such as the Killaloe/Ballina Family Resource Centre.

"This session was so enjoyable. I would take huge confidence in my recovery going forward."



What People Say About Our Workshops

Hunt Museum Partnership

Creativity for Wellbeing

This year marked a significant milestone in our ongoing partnership with the Hunt Museum, a leading arts institution in Limerick. In collaboration with Mid West Mental Health Engagement and Mid West Mental Health Occupational Therapy, we successfully co-delivered a pioneering series of Creativity for Wellbeing workshops. This two-part series represents the first recovery education initiative of its kind to be fully co-produced, co-delivered, and co-evaluated, highlighting the power of cross-service collaboration in supporting mental health and well-being.

We wish to thank Rosemary Ryan, Mid West Mental Health Engagement Lead, Maria Cagney, Curator of Education & Outreach, Hunt Museum, and Áine Frawley, Occupational Therapist, Limerick & North Tipperary Mental Health Service, for their on-going support for this project.

PART 1

Facilitated by Mid West ARIES Recovery Education Facilitators during this section learners explore their understanding of creativity and how they can tap into their creativity to support and enhance their mental health and wellbeing.

PART 2

In the concluding section, led by an art therapist, the group then gets to try out some inspiring creative activities such as copper repousse, lino printing, clay making or wreath making.

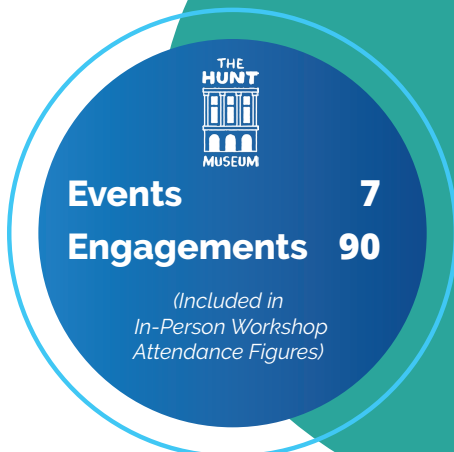


Evaluation

We revised our feedback form to illicit more relevant and meaningful responses for this series, with the addition of two new questions:

- *After attending this workshop I feel more confident in using my creativity to support my mental health and wellbeing. 91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.*
- *After attending this workshop I intend to engage in simple creative activities each week to support my mental health and wellbeing. 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.*

These particular results are noteworthy and supports the continuance of this ground-breaking series.





CHIME Hunt Museum Series

70
Respondents

96%

The Learning Experience
**OVERALL
SATISFACTION**

94%

CONNECTEDNESS
Felt connected to the activities and processes in the session

80%

HOPE
Felt hopeful about recovery after taking part

94%

IDENTITY
Felt their identity was respected and valued

91%

MEANING
Felt that the material delivered was meaningful

91%

EMPOWERMENT
Felt more empowered after taking part



OVERALL SATISFACTION

Feedback from participants in the Creativity for Wellbeing series has been exceptionally positive. Of the **70 respondents, 96% reported high overall satisfaction** with their learning experience, reflecting the series' success in meeting participant needs.

PERSONAL RECOVERY - CHIME

Using a 5-point Likert scale aligned with the CHIME framework for personal mental health recovery, respondents reported consistently high scores across all five metrics. Notably, the Hope metric scored slightly lower than expected at 80%, compared to other CHIME areas. While it is difficult to pinpoint specific reasons for this variation, it is worth noting that 13% of respondents did not answer the Hope related question. This highlights an area for potential exploration in future evaluations.

"The delivery of the workshop was very relaxed and informal, but professional. It felt very safe and put me at ease."



What People Say About Our Workshops

Recovery Education **Acute Units**

Working with the Recovery & Wellbeing Team in both Acute Psychiatric Units we delivered a comprehensive programme of recovery education with a total of **164 workshops** for **1,427 attendees**.



LIMERICK

Events **81**

Engagements **608**



ENNIS

Events **83**

Engagements **819**

Facilitating recovery education in both Limerick and Ennis Acute Units is a cornerstone of our weekly programme, with workshops held twice a week at each location. These sessions are an integral part of the role of our Recovery Education Facilitators, who enrich the workshops by sharing their own personal experiences of recovery. This lived-experience perspective is central to the sessions, offering invaluable insights into the journey of recovery. Feedback from participants highlights the impact of these workshops, particularly the sharing of practical guidance and personal recovery stories.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the exceptional mental health staff who co-facilitate these workshops. Special thanks to Sarah Danagher and

Barbara Keating in Limerick APU, and John O'Connor and Ciara Finn in Ennis APU. Their dedication and support are essential to bringing recovery education to the Acute Units, and we deeply value their commitment to this vital work.



Co-Evaluation

As with our community workshops, it is vitally important for us to gather feedback from the attendees in the acute settings to ensure that the service remains faithful to co-evaluation at all service delivery points. We invite all participants to complete a short feedback form, including both quantitative and qualitative questions.



QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK

Using a 5-point Likert scale the feedback form focuses on the 5 key aspects of personal recovery identified by the CHIME Framework: Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning and Empowerment. In this way, we can assess the effectiveness and impact of each individual workshop in terms of personal recovery.

1. *I felt connected to the activities and processes in this session*
2. *I feel hopeful about Recovery after taking part in this session.*
3. *I feel my identity was recognised and valued in this session.*
4. *I feel that the material delivered in the session is meaningful to me.*
5. *I feel more empowered after taking part in this ARIES session.*

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

We also collect qualitative feedback by asking participants what aspects of each delivered module worked well, and what could be improved.

All of this feedback is then used to evaluate, reflect and update our learning content and delivery for acute psychiatric settings; supporting our co-production review and update cycle.

Mid West ARIES Feedback Form
DATE OF SESSION: _____
LOCATION: _____

Thank you very much for taking part in this session.
We would like your feedback to help us in planning for the future.

Please respond to the statements below, ticking an option from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Statement	Please tick a box				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt connected to the activities and processes in this session.					
I feel hopeful about Recovery after taking part in this session.					
I feel my identity was recognised and valued in this session.					
I feel that the material delivered in the session is meaningful to me.					
I feel more empowered after taking part in this session.					

