



**Loreto Centre  
Crumlin  
Annual Report**

*Community Adult Education  
&  
Counselling Service*

**September 2016- August 2017**

*Registered Charity: Reg No. 20042011 Chy no. 13464*

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## **HISTORY OF LORETO CENTRE**

The Loreto Centre was initially established by the Loreto Sisters in 1998 for the purpose of providing low-cost adult community education and a back-up counselling service to people in the Dublin 12 and surrounding areas. The Trustees of the Loreto Centre are the Provincial Leadership Team of the Loreto Sisters (IBVM), Irish Province. The provision of community education in the Loreto Centre is provided from the perspective of the Loreto educational philosophy.

## **VISION AND VALUES**

Loreto Education communities are animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, foundress of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto). They are centred in God, rooted in Christ and based on Gospel values. Our vision is that they will be educational communities where each person has the experience of being valued; where all who participate in the learning process enjoy a liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a difference in our world.

Based on this fundamental belief in the uniqueness of each person, the Loreto Centre has as its main object to inspire and encourage all participants in its programmes to recognise and find their full potential. The aim stems from the conviction that, given the right support, respect and encouragement, individuals are enabled to develop and become empowered so that they feel better about themselves, become more tolerant of others, form better relationships and thereby contribute to the well-being of families, communities and the society in which they live.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to enable and empower people to develop their own resources for more creative and effective living within the context of their personal lives and within their families and to participate in building a supportive personal and community network.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The main object of the Centre is to advance education through the provision of adult Community education and pastoral care, of both men and women in Dublin 12 and surrounding areas, which in turn will benefit themselves, their families and the community in which they live, in accordance with the educational philosophy of the Loreto Sisters (IBVM), Irish Province.

In furtherance of the aforementioned main objective, the Centre has the following subsidiary / ancillary objectives:

- To provide adults in the community with appropriate education and counselling services;
- To enable and empower men and women to develop their own resources for more creative and effective living and to participate in building a supportive community network;

- To respond to the needs of the local community by providing course opportunities to promote healthy living, healing, growth and development of skills relevant to both personal and community needs;
- To provide an atmosphere of welcome and hospitality, a place where men and women can come to share, listen, or find space for quiet and reflection;
- To establish co-operative links with agencies and networks in both statutory and voluntary sectors at local level.

## **GOVERNANCE**

The Board of Management is governed by its Constitution as amended and approved by the Trustees and Board of Management on the 17th day of September 2012.

### **Methods used to recruit and appoint new Board Members**

The members of the Board are appointed, according to the procedures outlined in Paragraph 6 of the Constitution, as follows:

The Trustees will appoint the members of the Board of Management following appropriate consultation.

The Board of Management shall consist of at least six persons, not fewer than half of whom shall be nominated by the Trustees. The remaining persons shall be nominated by the Board of Management.

The term of office of the current Board of Management, as at the 1st day of February 2015, shall be deemed expired on the 31st January 2018

Thereafter the term of office for a member of the Board of Management shall be for three years but shall extend until the annual meeting subsequent to the lapse of these three years. Any member of the Board may be reappointed for one successive term if the Trustees see fit.

The nomination and appointment of members of an incoming Board shall be made and done at least one month before the date of expiry of the term of office of the then existing Board, and the Board so constituted shall assume office forthwith on that expiry date.

The Trustees shall fill any vacancy which occurs in the Board of Management. A member of the Board of Management appointed to fill a mid-term vacancy shall hold office for the same period as the member replaced.

### **Board of Management 2016- 2017**

Mary Upton, Chairperson	Anne O' Dwyer, Treasurer	Catherine Lynch	Beatrice Hughes
Marie Celine Clegg	Suzanne Doyle	Jane Bailey	Louise Clarke

**LORETO CENTRE CRUMLIN BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ATTENDANCE**

**September 2016 - August 2017**

BOARD MEMBERS	26 <sup>th</sup> Sept	21 Nov	9 Jan	27 Feb	10 April	12 June	Total
Jane Bailey	√	√	X	√	√	√	5/6
Louise Clarke	X	√	√	X	X	√	3/6
Marie Celine Clegg	X	√	√	√	√	√	5/6
Suzanne Doyle	X	√	√	√	√	√	5/6
Catherine Lynch	X	X	X	√	√	√	3/6
Beatrice Hughes	√	√	X	√	X	√	4/6
Anne O' Dwyer	√	√	√	√	√	√	6/6
Mary Upton	√	√	√	√	√	√	6/6

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2016-2017**

The year 2016/2017 was the year in which the Centre had the opportunity to avail in full of the excellent physical improvements and upgrading of the Centre following major remedial and renewal works carried out during the previous year. The Board is now very proud of the bright, attractive, safe facility that is available to our workers and clients. This renewed environment and the quality of the upgrading that took place is due to the very generous support of the Loreto Community and Trustees and the Board wishes to record again their gratitude for this on-going support.

The diverse courses and supports provided by the Centre continued to be widely availed of by the local community over the past year. It is a hallmark of the Centre that the courses and services offered are continuously monitored and reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate to the target groups for whom they are intended. Participants are invited to answer a questionnaire on each course so that the Centre can obtain feedback on the quality and relevance of the courses. It is reassuring that the many courses on offer are highly valued by those taking part.

The main source of referrals to the counselling and psychotherapy services continues to be through local medical practitioners. This is an indicator of the recognition by the profession of the value of the services. Other local services also refer clients to the Centre and many others have heard of the Centre through "word of mouth". This reflects the satisfaction rate of those who have previously undertaken a course or services in the Centre and who consider it worthy of a recommendation.

The age profile, gender status and social inclusion profile of course participants continue to remain broadly similar to previous years. The profile of those presenting for counselling and psychotherapy services is also in line with that of previous years. The Centre endeavours to continue to accommodate those people who live or work locally by seeking feedback regularly to ensure that the services provided are appropriate to their needs. It is the objective of the Board to provide, as far as possible, the services that are needed and the Board is always open to considering new courses or services if resources allow.

The Board regularly reviews its policy documents to ensure that the services provided are of the highest quality and that the Centre also meets all statutory requirements in relation to the protection of clients and workers. Substantial work was carried out during the year to ensure that the Centre was compliant with the requirements of the Charities Act. Arising from the proposed new European legislative requirement around data protection, the Board has commenced work on preparing for the updated legislation. Preparation for full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) will continue during the coming year. The Centre website has also been updated during the year to provide a new-look and user friendly site.

Succession planning continues to occupy the Board to ensure that the future of the Board and the services provided in the Centre can continue with confidence for the foreseeable future. Arising from this need, the funding opportunities for the Centre continue to engage the Board. The Board acknowledges the very generous financial support provided by the Trustees. Other funders are also listed in the full report and their continued support is very important to the Centre.

The continuing input of the volunteer Board members is vital to the effective and efficient running of the Centre. Their diverse range of skills and their constructive contributions at Board meetings is essential to the maintenance of the high standards which the Board is committed to. I am very grateful to the Board members for the oversight they bring to the Board and their dedication to the work and values of the Centre.

The Board acknowledges the commitment of the workers and volunteers who are dedicated to providing the highest quality service to the Board and to everybody who visits the Centre in any capacity.

The Centre is dependent in particular on Sr. Brede Quirke who manages the facility so effectively and who is totally committed to ensuring that every aspect of the service is of the highest quality. Sr. Brede continues to be the anchor for the Centre and sets the standards for all of us. She is ably supported by Sr. Anne O'Dwyer who is always available in whatever capacity is needed.

The Board will always focus on the primary purpose for which the Centre was established. That focus refers to the needs and aspirations of those who use the services of the Centre, whatever that level of need might be. It is because of the clients that the Centre exists and the Board will continue to modify, improve or introduce new services as demand arises and in so far as resources will allow.

*Mary Upton*

*Chairperson of Board of Management*

## **ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

Community Education is seen as an empowering process of personal and community transformation, challenge, social change and collective responsiveness. It is community led, reflecting and valuing the lived experiences of individuals and their community. Through its ethos and holistic approach, community education builds the capacity of groups to engage in developing a social teaching and learning process that is creative, participative and needs-based. Community education is grounded in principles of justice, equality and inclusiveness.

