

Discover/Recover Theatre Project Activities 2017 Summary and Evaluation



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“ *The real human experience of mental health difficulties, are all around us, but we often don’t see it. It is rarely spoken about and the details of the impact on individuals and families are rarely shared.*

This project through the sharing of sincere true life stories offers not only a rare glimpse into a hidden world, but also offers enlightenment and hope. ”

Through partnerships between the **Waterford/Wexford Mental Health Services (HSE)**, the **Wexford Mental Health Association**, local schools and local theatre groups, the project has evolved to date.

The model of the project is to invite participants to engage with the topic of mental health and suicide through the mediums of:

- › **Live drama performance**
- › **Post-Performance Workshop facilitated by mental health professionals**
- › **Project Booklet**

The project has received national funding from **HSE National Office for Mental Health Engagement**, **ESB Energy for Generations**, **National Lottery Funding**. These valuable stakeholders, as well as a partnership with **Carlow Mental Health Association** enabled the project to reach young people and communities across Wexford and Carlow. “A Face in the Crowd” was also part of the **First Fortnight Festival in Dublin 4th January 2018**.



Discover/Recover Theatre Project Activities 2017: **A Summary**

1

**Sell Out Performance
Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin
(First Fortnight Mental Health Arts Festival)**

4

**Performances for the Public
Carlow/Wexford**

7

Performances for Secondary Schools

29

Educational Workshops

Reaching in total:

OVER 1200

Audience Members

including 889

Secondary School Students



We gathered impact measurement at all performances for schools which indicated that the programme was very positively received by students and teachers alike:

“Powerful, honestly, performed amazingly”

“It opened by eyes both to myself and other people”

We believe there is value in reaching out to other communities in Ireland, enabling people from all walks of life, young and old, to engage with the material. We feel the stories, the themes and learning opportunities are transferrable nationwide.



The project as a whole has received national recognition and following adjudication by the **Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland** was the recipient of the prestigious **Ann Beckett Award 2016**. The adjudicators were impressed by the life changing and even lifesaving aspects of the project.



Evaluation of the Discover/Recover Theatre Project Activities 2017 Educational Drama Model - Evaluation

1

Sell Out Performance
Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin
(First Fortnight Mental Health Arts Festival)

7

Performances for Secondary Schools

4

Performances for the Public
Carlow/Wexford

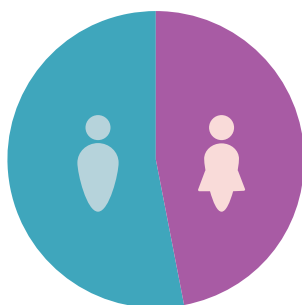
29

Educational Workshops

Total Number Of Participants In The Evaluation:

386

43% of total of **889** secondary school programme participants



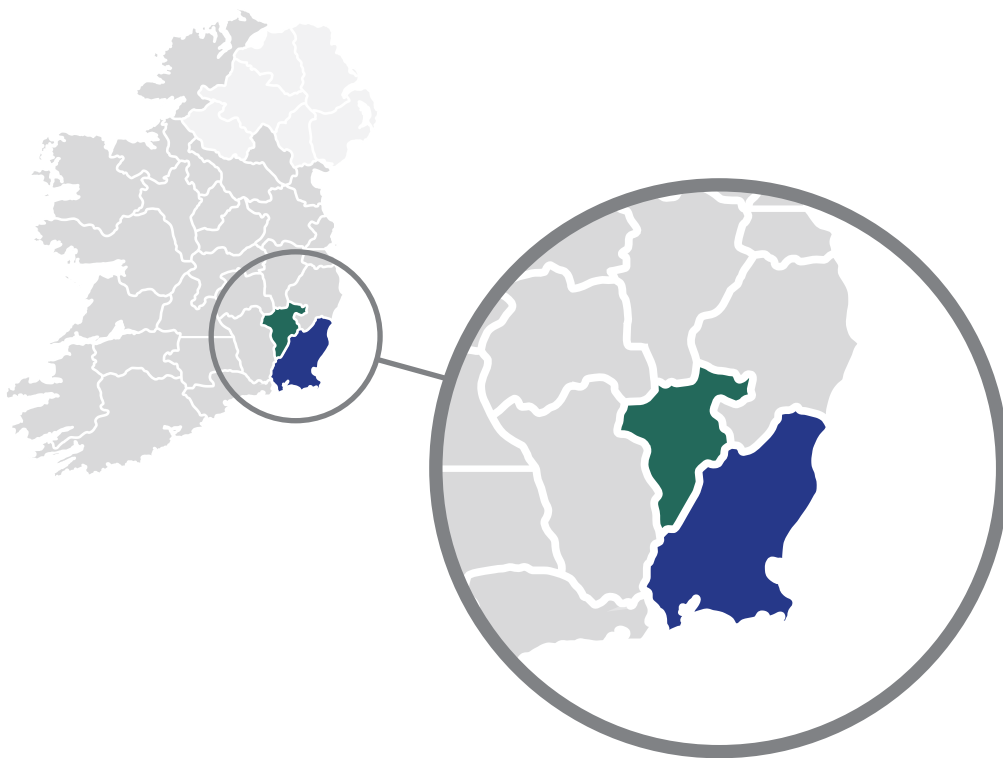
204 Male Students

182 Female Students

78%

Participated in the evaluation.
That's 11 out of the total 14 schools
that participated in the project.





45%

**Of Wexford Secondary Schools
Participated in the Programme.
That's 10 out of 22 schools**

36%

**Of Carlow Secondary Schools
Participated in the Programme.
That's 4 out of 11 schools**

Of the 11 Schools that Participated in the Evaluation, there was



1 **Single Sex
Girls' School**



3 **Single Sex
Boys' Schools**



7 **Co-Educational
Schools**

36% **of the schools were vocational
educational colleges.
That's 4 out of the total 11**





Q

The first goal of the Discover/Recover project was to make you more aware of mental health and mental health difficulties. To what extent do you think we achieved this goal?

Students specifically commented on how the use of real life stories and the medium of drama was effective in informing them about mental health and mental health related difficulties.



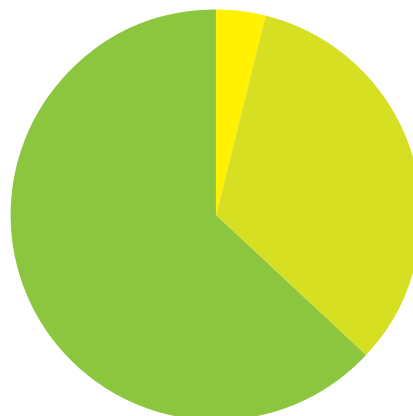
"It really opened my eyes and kind of explained to me what mental health really was."



"The play made mental health more real as we heard real peoples experiences."

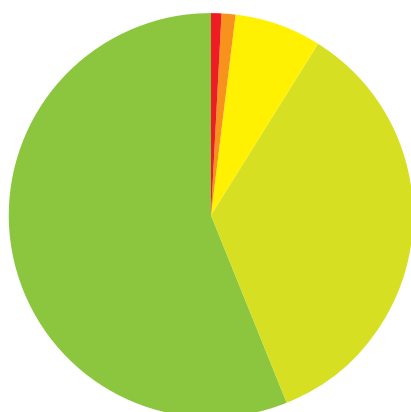


"Most mental health talks don't understand what it's personally like, but the personal stories made this a lot more relatable."



The second goal of the Discover/Recover project was to promote you to seek help if you're experiencing changes in or difficulties related to your mental health. To what extent do you think we achieved this goal?

Q



Students highlighted the dilemma of the challenge of asking for help and the consequences of not asking for help, indicating a gap here in terms of skills that promote help seeking, and anxieties that still exist around help seeking for mental health challenges. The young people appeared to value being provided with contact details for a range of organisations.



"Made me realise at what stage you need to ask for help."



"When you say that you can talk to people, but it's not easy and it could be difficult. It's just the way you say it, you make it sound easy."



"Brilliant, the contact numbers on the back of the leaflet are an excellent idea."





Q

The third goal of the Discover/Recover project was to get the message out there that people recover from mental health challenges and there is always a better day ahead. To what extent do you think we have achieved this goal?

Students reflected that the real life stories in the play demonstrate that the intensity of distress did not last forever and that recovery is possible, instilling a message of hope and offering a sense of perspective on life's challenges.



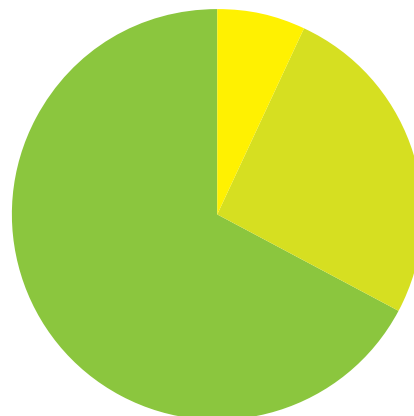
"It proves people can get better and there are more days ahead."



"I myself have gone through a lot of difficult times and I now see that there is a way out of how I may feel by talking to people."