Please answer the following questions based on your experience today:
What worked well in the session today?

What worked less well in the session today or what could be improved?

Any other comments or suggestions?

Thank you!



Acute Unit Quantitative Feedback

CHIME Acute Units

837

Respondents

90%

AVERAGE CHIME
RESPONSE

94%

CONNECTEDNESS

Felt connected to the activities and processes in the session

86%

HOPE

Felt hopeful about recovery after taking part

93%

IDENTITY

Felt their identity was respected and valued

94%

MEANING

Felt that the material delivered was meaningful

87%

EMPOWERMENT

Felt more empowered after taking part



PERSONAL RECOVERY - CHIME

During this period, we received feedback from **837 participants** from the Acute Psychiatric Units in Limerick and Ennis. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with **an average of 90% of respondents expressing enhanced feelings of Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning, and Empowerment following their attendance at a Mid West ARIES workshop.**

These outcomes highlight the significant impact recovery education can have for individuals in acute psychiatric care, often serving as a catalyst for their personal recovery journey, even during periods when they are acutely unwell.

We would like to thank all of our participants in the Acute Units for their generous support and active participation in our workshops.



Acute Units

Sample Feedback



The facilitator listened to everyone, gave time and respect to everyone.



Each individual was given the opportunity to discuss their ideas with the group, individual participation was encouraged.



It allowed me to see a way to move on and towards recovery, I now see a way forward.

The facilitators were good and informed us very well. The information was helpful and everyone got to participate.

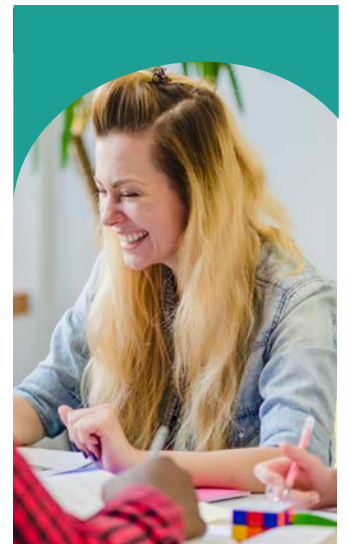


The best thing was listening to other people's stories, knowing you're in a safe place.

There was a sense of togetherness on the path of recovery.

It was good that we got a chance to have a speak and learn from other people's experiences.

I liked writing notes down, talking in turns, listening to everybody's contribution and learning from other people.

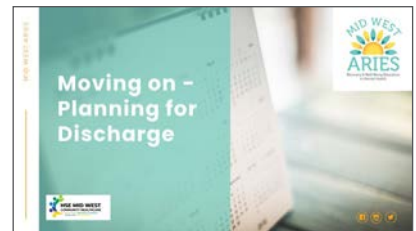
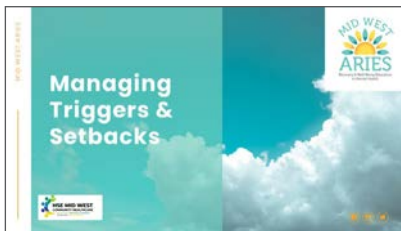
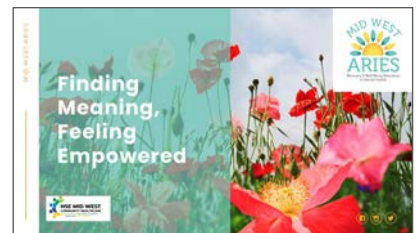


I discovered what resilience was and discovered I can be resilient.



Acute Units

Acute Unit Workshops



"The workshop helped me gain more self confidence!"



What People Say **About Our Workshops**



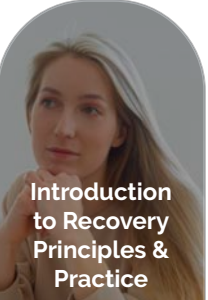


Partnerships in Training

3rd Level

This year, we strengthened our training and research partnerships with Third Level Institutions, creating valuable opportunities to introduce students to the principles and practices of co-production and personal mental health recovery. Our efforts led to a significant expansion in training activities, with six events delivered to 258 participants, a 112% increase in engagements compared to the previous year.

Our ongoing partnership with the University of Limerick has been instrumental in broadening our training reach, enabling us to collaborate with the Nursing, Paramedic Studies, and Allied Health departments. We were also delighted to return to Mary Immaculate College, where we delivered an "Introduction to Mid West ARIES" to first-year Psychology students.



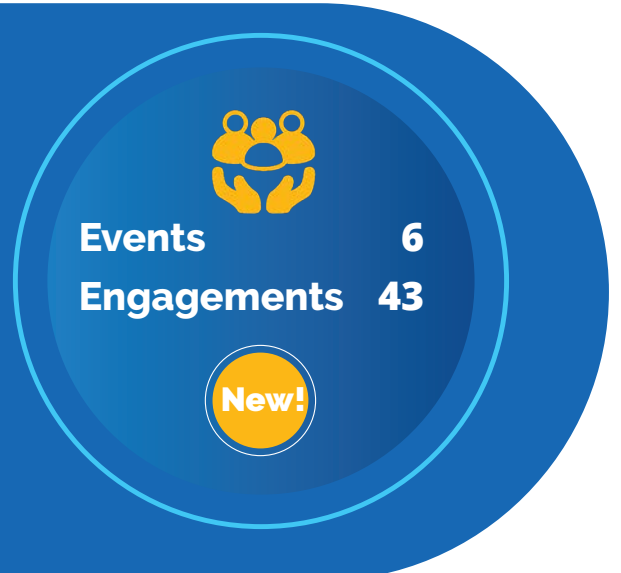
 Introduction to Mid West ARIES	 Introduction to Recovery Education	 Recovery Principles & Practice Module 1	 Introduction to Recovery Principles & Practice	 Co-Production: What Happens When You Ask People	 Introduction to Mid West ARIES
40	30	14	25	114	35
Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors	UL 1st Year Nursing Students	UL Paramedics	UL 4th Year Nursing Students	UL Allied Health Professionals	Mary I 1st Year Psychology

Recovery Education

Closed Community Groups

As a responsive and community-focused service, we continually strive to listen, adapt, and meet the needs of people in the Mid West region. This year, we took significant steps to bring recovery education to individuals in marginalised groups who may face barriers to accessing recovery education. This year we prioritised expanding our work streams to include delivery to these groups. This initiative ensures that individuals unable to attend our in-person open community groups can participate in a supportive environment designed to meet their unique needs.