The Centre organises and provides course opportunities to build confidence and self-esteem, develop new skills, build up accreditation and to help people become more actively involved in their local community: In reviewing and evaluating the responses from the learners over the past few years we have noticed an increasing demand for classes in psycho-education. Learners have asked for classes in issues that are relevant to their relationships in the home and in the workplace. Issues such as self-esteem, bullying, grief, loss and ability to cope with change are just some of the issues learners want to explore. We are developing short courses to respond to these requests. There is still demand for classes in holistic education. These are particularly valuable to learners who find themselves living alone and somewhat isolated.

### **What we offer**

The Loreto Centre runs a variety of courses each morning between 10am-1pm:

#### **Psycho-education**

- ◆ Making Sense of Life's Changes
- ◆ How Much are you Worth?
- ◆ Finding Harmony in Body & Mind

#### **Holistic Education**

- ◆ Tai Chi
- ◆ Mindfulness Meditation
- ◆ Flower Arranging
- ◆ Art
- ◆ Yoga
- ◆ Crochet/Crafts

#### **Academic Education**

- ◆ UCD Outreach Programme in Women, Gender & Social Justice Studies (level 7)
- ◆ Introduction to Women, Gender & Social Justice Studies

## COURSES DELIVERED:

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 428 people attended classes in the Loreto Centre. The breakdown for each class is as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Autumn 2016</b>	<b>Spring 2017</b>	<b>Summer 2017</b>
Tai Chi	17	17	12
Mindfulness Meditation I	17	11	9
Mindfulness Meditation II	17	14	12
Flower Arranging	13	14	15
Making Sense of Life's Changes	15	8	N/A
Art	14	13	11
Certificate in Women, Gender & Social Justice	23	N/A	N/A
Introduction to Women, Gender & Social Justice	N/A	N/A	32
Yoga I	16	10	14
Yoga II	14	13	13
Crochet	10	8	7
Finding Harmony in Body & Mind	N/A	17	9
How Much Are You Worth?	13	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>428</b>		

## COURSE TERMS:

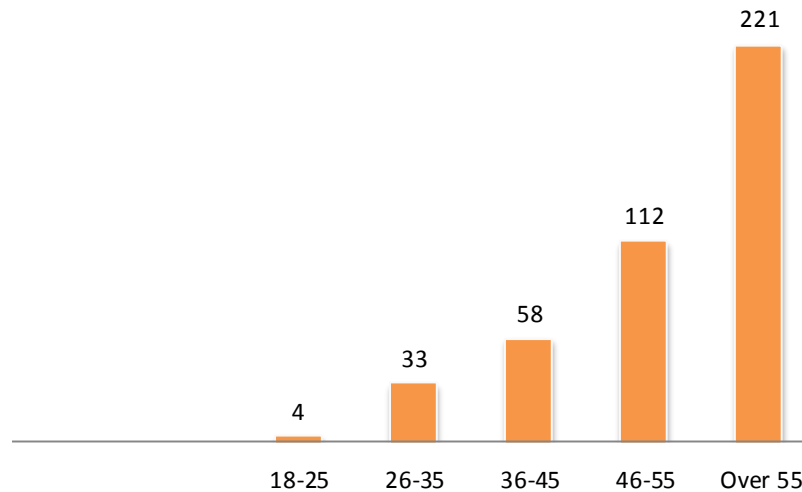
Courses run from:   September - December   - 10 weeks  
                                   January - April                   - 8weeks  
                                   May - June                       - 8weeks



## STATISTICS OF LEARNER POPULATION—428 LEARNERS

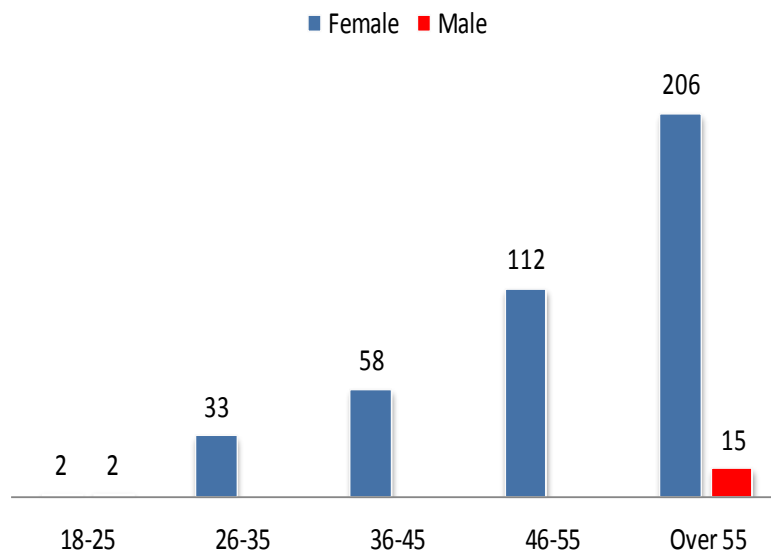
Tables 1 and 2 describe the age profile and the gender of the learners. This is similar to the trend noted in the last Annual Report.

**Age Profile of Learners Table No. 1**



**Gender of learners within age profile**

**Table No. 2**



To ensure that our classes meet the needs of the learners the Loreto Centre uses a measuring instrument designed by the Limerick City Adult Education Service to capture the benefits of adult community-based learning. This pilot initiative entitled “Capturing the Wider Benefits of Learning” sets out to devise simple tools and methodologies around two elements of non-formal learning:

This pilot initiative entitled “Capturing the Wider Benefits of Learning” sets out to devise simple tools and methodologies around two elements of non-formal learning:

1. Learning outcomes which learners used to access their skill level ‘before and after participating in

uncertified courses.

2. Evidence about the wider benefits of learning, specifically the impact of community education on key areas of peoples' lives, families and wider community.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES—We use this Tool/Methodology:**

- To find out what learners want from the course and set learning outcomes.
- To allow learners at the end of the course to reflect on their progress and identify benefits of learning.
- To record vital data about the impact of Community Education courses which will help Loreto Centre Adult Community Education programme with reporting and planning.

### **COURSE OUTCOMES**

In each Annual Report we feature the measured outcomes of a selection of the courses which have been delivered over the past year along with a short response from the tutor. Much more detailed reports have been submitted to the respective funders as part of the reporting procedures. This year we will focus on two classes offered in psycho education. There has been an increasing demand for classes on topics such as self awareness, self esteem, assertiveness and managing the challenges of life. The two tutors Angela Amirault and Therese Larkin have designed courses over three terms in responses to these requests. Angela facilitated the following course each term:

Here is a short account of the material and experiences of the course from Angela's perspective

### **HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH? (10 Weeks) - *A course looking at increasing self-esteem and self-worth.***

How do you value yourself? This is at the core of the ten week course entitled: How Much Are You Worth. Over the weeks participants contemplated their self-worth and learned practical steps on how to value themselves more highly. The weeks were divided into five sections: History, Negative Thinking, Realising Potential, Tools and Accepting Success. This allowed those in the course to examine where the negative view of themselves may have originated and how it impacts their everyday lives. With the mix of personal exploration and psychoeducation the learners were able to find more compassion for themselves and their journey.

### **FINDING HARMONY IN BODY AND MIND:**

Unless we look at ourselves as a whole entity with many moving parts it's difficult to feel grounded and content. In the course Finding Harmony in Body in Mind we looked at the way we treat our body impacts the way we feel in our body. Starting with nutrition, the course examined how what we put into our body causes chemical reactions which then changes how we feel. From there the course got participants to look at their own reactions around food and mood with a goal of demonstrating how food becomes a way to cope or to avoid feeling. In the final weeks learners were asked to explore what activities they enjoy and ways they could appreciate their body; no matter what their size or shape.

The goal of the course was to teach that having a holistic view of ourselves not only makes sense but helps us be in tune with our needs, body mind and soul.