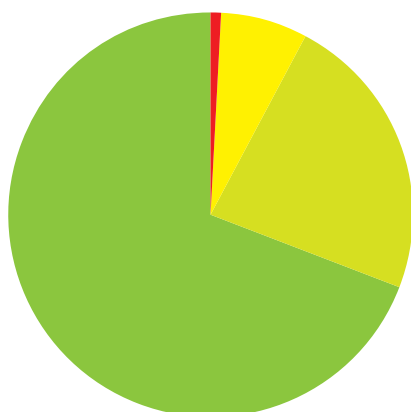
"Made it very clear that no problems last a lifetime."



What is your opinion on the play "A Face in the Crowd"?

Q

Students spoke positively regarding the quality of the writing, acting and stage production of the play. They commented on the emotive nature of the piece and how it increased their awareness of their own mental health but that of others in their community.



"Very realistic and amazing acting and story. Brilliant play."



"Incredibly moving and informative. Lets you know there's better days ahead."



"I would have liked to hear more stories, but I liked the fact they put in Mikes story, it made it more relatable."

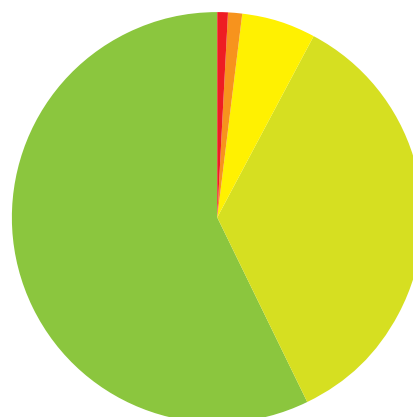




Q

What is your opinion on The Workshop?

Overall students found the Mental Health Education workshop useful and informative. Students valued the opportunity to discuss the characters and themes in the play, and valued the quality of the workshop. Recommendations included making the workshop more interactive.



"Slideshow helped, visual was nice."



"Brilliant – fantastic programme to raise awareness."



"More of these workshops in this school please."



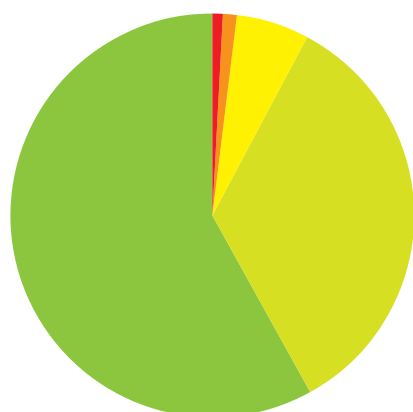
"Good but could be more interactive."



"Learnt a lot, to help me through a bad day."

What is your opinion on The Leaflet?

Q



Students reported to find the workshop leaflet both helpful and informative, and gave positive feedback on the provision of contact details for organisations. They felt the leaflet was accessible and highlighted that the spectrum of mental health was not only useful identifying and describing where they are in relation to their well-being but also for signposting them in how to manage the various stages of well-being from early warning signs to crisis.



"I liked the chart and made me see what colour I'm in."



"Very effective and visually interactive."



"The leaflet was useful to know what sources of help I have."



"Very helpful, will use again to help myself and anyone I know going through recovery."



Impact of having more knowledge of Mental health and Recovery and Potential Use in the Future.

Students felt that overall the programme increased their awareness of mental health and normalised the experience for them.

They reported a significant increase in their confidence and ability to either seek help for themselves or others in the future and an increased sense of confidence in their ability to manage their own mental health and that of others around them.

Students felt that the message of recovery and hope was one they would resonate with them in the future and that the way in which suicide is dealt with in the play could be life saving.

“If I ever feel in any way suicidal I know I can get through.”

“To know I always will recover and this happens to everyone.”

“You know that you will always have something to help and make you look forward even though things aren’t looking good right now.”

“That no problem lasts your whole life.”

“My family have a history of mental health so I know what to do if it happens to me.”

“Should I go through a problem I will know how to handle it.”

“This could be useful to help a friend in need or to help myself if I experienced signs of mental health.”

“Could help save a life.”



Report compiled by **Discover/Recover Project Team** kindly supported by
Elaine Power, Wexford Mental Health Association

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CAST

Liam Hourican	Mike
Sean Duggan	Joe
Clare Barrett	Sarah
Olga Wehrley	Margaret
Jim Roche	Frank

CREW

Jim Roche	Director
Set and Lighting Design	John Gunning
Stage Manager	Stephanie Ryan
Original Music and Sound Design	Denis Clohessy

STORY TELLERS

John Cloney
Jennifer O'Brien
Helen Finn
Liam O'Rourke
Angela Dubovskaja
Patricia O'Neill