To achieve this, we collaborated with several inspiring organisations, including Adapt House (Domestic Abuse Services), Headway (Brain Injury Services & Support), the National Learning Network Focus Programme (a person-centered education programme for individuals with mental health challenges) and the Lighthouse Kilrush. These partnerships have enabled us to create impactful programmes that promote inclusion and provide meaningful support where it is needed most.



 <p>Journaling for Wellbeing & Creativity & Creativity for Wellbeing</p> <p>15</p> <p>Adapt House Domestic Abuse Services</p>	 <p>Part 1 Exploring Anxiety Part 2 Managing Anxiety</p> <p>15</p> <p>Headway Brain Injury & Support Limerick</p>	 <p>Journaling for Wellbeing</p> <p>6</p> <p>NLN Focus Programme</p>	 <p>Journaling for Wellbeing</p> <p>7</p> <p>Lighthouse - Nth Clare MHDC & Orchard Residence</p>
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Closed Community Groups Quantitative Feedback

CHIME Closed Community Groups



OVERALL SATISFACTION

We are delighted to report that over the six “closed” community workshops delivered in the period, 41 out of 43 attendees took the time to complete our feedback form, with respondents scoring their **overall learning experience an impressive 97%**.

PERSONAL RECOVERY - CHIME

Feedback on the CHIME framework, measuring **Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning, and Empowerment**, was equally positive. On average, **97% of respondents** reported improved feelings in these areas following their participation in a Mid West ARIES workshop.

These exceptional results highlight the effectiveness of tailoring recovery education to groups who may face barriers to accessing our regular workshop programme.

Closed Community

Sample Feedback



It was good discussing each question with other members of the group, learning more tools to try and cope with anxiety.



The best thing was meeting new people, the lovely chat and the nice environment.



I liked the group work and conversations, it felt conversational.

It was really enjoyable and informative, in a relaxed environment and not daunting.



It will encourage me to get up and write a journal. Really appreciate all your help.

Great Interaction and discussions with no pressure to get involved.

I felt very comfortable with everyone, the group were lovely.

The best thing was discussing each question with other members of the group and learning more tools to try and cope with anxiety.



Everything was brilliant!

"I would definitely recommend this workshop to others."




What People Say About Our Workshops

Recovery Education HSE Day Services

This year, we expanded our reach within the HSE Mental Health Service through cross-service collaborations with several HSE Day Services, including Iniscara Day Centre (Limerick), Ivy Gate Day Centre (Kilmallock), Stella Maris Day Hospital (Lisdoonvarna), and North Clare Day Centre (Ennistymon). During the period, we successfully facilitated 8 workshops with 55 participants, many of whom were engaging with recovery education for the first time. This initiative also served as a vital bridge for individuals transitioning from our Acute Unit programmes, enabling them to continue their recovery education journey within community services.

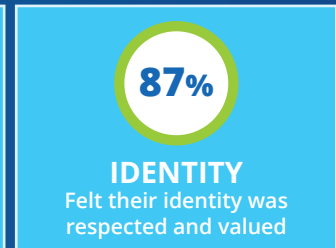
To ensure the success of this initiative, we recruited and trained HSE Mental Health staff from these Day Services to co-facilitate our workshops, promoting a collaborative and inclusive approach to service delivery. This proven model, which has been highly effective in Acute settings, once again delivered excellent results. We have found that having a trusted and familiar staff member as a co-facilitator enhances the facilitator-learner connection, fostering trust and engagement while strengthening the overall learning experience.



			
Events 3 Engagements 32	Events 3 Engagements 20	Events 2 Engagements 3	Events 1 Engagements 11
Iniscara Day Centre Limerick	Ivy Gate Day Centre Kilmallock	Stella Maris Day Hospital Lisdoonvarna	North Clare Day Centre Ennistymon

HSE Day Services Quantitative Feedback

CHIME HSE Day Services



PERSONAL RECOVERY - CHIME

The CHIME framework continues to be a highly effective tool for assessing the impact of our workshops on an individual's personal recovery. We are proud to report that, on average, **89% of respondents provided positive feedback** across all five CHIME dimensions: **Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning, and Empowerment.**

These results underscore the transformative impact our workshops have on participants, fostering meaningful progress in their recovery journeys.

Sample Feedback



It was good speaking openly with one another in a confidential setting.



Hearing other people's thoughts on what helps them in recovery.



The best thing was answering the questions and listening to other's responses.

I felt welcomed and nervousness was gone by the end.



I feel that the material delivered was meaningful to me.

Everyone gave their input and supported each other.

The information was clear and helpful.

We all worked together in the group; everyone's opinion mattered and we were all listened to.

I felt comfortable in this group.



"All the information
I got from this
workshop was brilliant.
I feel inspired by it."



What People Say
About Our Workshops



Training HSE Staff

This year, we are pleased to report the expansion of our training modules beyond Recovery Principles & Practice. Our enhanced programme now includes new key modules including *Co-Production Training, Introduction to Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI), Facilitation Skills Training, Personal Narrative Training, and Introduction to WRAP Training.* This expansion was developed in direct response to staff teams who identified critical skills development needs. The growing demand for these sessions, particularly from HSE staff across diverse disciplines underscores ARIES' reputation as a trusted and valued training partner.