## **MAKING SENSE OF LIFE'S CHANGES**

This ten week course looked at strategies for coping with difficult, painful and confusing times in our lives. It was facilitated by Therese Larkin in the Autumn and Spring Term. Here is a short account of the material and experiences of the course from Therese's perspective.

The material offered in the class affirmed that change happens but reflection on it and engaging in the process is our choice. It is natural and good but it can be hard to navigate which is often the reason we resist it. This class offered a thorough understanding of the experience of change in our lives. Throughout the course reflective exercises and artistic styles of expression such as poetry, music and pictures were



used to help personalise the information presented. Any group interaction was done at a level where the participants felt at ease and emotionally safe. They were aware that support was available through our counselling service if any deep challenges emerged that required extra attention in private.

The feedback received was very positive. The objectives were achieved. People felt affirmed in their experience, understood it better and found positive ways of coping with the challenge of change in their own lives. See Tables 3 and 4.

### **What the learners said:**

*"I found the course very helpful in identifying ways and means of coping with difficulties. The course was very constructive and delivered at a very suitable pace. Emotional at times but thought provoking. Very worthwhile course"*

*"The course was excellent, engaging and very well put together and thought provoking. Highly recommend the course, loved the interaction, exercises given were brilliant"*

*"Found Course gave rise to a lot of unresolved issues in the past and hope and encouragement. To be more positive and proactive in future decisions"*

*"I've come a long way throughout this course. I heard about it from a sister of mine. I will continue to do courses at the centre. I have a much better routine which was something I did not have, and I'm motivated. Therese is a very very good tutor, very patient but firm and doesn't let the class run away with chat which we are inclined to do. Overall I enjoyed this course very much and would recommend it"*

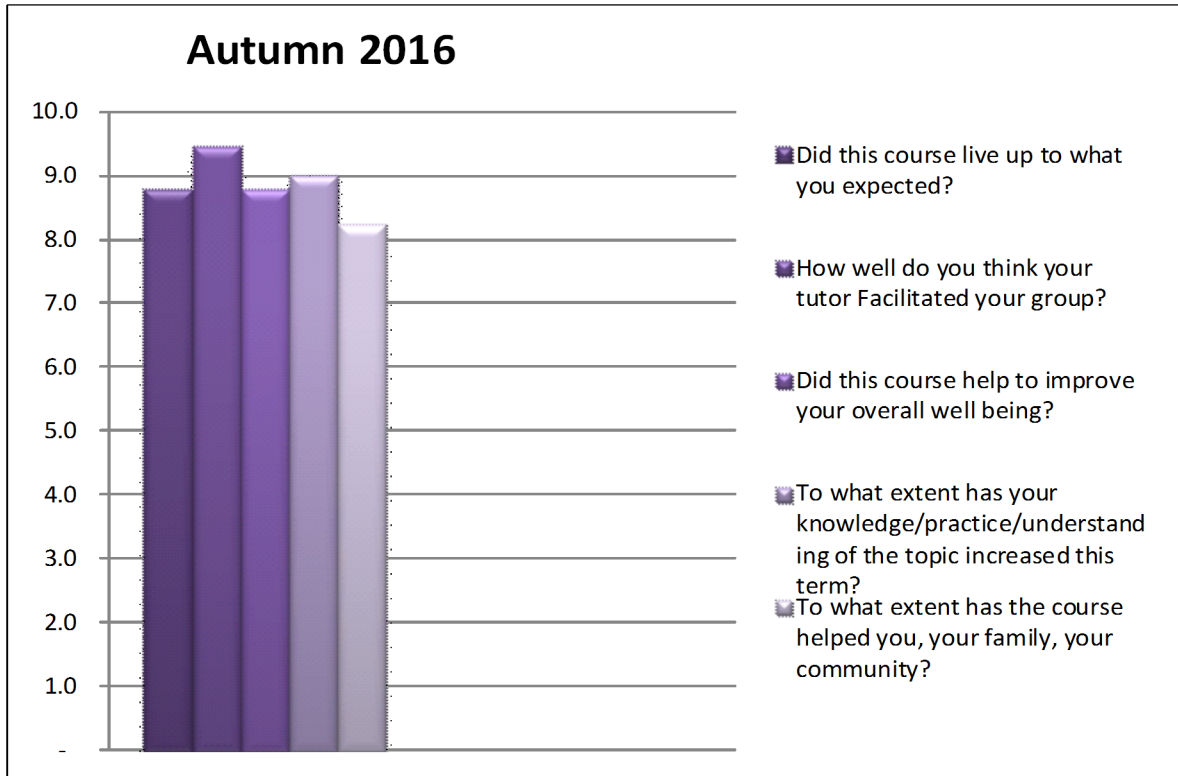
*"I enjoyed the course, done me the world of good"*

*"Course was conducive to self-change in a busy world. It was so relaxing. Tutor was exceptional and made the class very enjoyable"*

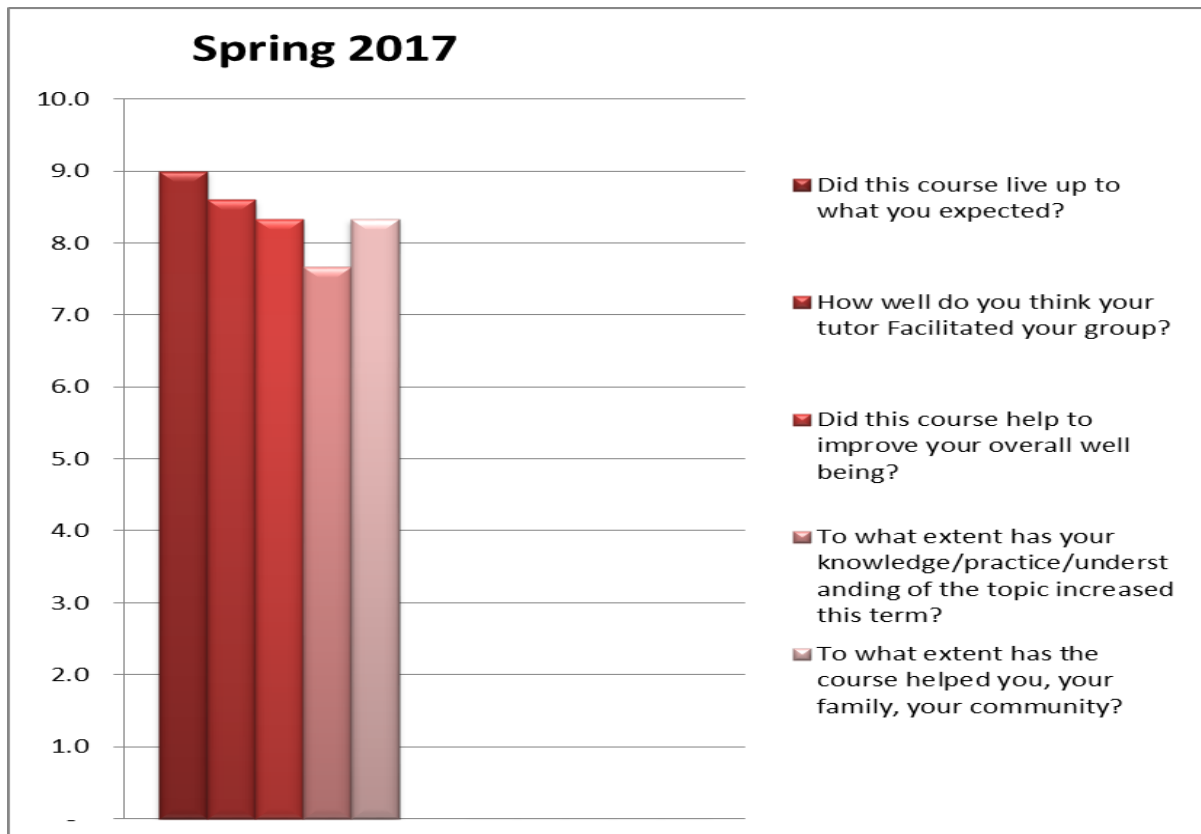
## MAKING SENSE OF LIFE'S CHANGES

Table 3 and 4 captures the feedback from learners over two terms.