Groups & Multi-Disciplinary Teams who received training:

- Roselawn House Mental Health Staff
- CAMHS Service User Engagement Group
- CAMHS Clinicians
- Children's Disability Network Team Clare
- Children's Disability Network Team St. Gabriel's Limerick
- Children's Disability Network Team Nenagh
- Health & Wellbeing - Smoking Cessation Staff
- Matthew Burke House Staff
- North Clare Mental Health Day Centre
- Ivy Gate Day Centre
- Iniscara Day Centre



Events
6

Engagements
81

Co-Production
Training



Events
4

Engagements
48

Introduction
to TCI Training



Events
2

Engagements
22

Facilitation
Skills Training



Events
4

Engagements
12

Introduction to
WRAP Training

Introduction to WRAP Acute & Community

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is seen as a valuable tool designed to support individuals on their journey to mental health recovery. Last year we developed a 5 hour 'Introduction to WRAP' course. This introductory programme focuses on the five key recovery concepts: Hope, Personal Responsibility, Self Advocacy, Education and Support. It serves as a taster course and has worked particularly well for those with enduring or long term mental health issues, preparing participants for the more and in-depth comprehensive WRAP programme.

This year, additional Mental Health staff were trained to deliver the 'Introduction to WRAP' programme. As a result, we are proud to report that the course is now firmly embedded within the Recovery & Wellbeing Programmes in both Acute Psychiatric Units and the North Clare Day Centre in Ennistymon. This development reflects our commitment to enhancing mental health services and promoting a recovery-oriented approach across the region.



We would like to thank the mental health staff who are the forefront of bringing new ARIES education initiatives to the people in their care.



Events 1
Engagements 6

North Clare Day Centre
Ennistymon



Events 23
Engagements 184

Acute Psychiatric Unit
Ennis Hospital



Events 10
Engagements 38

Acute Psychiatric Unit
UHL

Training Community Partners

This year, we expanded our training offerings to include sessions specifically requested by our community partners. Since our founding, we have been dedicated to cultivating meaningful partnerships across the community and voluntary sectors. These training requests highlight the growing recognition of Mid West ARIES as a trusted and valued partner in staff continuous professional development. Over the reporting period, we conducted four training events, resulting in 42 meaningful engagements that contributed to capacity-building and professional growth within our partner organisations.

During this period, training requests focused on three key modules tailored to meet the needs of community organisation staff in their public-facing roles, many of whom work with marginalised groups. These modules included:

- 1. Introduction to Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI):** Equipping staff with skills to manage and de-escalate challenging situations.
- 2. Facilitation Skills Training:** Enhancing the ability to lead effective and engaging group sessions.
- 3. Personal Narrative Training:** Empowering staff to use storytelling as a tool for connection and advocacy.

These modules reflect the critical areas of support required by organisations working at the forefront of community engagement and development.



			
Events 1 Engagements 7	Events 1 Engagements 6	Events 1 Engagements 17	Events 1 Engagements 12
Employability Ennis Clare	Matthew Burke House Thurles	Regari Recovery College Roscommon	Peer Wellness Cafe Ennis Clare

Virtual Café

Coffee & Connection

Launched during the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, our online virtual café, Coffee & Connection, was designed to provide a vital connection point for our most vulnerable groups in our Acute Psychiatric Units and HSE Residences. Over time, this responsive initiative has evolved to meet emerging needs. Initially offered exclusively online, the programme expanded this year to include in-person events at the Ennis Acute Unit every two months, following a request from the Recovery & Wellbeing Team in Ennis. This year we delivered 5 events online and 3 in-person with a total of 135 engagements.



The primary focus of each café is to foster creativity, joy, and hope, offering opportunities to connect through conversation, music, poetry, and art. These events exemplify the CHIME principles in action, serving as a vital lifeline for those at risk of isolation. Coffee & Connection has become a highlight of our event schedule, bringing people together in meaningful ways. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Residence and Acute Unit staff who co-facilitate these joyful gatherings.



Other Events

Each year, we focus on strengthening existing partnerships while actively exploring new opportunities within and beyond recovery education. These well-established and emerging collaborations have paved the way for exciting new initiatives, expanded our audience reach, and deepened engagement across a wide range of services and communities. As a result, in addition to our training programme, our team also participated in a number of special events throughout the year.



After six years, we are proud that ARIES has established itself as a reliable, trustworthy, and credible source of mental health information and resources. This year, we hosted **27 Special Events**, achieving **624 engagements**, representing a sizable **29% increase in events** and a **35% rise in engagements** when compared to the previous year.

During this period, our team delivered and took part in a range of special events working with:

- Acute Unit UHL
- Adapt Services
- East Clare GP Engagement - Mid West Mental Health
- Employability Clare
- Ennistymon Day Centre
- Jigsaw
- Limerick Mental Health Association
- Limerick Social Services
- Mid West Local Employment Service
- Mid West Occupational Therapy
- Midwest Community Healthcare - Limerick Show
- National Learning Network
- National Office for Suicide Prevention
- Nenagh Hospital
- Office of Suicide Prevention Mid West
- Paul Partnership - Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival
- Public Health Nursing Mid West Group
- Refocus Symposium
- Shannon Hotel Management
- Specialist Perinatal Mental Health
- TUSLA Aftercare Limerick
- UL Psychology Department & Health Research Board
- University Hospital Limerick
- Willowdale Day Hospital



Some Highlights

LIMERICK LIFE LONG LEARNING FESTIVAL

Each year, we eagerly anticipate participating in the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, a vibrant celebration of learning across the city and county. This year, we hosted our “Worry Exchange,” one of our most popular interactive events. We are continually inspired by the enthusiasm and engagement people bring to this simple yet impactful initiative.



LIMERICK MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Organised by the Limerick Mental Health Association, our team once again facilitated our “Worry Exchange” at an open event in Bedford Row to celebrate Limerick Mental Health Week. The exchange provides a safe and non-judgemental space for individuals to share their worries and, in return, receive an uplifting message of hope.

EAST CLARE GP ENGAGEMENT EVENT

This year, we had the privilege of participating in an East Clare GP Engagement event organised by Mid West Mental Health. Mike O’Neill, Mid West ARIES Manager, was delighted to have the opportunity to introduce recovery education, share the principles of co-production, and showcase our resources with this group of clinicians.



BESPOKE CLINICAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME HSE MID WEST

We were delighted to be invited back to contribute to the Bespoke Clinical Leadership & Management Programme at UHL. Including our Self Care Workshop in this programme underscores the recognition of self-care as a vital component of effective leadership.

Spotlight on Digital Mental Health Conference

In the summer of 2023, Mike O'Neill, Manager, and Margaret Keane, Education Training & Development Officer, were invited to join the planning committee for the HRB UL Digital Mental Health Conference, "Digital Mental Health: A Vision for Research, Policy, and Practice." The event's main theme was to develop "a shared vision for digital mental health in Ireland," which would directly contribute to shaping the national digital mental health strategy. As a hybrid education service, we were excited to share our knowledge and expertise in co-production with attendees.



Co-presenting with Lorraine Naughton, Assistant Director of Nursing at the Acute Psychiatric Unit in Limerick, we delivered a presentation highlighting the power of co-production in driving a needs-led approach to developing impactful digital mental health solutions. We were thrilled when our project, "Understanding Acute Mental Health Services for Families, Carers & Supporters" was honoured with the Digital Mental Health Implementation Award at the conclusion of the conference.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Ruth Melia, Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology, and Professor Donal Fortune, Department of Psychology at the University of Limerick for the invitation to take part in this important event.

"I found that what I learned today can be used in our daily lives. It's good to know that there is always a way to turn situations around for the good of all."



What People Say About Our Workshops

Development & Innovation



We believe that co-production is the driving force behind needs-led innovation in service delivery. At the heart of our approach lies a single guiding question: *“What happens when you ask people?”* For our team, the answer is clear. **Co-production consistently leads to better, more meaningful outcomes for all stakeholders.** Moreover, the processes of co-production, co-evaluation, and co-facilitation often spark fresh, innovative ideas that might not have emerged through other approaches. This method not only enriches our resource development but also ensures the results are aligned with the needs of those we serve.

This year proved to be a highly creative, productive and collaborative year as we expanded and enhanced our hybrid learning offerings.



Online Digital Self-Paced Learning

This year, our self-paced course development continued to be an important cornerstone of our development and innovation strategy, enabling learners to engage with recovery education in their own time and at their own pace. By offering complete flexibility, these online courses accommodate diverse lifestyles and learning preferences, breaking down access barriers to ensure our educational programmes are accessible, inclusive, and equitable.

By designing all self-paced courses in-house, we are able to create a robust library of scalable, reusable digital mental health resources that can be updated easily, ensuring cost-efficiency over the long term. The success of these initiatives highlights our dedication to learner-centered, needs-driven innovation, delivering adaptable, flexible, and personalised learning experiences that meet the evolving needs of our learners.

We are delighted to report that during this period our current self-paced courses had increased engagements across:

- ***My Self Care - Taking Care of Me - 485***
- ***Understanding Acute Mental Health Services for Families, Carers & Supporters - 1,417***

We also developed five new self-paced resources including:

- ***Getting the Best from Your Mental Health Appointment - 619***
- ***Perinatal Self Care - Taking Care of Me - 603***
- ***Online Guide to Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery - 493***
- ***My Perinatal Self Care Workbook (Audiobook Version) - 1,100***
- ***Perinatal Messages of Hope Animations - 172***

New!



Events 9
Engagements 4,889

387%

Online Digital Self-Paced Resources

Accessible - Transferable - Needs Led

MY SELF CARE

Online Course for HSE Mid West Staff

Learn simple, practical strategies to look after your **Physical, Emotional, Social and Intellectual Health.**

In your own time, and at your own pace.

Mobile Friendly - Scan the QR code to access
Log in on your laptop - <https://tinyurl.com/selfcareabout>
Self-Paced - Available 24/7

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare | ARIES | HSE

My Self Care - Taking Care of Me

Build your personal daily self care toolkit. Learn simple, practical ways to look after your **Physical, Emotional, Social and Intellectual Health.**

In your own time, and at your own pace.

Mobile/Tablet Friendly - Scan the QR code to access
Log in on your Laptop/Desktop - tinyurl.com/selfcareabout
Self-Paced - Available 24/7

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare | ARIES | HSE

FREE RECOVERY EDUCATION COURSE

Understanding Acute Mental Health Services for Families, Supporters & Carers

Available Online 24/7

Learn In Your Own Time and At Your Own Pace:

- How admission to an Acute Psychiatric Unit works.
- The different members of the Care Team and their roles.
- The program of services you may need.
- What supports are available to you and your loved one.
- How to support your own mental health and wellbeing.

Mobile/Tablet Friendly - Scan the QR code to access
OR Log in on your Laptop/Desktop - <https://tinyurl.com/UnderstandingGADMS>

Need More Information? Contact:
 Margaret Keane | margaret.keane@hse.ie | 095 287 3528
 Glenn Keane | glenn.keane@hse.ie | 095 287 3528

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WINNER

Understanding Acute Mental Health Services for Families, Carers & Supporters

Available 24/7

Learn how to prepare for your mental health appointment to support your recovery.

- Practical information
- How You Can Support Your Loved One
- How You Can Support Yourself

Click & Go

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare | ARIES | HSE

New!

Getting The Best From My Mental Health Appointment

Learn how to prepare for your mental health appointment to support your recovery.

- Explore what you can do **before, during and after** your mental health appointments to enhance your recovery.

In your own time, and at your own pace.

Mobile/Tablet Friendly - Scan the QR code to access
Log in on your Laptop/Desktop - <https://tinyurl.com/assist-eres>
Self-Paced - Available 24/7

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New!

Introducing Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery

Discover Occupational Therapy

- How Occupational Therapy Can Support Mental Health Recovery
- What Other Supports are Available

Click & Go

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare | ARIES | HSE

New!

My Perinatal Self Care "Taking Care of Me"

Are you pregnant or had a baby in the last year? Are you finding it challenging sometimes to self care? Then this online self-paced course is for you!

Build Your Own Personalised Self Care Toolkit

- Physical Wellbeing
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Social Wellbeing
- Intellectual Wellbeing

Want to start learning now? Scan the QR Code or go to: <https://tinyurl.com/PerinatalSelfCare>

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare | ARIES | HSE

New!