**Table no. 3**



**Table no. 4**



## **THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION FOR EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS**

### **CERTIFICATE IN WOMEN, GENDER AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDIES**

Community-based adult education is not just a means to an economic end, but rather a community based adult education experience that benefits the learner, their family and the wider society. It has a positive influence on children's education, improving family communication, mental health and changing family dynamics. Community education has also resulted in an increased social awareness of issues in the community and encourages opportunities for cross-community activities.

In Loreto Centre we are passionate about promoting access to higher education by under-represented groups. Our commitment to promoting education for disadvantaged or socially excluded groups is based on the benefits that the learners can derive from a third level qualification. These range from the personal through to social and economic.

Loreto Centre has offered a Certificate in Women, Gender and Social Justice Education in conjunction with the Department of Social Science, Social Policy and Social Justice University College Dublin (UCD) over the past two years. Twenty three local women completed this course which is a 60 week course spread over two years. Learners attended the centre for three hours every Wednesday morning. The women completed six modules. covering the following topics:

- ◆ Women's Studies, Feminism and Social Change
- ◆ Re-discovering Women in Irish History
- ◆ Feminism and Gender theory.
- ◆ Storytelling
- ◆ Art, Activism and Feminism
- ◆ Liberation Psychology

### **MODULE SUMMARY REPORT 2016/17**

*In this report we will share a summary of the outcomes of the final two modules*

### **MODULE 5: WOMEN, ART, ACTIVISM: CREATIVE STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

#### **Module Descriptor:**

Dr Aiden Quilty outreach co-ordinator UCD delivered module 5 in Loreto Centre. Throughout the module the learners took a broad interpretation of 'artist' to encompass a variety of creative genres including art, film, theatre and music. This was an opportunity to place 'art' and 'activism' and 'feminism' as typically encountered under the microscope so as to question taken for granted meanings. It placed all three in conversation through engagement with academic readings, artists' presentations/ examples of work and community-based, activist driven, socially engaged projects. Teaching included a number of guest inputs from artists with hands on experience of activist driven, deliberately provocative,

socially engaged art projects including artists from UCD's Artist in Residence (AiR) Programme.) A total of 23 students were registered to this module. There was a 100% successful retention and 100% successful completion rate.

*Assessment comprised two main components:*

1. Weekly critical reading assignments and in class small group participation exercises,
2. 2,000-2,500 word end of module academic essay.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

*On completion of this module students were able to:*

1. Demonstrate a specialised understanding of some of the key debates surrounding women's and feminist art, activism and activist strategies
2. Devise, develop and sustain arguments relating to women, art and activism
3. Engage in critical, informed discussion of socially engaged art in small group and whole class contexts
4. Explore ways to develop activist strategies within their everyday lives as they challenge socio-cultural inequities
5. Complete an assignment relating to the themes of the module, conforming to academic conventions, that is appropriate to level 7 study.

## **MODULE 6 FEMINISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE: (A LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY MODEL)**

### **Context:**

This module was co-taught by Dr Ger Moane, one of the forerunners internationally in Liberation Psychology Theory, and Dr Aideen Quilty, Outreach Programme Director. Dr Moane is a highly regarded academic and scholar in the field and builds on a long history of collaboration with the Loreto Centre and with the Women's Studies Outreach Programme. This was the final module leading to the award of University Certificate and was extremely well received by students as an appropriate module to complete their academic journey. Linking back to the idea that the personal is political it sought to emphasise the importance of self-care in our multiplicitous activist strategies within everyday life and more formal activist spaces.

## **Learning Outcomes**

*On completion of this module students were able to:*

1. Demonstrate the connections between personal experience and broader social, cultural and political contexts
2. Present informed ideas about women's experience in relation to anger and sexuality in a clear coherent manner
3. Engage in informed discussion of individual, community and social change in small group and whole class contexts
4. Critically reflect on issues of diversity, equality and individual, community and social agency
5. Demonstrate a deepened understanding of systemic societal oppressions locally and globally through class participation and responses to weekly reading assignments
6. Complete a written assignment relating to the themes of the module, conforming to academic convention, appropriate for level 7 students.

## **Overall Comments:**

Across both modules the overall level of student commitment was evidenced by excellent student participation and engagement. There was significant evidence of new skills acquisition by students through class participation, intensive Saturday on-campus teaching days and essay work. The level of engagement with the artists who contributed to module 5 was impressive and praised by the artists involved.

As with previous modules the dynamic learning environment, already co-created between the students and lecturer, was further embedded and articulated. In module 6, student confidence was evidenced by the large number of students completing CAO applications and availing of progression pathways to Universities, Institutes of Technology and Further Education colleges.

## **Quality of Work:**

The quality of the academic essays submitted by all students was impressive with grades awarded spanning D to A+. The students demonstrated significant learning from previous assignments. The key learning goal for this final stage in the developmental learning process was to demonstrate familiarity and competence in crafting formal, logical, critically informed well written, fully referenced academic essays.

## **Student Evaluation:**

Both modules met with significant student satisfaction as evidenced by the formative evaluations completed anonymously by each student on completion of the module. There was much praise for the lecturers and no suggestions offered for improvement. Students expressed that deep learning had been achieved



## Celebration Evening in Centre to mark the completion of the Certificate Course in Women, Gender and Social Justice 2017

On March 29th twenty-three women gathered in the Loreto Centre Crumlin to mark the completion of their studies. The creative backdrop to the event was a wonderful art piece by Karen Hollowed.

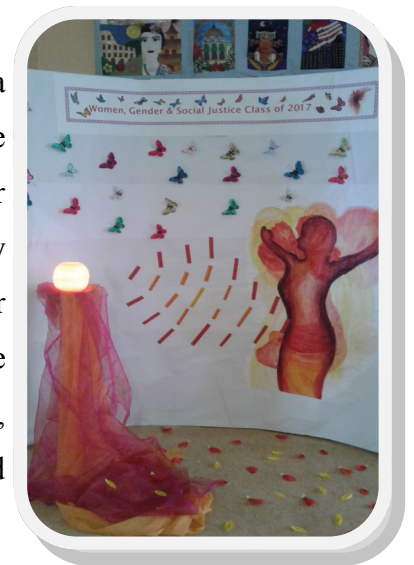


As the evening unfolded the butterflies were a perfect symbol for the journey these women had undertaken. Brede, the manager welcomed everybody, in particular the graduation group, their tutor Dr. Aideen Quilty, Professor Michelle Moran, Assistant Professor Ursula Barry, U.C.D. School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, funders from the Dublin South City Partnership, representatives of Loreto Sisters, Board Members and voluntary mentors. As Aideen Quilty spoke so movingly about the courage and commitment of her students she quoted from several poems, one being Derek Walcott's

### *Love after Love:*

*'Give back your heart to  
itself, to the stranger who has loved you all your  
life, whom you ignored...'*

Being present to hear the sharing of the women themselves was a tremendous privilege. They were honest, open and so grateful for the opportunity they had been given to find their hearts again, to realise their worth and to have a deep sense of what they are capable of achieving. Many experienced it as a rebirth, a finding of their voice. Like butterflies their complete metamorphosis is a work in progress. Having experienced the thrill of discussion and learning they are determined to listen to their voice, their heart and live life as fully as they possibly can. Members of the Board of Management and Centre staff provided a beautiful setting and meal.





## History Module – A learner’s experience

The history module presented by Dr Mary McAuliffe UCD, was so enlightening of all the areas of our struggle and determination in Irish history to gain our freedom from British control and above all to be treated as equals.

During our history the women of Ireland played a major role inside and outside the home. They fought alongside the men during and after the 1916 Easter rising.

We were also privileged to be a part of the “Commemorative Quilt Project” which was a celebration in memory of the seventy seven amazing, yet forgotten women, detained in Richmond Barracks following the 1916 Rising, having stood shoulder to shoulder with the celebrated men of Ireland who fought so bravely for our freedom.