My Perinatal Self Care Workbook

Are you pregnant or had a baby in the last year? Are you finding it challenging sometimes to self care? Then this audiobook is for you!

Listen & Build Your Own Personalised Self Care Toolkit

- Physical Wellbeing
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Social Wellbeing
- Intellectual Wellbeing

Want to start listening now? Scan the QR Code or go to: <https://tinyurl.com/PerinatalSelfCareAudiobook>

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare | ARIES | HSE

New!

Visual representation of various digital resources available on a laptop screen, including icons for self-care, mental health, and recovery.

HSE Mid West Community Healthcare | ARIES | HSE

Spotlight on Perinatal Mental Health Partnership



PERINATAL Self Care Taking Care of Me

Workshops | Workbook | Online Course | Audiobook | Resources

This year we saw the fruition of our year long partnership with the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team, UMHL, beginning with the launch of the co-produced self care workbook “My Perinatal Workbook - Taking Care of Me” in October 2023.

Co-produced by women attending the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Service in UMHL, together with members of the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team and Mid West ARIES, the main purpose of this comprehensive Perinatal Self Care Programme is to empower women to create a personalised self care plan to suit their own individual needs and personal recovery goals.

Since the launch of the workbook, we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both perinatal women and staff, along with numerous requests to make copies available to other services. One woman attending the perinatal service shared: *“It is simple, easy to follow (great for reading in between chasing a baby) and has words of encouragement from other mums in my shoes!”* Accessibility and transferability have been central to the development of this programme. Our goal is to provide diverse learning pathways for all perinatal women, with the result that these resources are now being utilised across multiple healthcare settings.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank Pauline Walsh, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team, UMHL, Dr. Mas Mahady, Dr Mas Mahady, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist and SPMHS team lead at UMHL, all of the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team at University Hospital Limerick and the women attending the SPMHT for their support in the co-production of this innovative recovery education initiative.



PERINATAL Self Care Taking Care of Me

New!

PERINATAL SELF CARE WORKSHOPS

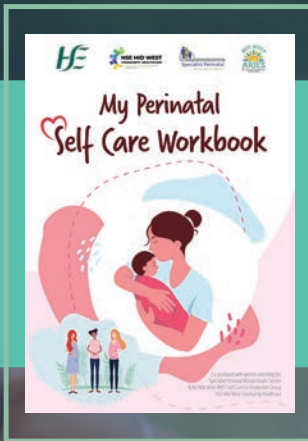
In April 2023, we facilitated our first baby-friendly perinatal workshop “Self Care - Building My Resilience”, aiming to:

- Bring women with similar experiences together
- Foster relationships based on mutual experiences
- Explore self-care opportunities
- Explore ways to overcome self-care barriers



1

2



MY PERINATAL SELF CARE WORKBOOK

Women at that workshop expressed the need for a resource or tool that would help them to prioritise their self care to support their wellbeing and mental health. Our co-produced printed resource “My Perinatal Self Care Workbook” was launched in October 2023, covering *Physical, Emotional, Social & Intellectual Wellness*, with women sharing supportive *messages of hope*.

ONLINE COMPANION COURSE

With access in mind, we launched our companion online self-paced course “My Perinatal Self Care – Taking Care of Me” in April 2024. Available 24/7 from any internet-enabled device including mobile phone, the course mirrors the workbook, with some additional resources such as mindful moments of pause with short guided meditations.



3

4

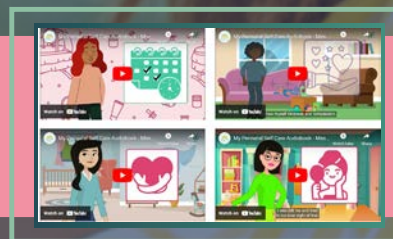


SELF CARE WORKBOOK AUDIOBOOK VERSION

Released in June 2024, this free audiobook version offers an accessible “anytime, anywhere” option for those who want to use the Self-Care Workbook on the go or at home. It has quickly become the most accessed resource in our entire learning portfolio.

ANIMATIONS - MESSAGES OF HOPE

Throughout the resources are the authentic voices of women sharing their stories. These voices are now found in a series of animated shorts shared across social media.



5

Spotlight on Occupational Therapy Partnership

Mid West ARIES has enjoyed a long-standing collaborative and highly productive working relationship with Occupational Therapy, Mid West Mental Health, collaborating on a number of projects including the Creativity for Wellbeing Series in the Hunt Museum. This year a need was identified for a Guide to Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery highlighting the numerous benefits of occupational therapy for people working to improve their mental health and wellbeing through a focus on the everyday activities that bring meaning and purpose to life.



In April 2024, we launched the **Online Guide to Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery**, the first of its kind in the country. This innovative guide utilises a variety of IT tools to enhance understanding of how Occupational Therapy supports mental health recovery. It features video testimonials, interactive quizzes, and live links to community-based support services, all designed to be easily accessible on laptops, PCs, and smartphones. This guide marks the beginning of a series of introductory resources focused on mental health disciplines and services.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank Eithne Egan, Occupational Therapist Manager, Limerick & North Tipperary Adult Mental Health Service and Áine Frawley, Occupational Therapist at St Anne's Community Mental Health Centre for all of their hard work on this project, together with Mary O'Carroll for her wonderful contribution and finally Nuala Kelly, Head of Service, Mental Health for all of her support.

Self-Paced

Guide to Occupational Therapy for Mental Health Recovery

New!

The aims of the guide are:

1. To increase awareness regarding the role of occupational therapy in mental health services.
2. To provide understanding of the guidance and support occupational therapy can give to a person on their mental health recovery journey.
3. To help people know what to expect when they attend occupational therapy.
4. To dispel some myths regarding occupational therapy as a profession and service.



The Guide is designed to be highly interactive and engaging for learners. It includes:

- Staff videos explaining Occupational Therapy and what to expect during your first appointment.
- A video message someone using the service sharing how Occupational Therapy supported her recovery journey.
- A “Myth Busting” section featuring a fun and educational True/False quiz to address common misconceptions about Occupational Therapy.
- Information on local resources to support further learning and access to services.

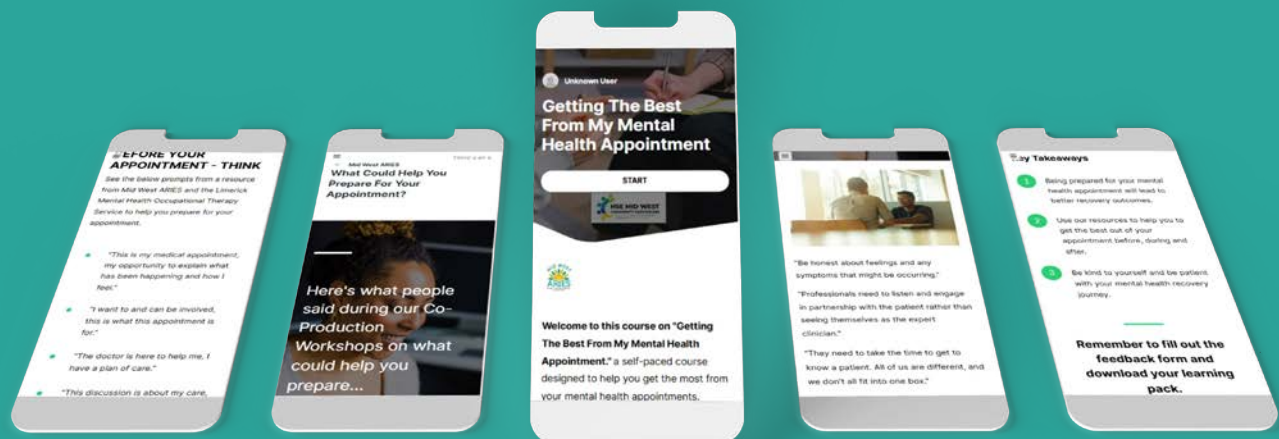
Self-Paced

Getting the Best from My Mental Health Appointment



The aims of this co-produced short course are:

1. To help individuals using mental health services learn how to effectively prepare for their appointments, ensuring they get the most out of each clinical interaction.
2. To guide learners in understanding what steps they can take before, during, and after their mental health appointments to enhance and support their recovery journey.
3. To empower service users with the confidence to attend and engage in their appointments, thereby reducing the number of missed appointments, or “Did Not Attends” (DNAs).



Designed to engage and empower learners in actively participating in their mental health recovery, this course offers:

- Three distinct sections focusing on **Before, During, and After** a mental health appointment.
- Prompts and checklists to assist learners in preparing for their appointments.
- Practical advice gathered from participants who contributed to our co-production sessions.
- Downloadable resources to help service users identify strategies for making the most of their mental health appointments.

"I discovered what resilience was and discovered I can be resilient."



What People Say About Our Workshops

Live & Recorded Webinars



Our monthly webinars, in partnership with Mental Health Ireland, have continued to serve as a dynamic platform for promoting and discussing key mental health topics. This year's webinars covered a wide range of subjects, including co-production, research, policy and practice, counselling, the role of food and exercise in wellbeing, and strategies for coping with grief. We would like to thank our wonderful panellists who brought their authentic voices, insights and knowledge

to each panel discussion. They came from a range of disciplines and organisations including the University of Limerick, the Acute Psychiatric Services Mid West, the National Office for Mental Health Engagement & Recovery, Mental Health Associations, Paul Partnership and IPS (*Individual Placement & Support*). **This year we hosted 11 webinars, engaging 179 live attendees, generating 638 video views, and attracting 215 podcast plays, resulting in 1,032 total engagements.**



We record and share each monthly webinar via our YouTube Channel @MidWestARIES, and as a long form podcast as "The Wellness Panel", available on Spotify and all podcast platforms. This extends our reach for this initiative and brings our message to new audiences.



Our Messaging Social Media



Guided by our Social Media Communications Strategy we continue to use a number of social media platforms to inform, engage and signpost. We are delighted to see its effectiveness with an increase in reach and engagement.

OUR GOALS

- To increase engagement and interaction with our stakeholders.
- To offer trustworthy, evidence-based recovery focused learning resources.
- To provide signposting to mental health information and supports.
- To raise awareness around recovery education, highlighting that recovery from mental health challenges is possible.
- To create an online community for people passionate about recovery education.
- To help build and maintain important connections with community partners in the Mid West region.
- To promote our online and in person events and self-paced learning to reach a wider audience.



“Everybody’s voice was respected, it is nice that everyone got asked for their contribution, as everyone’s ideas should be heard.”



What People Say **About Our Workshops**

A Year Of Engagement



In the second year in my role of Mid West Lead for Mental Health Engagement, it has been a time of change and opportunity to engage further with service users and their families and staff in mental health services. Each engagement is valuable, whether as a provider of feedback, or request for information, or consultation and planning to inform new initiatives or improve the experience for people in mental health services.

There are a range of supports and services which assist at the level of need, from social connection at the community level, to general healthcare through the GP-service user relationship to specialist level healthcare such as mental health services. It can be a challenge to keep informed and to find the right support at the right time. To address this, the **Mid West Directory of Services & Supports for Mental Health Recovery** had been proposed by services users at the local and area forum level and was published as a 2024 version in March of this year. The beautiful illustrations are the work of creative service user engagement in a co-production session with Aoife Boland (previous Area Lead) and graphic illustrator Esther Blodau. The 5 illustrations of CHIME are throughout the listing which contain emergency contact numbers, and a location-based A-Z list of services and supports for recovery by county, and many regional and national contacts that may be useful. This gathering of information is designed to be useful in healthcare or community settings.

In order to meet people where they are, engagements throughout the year took place in various locations, from community meetings with residents in acute psychiatry services and community venues for local forum engagements. Community partners such as Grow Mental Health and Limerick Mental Health Association provided their ideal venues for some of these engagements. Shared reflections on experiences and suggested improvements and solutions offer the service user perspective and knowledge which directly benefits service improvement. Feedback via individual calls and one-to-one meetings provided valuable insight which provides an alternative where group days/times or setting do not suit everyone.