The highlight of my involvement in the quilt project was having the privilege and honour of researching and getting to know of Annie Cooney, who I was to represent in one of the panels on the quilt. Being invited to meet Orla McKeon, Annie’s granddaughter, accompanied by Marja Almqvist who was the inspiration and designer of the quilt in the Yarn School, a community based textile studio in Goldenbridge meant a lot to me. Orla shared so generously the memories and information she had of Annie.



This project was launched in Kilmainham Hospital as part of the centenary programme celebrating the 1916 Rising. The book “Richmond Barracks 1916, We Were There-77 Women of the Rising” written by Dr Mary McAuliffe and Liz Gillis, was also launched on the same day. It was such a wonderful and treasured experience being part of bringing Irish history to life and celebrating the very important roles these women played in setting Ireland free, while also rubbing shoulders with our very own president Michael D Higgins who launched the project. The quilt then toured the country, enlightening and reuniting Ireland once again 100 years on.

By Una Doyle



## CONFERRING CEREMONY UCD

On the 7th September the formal conferring ceremony was held in O'Reilly Hall in Belfield where the learners were conferred in the presence of their families. The attached photos will convey the significance of the event for each graduate.



## My Women's Studies Journey



I left school in 1968 at the age of 14 with just a basic Primary education. I thought that my education days were over forever. I could not wait to leave school. I had a Saturday job at hairdressing so when I was offered a full time job I could not wait to get started. I have worked all my life so I thought my lack of education would never stand in my way. Everybody left school at that age then and walked into employment.

In 2012 I was made redundant and I soon realised that in order to get back into the workforce I needed to up my skills. I did an ECDL course for 6 months and that led me into working in the Loreto Centre. It was through working in the Centre that gave me the wonderful opportunity of taking on the greatest journey of my life which was to participate in doing a course in Women, Gender & Social Justice Studies.

I was very apprehensive at first and worried if I would be able to take on such a challenge. I soon found out that community education is less formal and is delivered in a far more interesting way than regular education. This system of education opened up a whole new world to me and in a good way challenged me on several occasions. I think community education is so important. It is necessary to make people feel included and not isolated, just because they would have missed out on educational opportunities. It enables older people to participate in the human and social development of society. It improves your understanding and quality of life particularly those most at risk of social exclusion and isolation.

There were 6 Modules in the course and we dealt with some of the many social problems that are happening in society today. It covered topics such as class, race, inequality, Women's issues, domestic violence, mental health, homelessness, activism and the migrant crisis. Having a greater understanding of these issues helps me with my work here in the Centre. We also had a History module which opened my eyes to the events that occurred in our own country and abroad. It gave me a far greater understanding of the issues that were happening in the wider community and also throughout the world.

Two major events occurred during the course: we had the 1916 Commemoration, and also The Marriage Equality Referendum. I felt that we were very lucky to be taking part in the course during this very historical time. We also visited the Museum of Modern Art and Kilmainham Gaol which were most interesting. They are places that I would never have visited before doing this course as I would have found them boring and uninteresting. I recently visited the National Gallery to view the Vermeer collection. Through doing this course I now have found a far greater understanding and appreciation of culture.

The day of my graduation was the second best day of my life. The sense of pride and achievement will stay with me forever. The confidence that it has given me is unmeasurable. It was wonderful to feel so included in the ceremony in UCD. Lifelong learning is such an important part of adult and community education. Older people need to feel included and be given greater opportunities in the community education system. I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would get the opportunity of a second chance at education. It has turned an impossible dream into a reality for me.

By Margaret Burke



## Taster course on Women, Gender and Social Justice Studies held in summer term 2017

With the financial assistance of South Dublin City Partnership we were able to offer an eight week introductory course to all who expressed an interest in pursuing the Certificate course in Autumn 2017. This taster course is vital to help learners to overcome their fear of returning to education.

Thirty two women participated in the course which prepared them for the commitment which they would have to make to attend classes one morning a week for sixty weeks. It helped them to build up their confidence and it enhanced their basic reading, study, writing and discussion skills. A former learner in the centre, Beatrice Hughes M.Sc. facilitated the course on the following topics:

- ◆ What is Women, Gender and Social Justice Studies
- ◆ Feminist Philosophy
- ◆ An introduction to study and how to do critical thinking and analysis
- ◆ Learning how to read, analyse, summarise and deconstruct.
- ◆ Exploring the basics of writing a university level paper

As a result of this introduction some women decided that this course would not suit them while twenty seven were delighted to get the opportunity to sign up for the course.



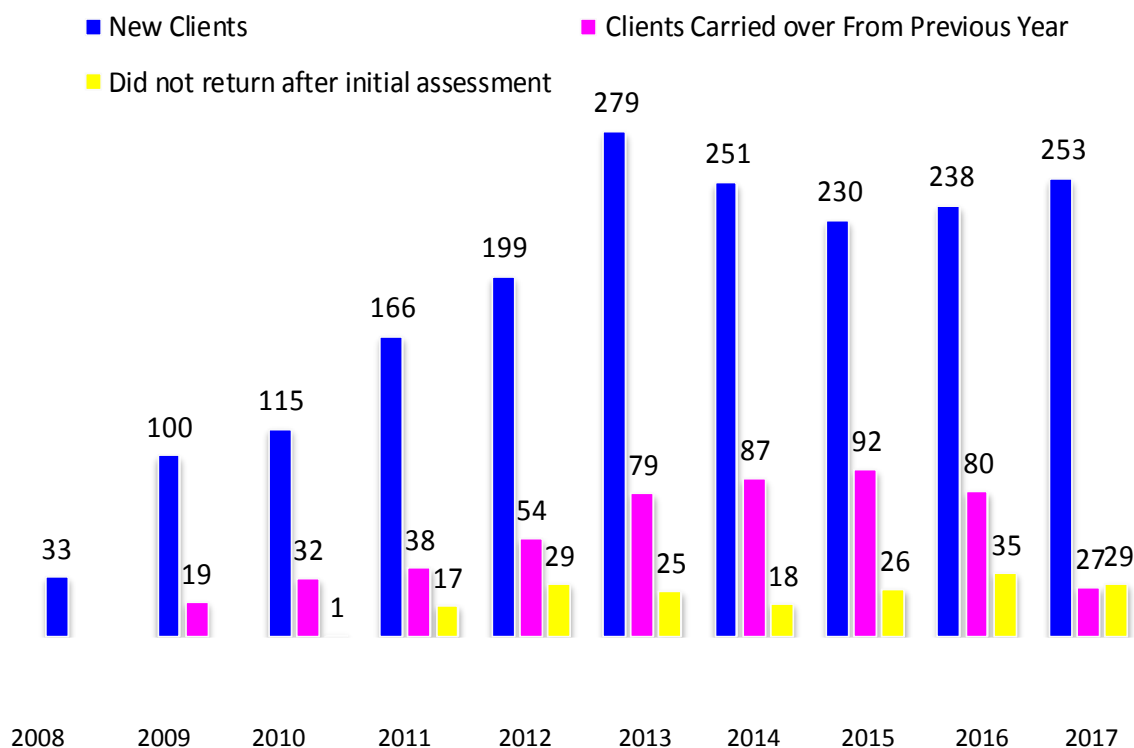
## COMMUNITY COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICE

In the public interest and in response to increasing demands the Centre offers a low-cost counselling/ psychotherapy service to adult learners attending courses in the Centre, as well as people over 18 years from the local Dublin 12 community and surrounding area. Local agencies and many GPs in the local area make weekly referrals. Table no 5 below illustrates the high usage of the counselling/ psychotherapy over the past 10 years. Trends are comparable to other low cost counselling services. The service is only possible because of the generosity of so many therapists who volunteer their time and professional skills to the Centre. The commitment and expertise of the Director of Counselling Pat Colgan in assigning clients to therapists is reflected in the high attendance of clients in therapy.

### THE INCREASING TREND IN THE TAKE UP OF COUNSELLING OVER THE PAST NINE YEARS FROM

January 2008 to December 2017

Table no. 5



## **OUR PHILOSOPHY ON COUNSELLING/PSYCHOTHERAPY**

From the beginning our counselling/psychotherapy service was focused on the local community and its needs. Many of the women attending the initial courses, in personal development and community education, began to talk about personal and family problems and crises. We soon realised that many needed supportive and person-centred counselling and psychotherapy.

Once we became aware of this need we set out to provide a professional level of counselling and support for the wide variety of personal problems endemic in our local catchment area. Over the past fourteen years we have liaised with many of the colleges and centres that provide courses for the emerging professional counsellors and psychotherapists in Ireland. As a result we now have a team of forty one therapists working with our growing client base and providing a professional standard low-cost service.

Overall, we aim to maintain an atmosphere of community values, team-building and support for the people who need our courses and counselling services. The profile of our clients and their problems within our emerging society validates our policy of low-cost person-centred psychotherapy.

## **CURRENT TEAM**

Our current team of forty one therapists consists of a mix of trainee therapists doing their required intern hours on a voluntary basis, a number of fully qualified therapists completing their required accreditation hours, and a core of qualified and accredited psychotherapists. In return for the service these therapists provide to our clients we have a fully supervised and supportive framework in place that provides them with additional professional support, and some of the experience they need to enhance their suitability for a future professional career.

Our volunteer counsellors are all members of the main counselling and therapy accrediting bodies in Ireland, including The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) and the Irish Association for Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP). The volunteer counsellors are offered opportunities for continuous professional development either offered on the premises or by other agencies. During this past year the Centre management offered training to the therapists on outcomes measurement in psychotherapy, note taking for court appearance and skill training for dealing with shame in therapy.

## **CASE DURATION**

All clients are offered an initial six week contract. The average duration of client attendance is twelve weeks.

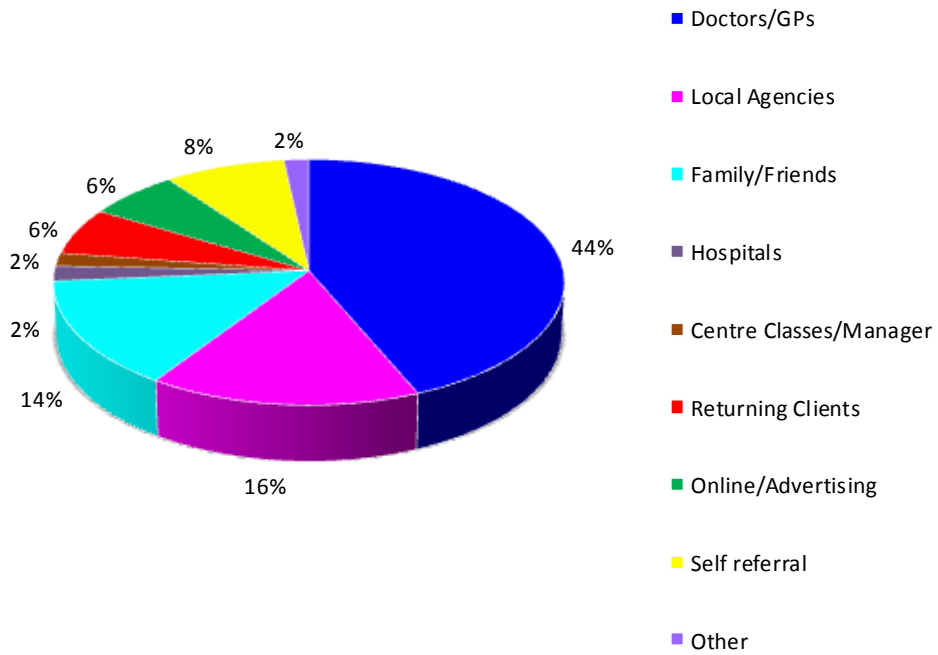
## **COUNSELLING STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2016 - AUGUST 2017**

After cancellations and non-attendance, three thousand eight hundred and seventy-one counselling sessions were delivered in the Loreto Centre. Three hundred and ninety clients attended for counselling/psychotherapy sessions between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017.

Four hundred and sixteen appointments were made to see the Director of Counselling. Out of that figure there were eighteen cancellations, fifty-two no shows which brought the number of intakes to three hundred and forty-six new clients. Table no 6 describes the source of referrals for counselling during the year 2016-2017. Tables 7 and 8 describe the age and gender of clients for the same period.

**Referrals to Counselling**  
**September 2016 - August 2017**

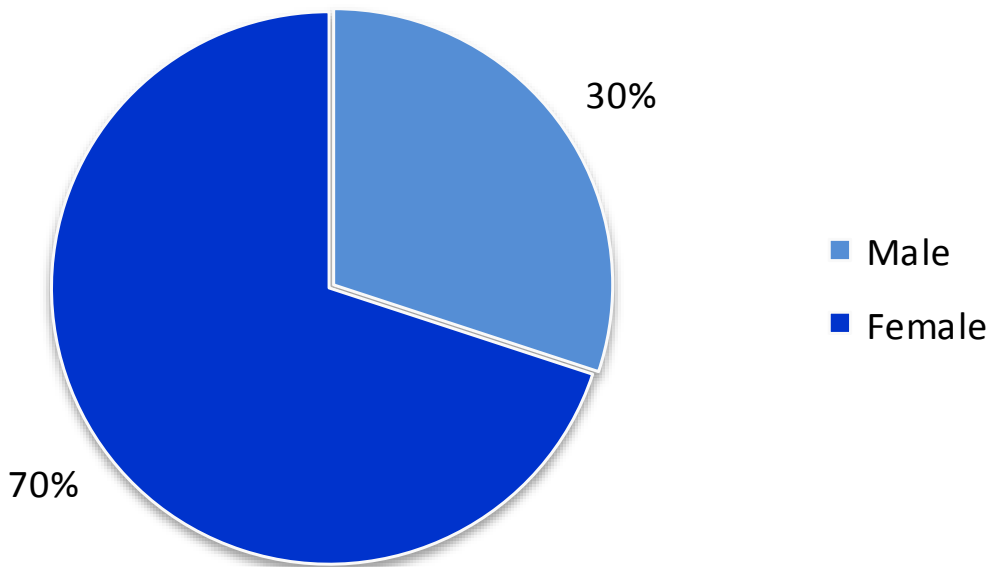
**Table no.6**



**Gender Profile of Clients**

**September 2016- 2017**

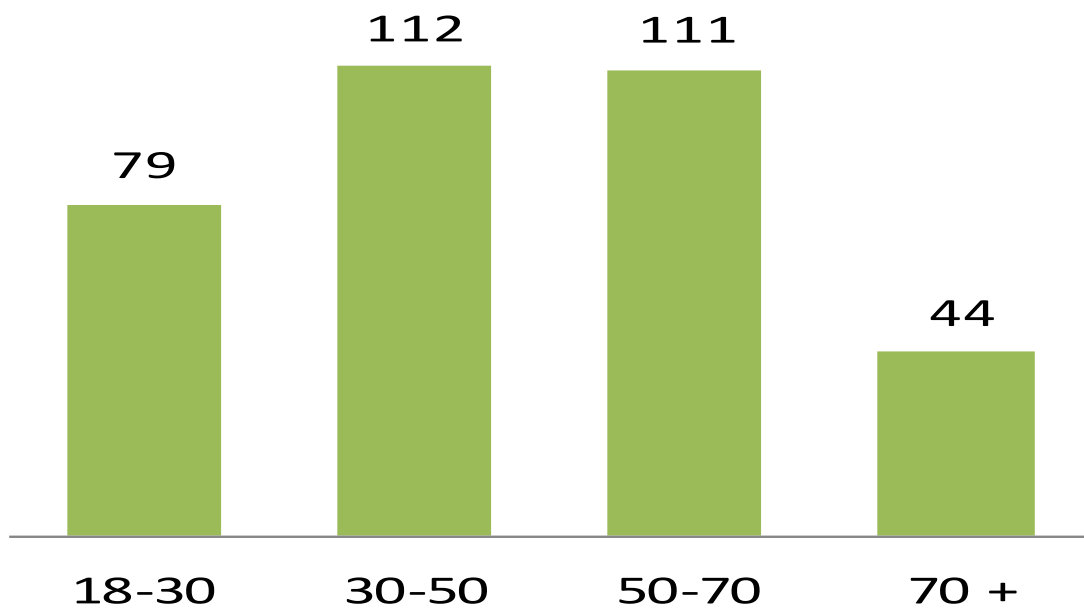
**Table No. 7**



## Age Profile of Counselling Clients

September 2016- August 2017

Table no. 8



## OUTCOMES

All our work is designed to enable our clients to heal and repair the damage that has become part of their personality as a result of their life experiences to date. We work in conjunction with GPs and other local services to enable people to depend on their own inner resources rather than on prescribed medication. Among the outcomes reported by clients and observed are as follows:

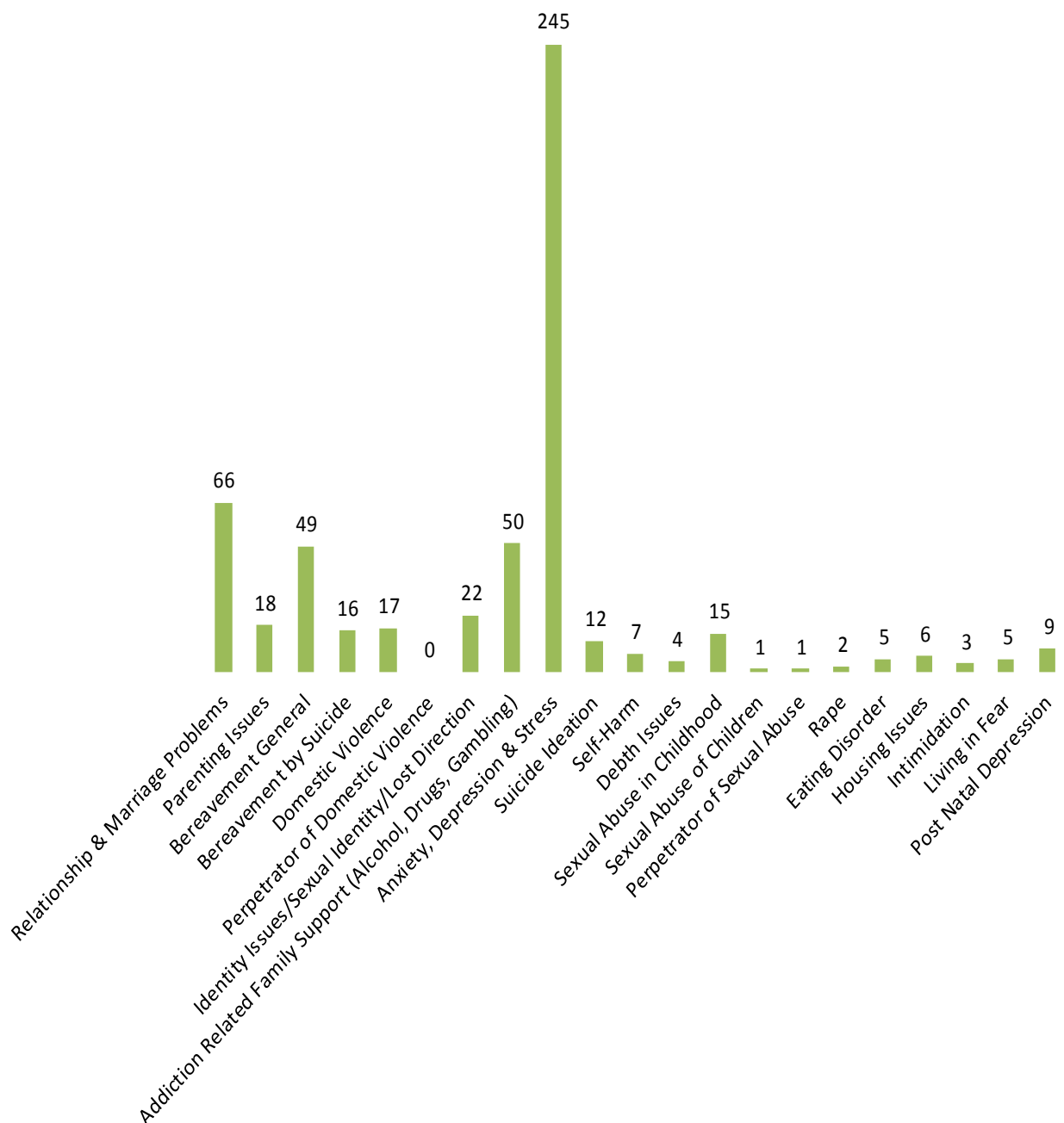
- Improved mental health which leads to freedom from the pain that has become a part of their daily lives.
- Healthier and more rewarding interpersonal interactions.
- Behavioural and cognitive changes which enables them to live richer personal and social lives.
- Greater involvement in new projects and new learning outside the home.
- Increased safety for their children and a healthier domestic environment.
- Healthier life choices.
- Increased positivity and hope for a better future.



## Presenting Problems of Clients 2016- 2017

**Table no. 9**

Throughout the counselling process a variety of problems may emerge. The following chart no 9 illustrates the span of presenting issues that clients identified. An interesting development this year is the increase in anxiety, depression and stress identified in the initial interview. The other significant increase on last year can be seen in the greater number presenting with general bereavement and bereavement due to suicide. We have also noted a sharp increase in parents, partners and family members attending seeking therapy because of addiction in the family i.e. drugs, alcohol and gambling.



## FEEDBACK FROM COUNSELLING CLIENTS

I was apprehensive about attending counselling as I had never attended counselling before. After attending Loreto Centre I no longer hold such fear and would recommend it for people of any age.  
(Female, mid-seventies)

*Coming to counselling has been a safe space where I can say what I feel, things that could not be discussed with or understood by family or friends. (Female, early sixties)*

I feel a stone lighter after talking to a counsellor and speaking about trauma I experienced as a child and had kept secret. My physical health has improved-better sleep and freedom from headaches.  
(Female, late sixties)

*Loreto Centre is a lovely place to go to counselling. The staff are always kind and caring and there is a lovely welcoming atmosphere in Loreto. The building is bright and airy and there are always beautiful flower arrangements around the place. (Female, thirty two)*

I am better able to feel what comes up without pushing it away and without beating myself up for how I feel. This year helped me so much, and our sessions in Loreto genuinely changed how I see and treat myself. (Female in her fifties)

*Coming here has made me heal in lots of ways; it has really helped me to value myself. (Male, twenties)*

Coming to therapy is the bravest thing I have ever done but I knew I needed to do it and now I am really beginning to get my life back. (Female, forties)

*I was always the strong one for everyone else and I just couldn't do it anymore. This emotional collapse has helped me understand myself better and that I need to look after myself too. (Female, age 34)*

I am able to get through the week because I come to counselling every Tuesday. I keep remembering that each day is one day closer to Tuesday. My best night's sleep is on Tuesday night. (Female, age 41)

*You have helped me believe in myself again. The things that happened to me took my strength away, now I am able to face the challenges and feel stronger in myself to deal with them. (Female, age 67)*

This has helped me so much that I've told a friend to come here. She needs support too and I think this would really help her. (Male, age 47)

*Coming here gives me hope. (Female, 60s)*

Coming to the centre has helped me cope. It has given me an appreciation of the support of family and friends. I feel stronger and able to manage whatever else comes my way. (Female mid 40s)

*Since coming to counselling I am beginning to take care of myself and I am feeling the better for it. (Female, late 60s)*

I am becoming more familiar with the centre and feel the course and counselling I'm doing is helping me. I feel safe in the centre. (Female, early 50s)