Meetings of MHS working groups, committees and management teams are not included in these figures, however these are the ongoing work of staff to manage and develop mental health services that meet the needs of people who experience mental illness in the Mid West. Staff interest in engagement and the co-production approach has been important to the further development of engagement this year and I appreciate this vital support.

The largest proportion of engagements in this year represented staff-service user engagement through the community singing initiative Chimers choir, supported by Mental Health Engagement and Mid West HSE Values in Action. This group of service users, supporters and staff (current and retired) provides a space for social connection and interaction where there is no stigmatisation and the focus is on the shared interest in using the voice musically. Research continues to grow around the mental health benefits in relation to group singing. The specific feedback from the group this year highlights the important Connectedness impact. When asked, **“What do you like about Chimers?”** responses included *“The company and fun and learning new songs”* and *“The banter, not taking it too seriously”*.

The involvement of staff and service users in peer-led initiatives will be an important focus in the coming year. It has been a privilege to meet and work cooperatively with all the individuals with whom I have had the opportunity to engage with this year, including colleagues in Mid West ARIES.

Is mise,

Rosemary Ryan
Area Lead Mental Health Engagement
HSE Mid West

NATIONAL WORKING GROUPS UPDATES

Member of the Peer Support Epistemological Position multi-stakeholder group led by Michael Norton in MHER national office which is working to establish the current evidence base and recommendations for protecting and promoting the lived experience role of peer support and family peer support workers.

Member of the Inpatient Access Review group led by Una Twomey in MHER national office which has a focus on current pathways and best practice model to improve the experience of service users who may require an acute psychiatric care stay.



However, it is the collaborative work with HSE staff, service users and community organisations which has been most memorable in this second year. I am delighted to report a significant increase in the number of engagement events and the number of individual contacts made.

Engagement Year in Numbers

ENGAGEMENT TYPE	ATTENDED
Community Meetings	11
Consultations	24
Expression of Interest	5
Feedback - Group	99
Feedback-Individual	8
Information Requests	13
National Engagements	3
Planning	41
Service User Engagement	26
Staff - Service User Engagement	368
Training	17
TOTALS	615

Engagement Year in Numbers

615 engagements with individuals across the Mid West Region

- **110 attended at group meetings**
- **21 individual requests** for information on mental health services and community support organisations, and feedback on experiences where services met and did not meet needs at the time
- **24 attended consultations**- focus groups on My Care Plan in acute services and Experiences of mental health care for MTU research into Trauma Informed Services.
- **58 engagements in planning and training sessions** facilitated by the Area Lead with a peer development and community organisation driven focus
- **5 new expressions of interest** to become involved in Engagement from people with experience of mental health services
- **3 Mid West representation at national events** - the national Engagement Conference and launch of the current National MHER Mental Health Engagement Framework 2024-2028
- **394 Staff-Service User Engagements** - includes the community singing mixed group Chimers, Christmas forum gathering and visits with Hope/Worry Exchange to University Hospital Limerick.



CHIMERS
GROUP SINGING
Singing To Lift Your Week
No Experience Needed
Come try it out & see if it's for you?
Where:
St Joseph's Health Campus, Mulgrave
Street, Limerick
When: Mondays 5:30pm-6:30pm

Music Therapist led Community Singing.
Call in from 5 pm for tea/coffee & chat.

Group Singing Benefits to Wellbeing

- Positive Mood Boost
- Reduced Anxiety
- Benefits for Stress Management

Contact Details:
Rosemary Ryan- Area Lead Mental Health Engagement
Phone: 087 6560854

Marie O'Flynn - Lead for Values in Action
Phone: 086 6055545

HSE Mental Health Engagement & Recovery
HSE MID WEST COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE
HE
VA

Engagement Funding has supported:

- Local forum activity
- Workshops in Creativity for Wellbeing with ARIES
- Focus groups on trauma informed mental health services with MTU researchers
- Exercise Gym Activation 4 week pilot with Limerick Sports Partnership at UHL Acute Psychiatry Unit
- Chimers Community Choir
- Arts project Embrace Arts with

Engagement

Some Highlights



Chimers Community Choir began in 2018. Service users and staff meet to sing together in St Joseph's Campus main building. It is a wonderful outlet to use your voice in harmony with others. Monday evenings 5:30-6:30pm are the practice nights. A link with rehabilitation psychiatry has led to opportunities to sing with service users at the Christmas party and in the acute psychiatry unit in UHL. This is supported by MH Engagement, HSE Values in Action Lead Marie O'Flynn and by nursing staff without whom it would not be so successful.

The **Community Education Series** coordinated by Mary Purcell GROW Regional Manager, introduced topics relevant to mental health. The 4 week series was held in Cappamore, supported by the community, with various weekly themes: *Mental Health Recovery*, *Sleep*, *Addiction* and *Physical Activity*, which I was delighted to speak on under the title "Why be Active?". Attendees at the series came from the east Limerick area and ranged widely in age from teens to older adults. After looking at the physiological effects, I introduced the CHIME principles as the mental health benefits of regularly doing an activity you enjoy are very much linked with Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning & Purpose and Empowerment. The concept was new to some attending and the variety of activities people chose as their outlet for exercise was interesting, walking emerged as the most popular overall as an outlet for being active.



The Mental Health Engagement Framework 2024 - 2028 was launched on April 16th 2024. Support for service user and supporters' engagement is evident at the national level. Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People Mary Butler and Head of Mental Health Operations Dervila Aires spoke at the launch of the Framework in Dublin. This framework provides a context and establishes the clear aims, outlines a variety of methods for engagement, with actions and measurement of outcomes.

"I don't feel alone,
I think I can get
better."



What People Say About Our Workshops



Recovery & Well-Being Education
in Mental Health

Mid West ARIES

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University Business Complex,
Limerick, V94 CK65

Tel. (061) 492085 / 085 8768517

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