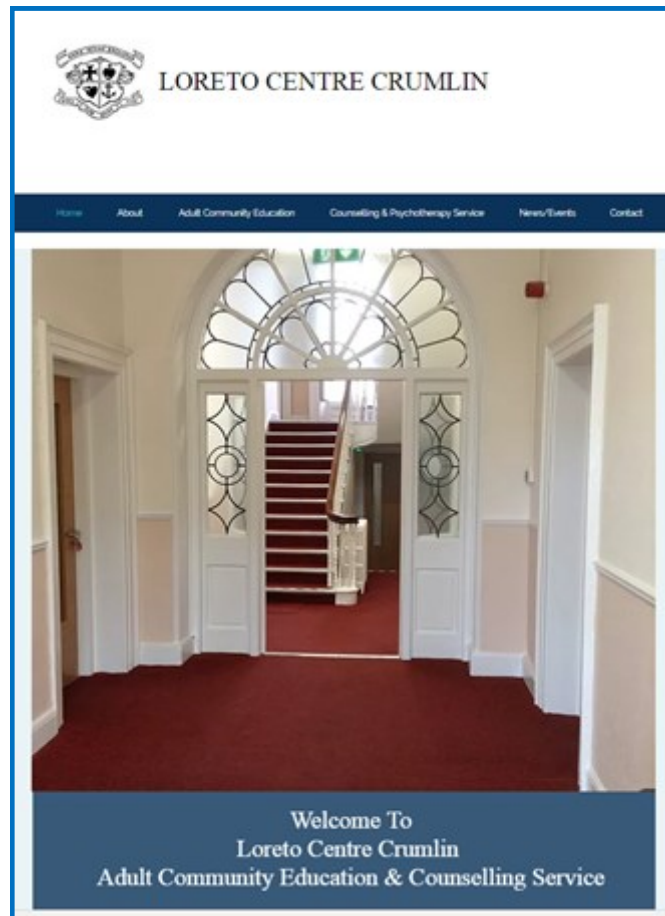
*I am pleased with my progress and I'm not allowing negative thoughts about myself have such power over me. (Female, 40s)*

I feel I have changed through counselling. I have dealt with a difficult relationship and do not feel strong bodily sensations of fear anymore. (Female, 50s)

*Counselling saved my life. I have learned so much about myself. (Male, 30s)*

## NEW WEBSITE

We were very happy to launch our new website at [www.loretocentrecrumlin.ie](http://www.loretocentrecrumlin.ie) during the past year. It has received very favourable responses. People find it clear and very readable. We are most grateful to Karen Hollowed in administration for creating and maintaining the website.



## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The following outlines the focus and priorities of the Board in its governance role over the past year.

### Regulation

The Board has dedicated itself to attending training during the past year in order to be ready to lead the centre effectively in the challenging new era of Charity Regulation. Three members attended The Wheel training session entitled *Charity Trustees - Board Roles and Responsibilities* on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

It provided information and background required to lead an organisation effectively in this challenging new era of charity regulation and transparency. An overview of the following was given;

The Charities Act 2009  
The Companies Act 2014  
The Lobbying Act 2015  
Governance Code, including:

- \* An overview of the Code and how to go about adopting it
- \* The Five Principles of the Code
- \* An understanding of why the Code matters - now, more than ever.

## ⇒ **Outcomes Measurement**

In September 2016 the Board had a presentation on the topic **Measuring Outcomes in Therapy** by Frances Walsh, a therapist in the Centre who had completed her Masters on the following topic: *A mixed methods study to develop recommendations for psychotherapy outcome measurement in a low-cost, community based counselling centre.*

This helped the Board to understand the difficulties involved in putting an outcomes measurement system in place. However, it was recognised that while the Centre needs to show measured outcomes it was accepted that the Centre does not have the financial or human resources available to put CORE 10 (therapy outcomes measuring tool) in place. The Board agreed that it needs to put a simpler measurement system in place that would be possible to use within its resources.

## **Fire safety Upgrade**

The Board continued to ensure that the refurbishment of Fire Safety equipment begun the previous academic year was completed properly.

## **Succession Planning for Manager and Director of Counselling June 2017**

To complete the strategic plan the Board identified the personal skills and job specification for both roles in the event of a vacancy arising.

## **Succession Planning for Board of Management members for Jan 2018**

Four members of the Board will be due to complete their term of office on the Board by the 31st January 2018. The Board looked at the skills required to govern the Centre into the future and will present these to the Trustees in due course.

## **Signed off on following policies:**

- Governance Code - Nov 2016
- Taping of Therapy sessions Policy - Jan 2017
- Code of Conduct for Board Members - Jan 2017
- Review of Garda Vetting Policy - April 2017

The Manager attended the following training courses and reported back to the Board on the relevant content:

- New Accountancy and Fundraising Guidelines for Charities Regulation Authority, on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016 organised by The Wheel
- Creative writing for the Web, on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016 organised by The Wheel
- Starting a website from scratch, on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016 organised by The Wheel
- Data Protection Seminar, Preparing for GDPR. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 organised by The Wheel
- Preparing Annual Report, On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 organised by Carmichael House
- Trustee responsibilities, on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017 organised by L&P Financial

## FUTURE PLANNING

### STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 - 2016

As part of its ongoing work in the centre the Board of Management undertook to develop a three-year Strategic Plan. The strategic planning exercise is important for the Loreto Centre at this time because of the external and internal factors that might challenge the Centre to provide affordable adult education and counselling services to the people in its catchment area.

*Having completed the necessary consultations the following priorities were identified :*

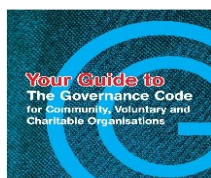
- ◆ Succession planning
- ◆ Funding
- ◆ Services offered
- ◆ Governance
- ◆ Stakeholder support

The Board is happy to report that it has given significant attention to all the above issues. The present Board will have fulfilled its three year term and four new members will be appointed by the Trustees in January 2018. It is envisaged that a new Strategic plan will be developed during the course of the coming year. In the meantime the Board will give considerable attention to ensure that it meets the requirements of GDPR. (*General Data Protection Regulation*)

Given that good governance means that policies and procedures are in place the Board during the past six years has concentrated on making sure that the relevant policies are in place and up to date. So far the Board has reviewed and signed off on the following policies:

Equal Opportunities Policy	Dignity at Work Policy	Data Protection Policy Staff Members
Client Complaint and Grievance Policy	Internal Complaints and Grievance Policy	Child Safeguarding Policy
Counselling Policy and Procedures	Clients Charter	Financial Policy
Student Work Experience Policy	Phone and Mobile Usage Policy	Data Protection Policy Clients and Service Users
Internal Disciplinary Policy	Internet Usage Policy	Disciplinary Policy for Sponsored Workers
Risk Register and Risk Management Policy	Health and Safety Policy	Taping of Therapy Sessions Policy Jan 2017
Code of Conduct for Board Members Jan 2017	Review of Garda Vetting Policy April 2017	

### Good Governance Code



The Board has signed up to the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations. It continues to review and create new policies. It ensures that the organisation is run with responsibility and accountability making it compliant with the requirements of the Charities Act 2009.

## FUNDING AND RESOURCE SUPPORTS

The Board wishes to acknowledge the contribution made by staff and volunteers who continue to make this Centre such a vibrant place.

*In particular, the Board wishes to acknowledge the role played by the following :*

- ◆ The Trustees, who are the Loreto Sisters.
- ◆ The Manager, Assistant Manager and the Director of Counselling.
- ◆ The tutoring, counselling, administration, housekeeping staff and volunteers, for their dedication, professional service and expertise in working with the learners and clients.
- ◆ The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) for JI, CE and TUS schemes along with the CDETБ who commit personnel resources to the Centre and who make a significant contribution to the day to day running of the Centre.
- ◆ All funders (listed below), fundraisers and friends of the Centre.

The Board wishes to record appreciation for the professional support received from the other agencies at local and national level who inspire community education and the management of the counselling service in many diverse ways.

Finally the Board acknowledges the trust that learners and clients put in the Centre.

## FUNDING OF THE SERVICE

### September 2016—August 2017

Loreto Sisters, Ireland, Loreto Province Fund, Mary Ward Mission Fund and Loreto Past Pupils Union



The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP)



City of Dublin Education and Training Board



Dublin South City Partnership



TUSLA



Dublin City Council



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