



Loreto Centre Crumlin Annual Report

*Community Adult Education
&
Counselling Service*

September 2019 - August 2020

Registered Charity: Reg No. 20042011 Chy no. 13464

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2019-2020

The year September 2019 – August 2020 started off with great promise, with the Centre's new Manager, Anca Lupu, one year on and fully embedded in the new role at the helm of the organisation and plans were afoot for the development of a strategic plan for the following four years. Never could we have imagined the year that was to unfold, with the announcement by the then Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, on March 17th, that Ireland was entering into a lockdown, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The pandemic split the year in two for the Loreto Centre, with pre-lockdown progress in keeping with expectations in terms of both education and counselling. The first six months of this year saw good attendance at classes and a diverse programme on offer and I would like to extend a very sincere thank you to all the teachers, tutors, staff and students for all the hard work that goes into making this possible. Our strategic plan for the coming years seeks to develop and expand our educational programme in keeping with the communities' needs and learner demand.

The first half of the year correspondingly saw an increase in demand for counselling. We are very grateful to our counselling team, comprising Terry Kelleher and Jim Murphy as joint clinical directors, who head a team of over 30 volunteer counsellors, all of whom have contributed to the development of the Loreto into a trusted counselling service within the locality. This service, which represents such a valuable resource to the local community, would not be possible were it not for the many volunteer counsellors and our clinical directors, who give their time to provide a highly professional service. A most sincere thank you to you all for your continued commitment to the provision of counselling in the Loreto Centre.

In early March, following a very successful flower arranging display and celebration honouring International Women's Day, an emergency board meeting was called in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, where the decision was made to close the Centre until further notice.

The Centre closed from March to June 2020 and re-opened from July on a restricted basis, in line with government guidelines and with a focus particularly on more vulnerable clients. The reopening of the centre entailed the development of new strategies and approaches, one way systems were devised, room usage reduced, deep cleaning on a regular basis, an isolation room designated, hand sanitisation stations along with an array of new health and safety practices that ensured the safety of both staff and clients alike.

While there were many challenges to the provision of counselling during the lockdown periods, the manager met regularly with the clinical directors and the counselling team had regular briefings as we entered and exited the various stages of lockdown. Clients remained to the forefront with telephone counselling and regular check-ins with clients commencing from the outset and continuing throughout the various stages of lockdown as required.

A most sincere thank you to the counselling team for how you responded to the ever changing needs and demands within the service and continued to connect with clients during this stressful time.

The challenges in terms of learning proved even greater with restrictions in numbers allowed to gather indoors preventing the continuation of many classes and postponing the commencement of others. Again, despite these limitations, the tai-chi, yoga, mindfulness and horticulture tutors prepared and shared with their students, online videos and tutorials during the 2nd and 3rd terms.

None of this could have been done without the continued commitment of the excellent team, who ensured that the Centre's vision was upheld by continuing to provide a professional and dedicated service for all those who attend the Centre despite the relentless challenges and disappointments that came with each stage of lockdown. Many online meetings were attended by the Manager and staff, who worked from home when this was required and who continually found ways to support and reach out to the community, to check in with individuals who may be isolated and to offer reassurance and allay fears of those who struggled with their new found reality. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing hard work, support, innovation and commitment to the Centre during this particularly difficult time in the Centre's history and commend you all on your capacity to reach out into the community and particularly to those most vulnerable, at a time when they were unable to attend the Centre themselves.

Just as the summer term was closing and the team at the Centre were preparing for the Autumn term with hopes of reopening to full capacity on the horizon, a further blow landed, with the all too sudden loss of Garret Finegan, a much loved member of the team. The reverberations of his loss are still felt in the Centre today where he is still sadly missed. May he rest in peace.

Notwithstanding the many challenges throughout the year, the team at the Loreto utilised the working from home period in a very productive manner by engaging with Lucy Franks, a former Loreto student, who facilitated the development of the strategic plan for the next four years. This entailed many telephone interviews, online meetings and discussion groups, including, learners, staff, volunteers, counsellors, tutors, clinical directors, funders, the Board of Management and the Trustees.

Feedback from the strategic planning process provided reassurance that the Centre continued to uphold its mission and vision, despite the many challenges, by

'...reach[ing] in a positive way beyond the confines of the learning or counselling session'.

Much of the feedback from learners and clients garnered during this process, confirmed that the Centre plays such a pivotal role in terms of connecting, supporting and empowering members of the local community, particularly in terms of lockdown and the loss of freedom and community that so many experienced during these worrying and isolating periods.

While in general terms the diversity within our service provision demands an array of skill sets, the year September 19 to August 20 proved a most challenging 12 months in so many respects. I would like to acknowledge the highly professional manner in which the manager, staff and volunteers met and managed the many and varied sets of needs that this year has called for. Through your continued hard work, innovation and commitment, you have succeeded in reaching out into the community when they needed it most and opening the doors of the Centre in a safe and measured way when it was safe to do so.

My thanks also to the Board Members, who have shown considerable commitment during this challenging period and who share their expertise and advice, to ensure the continued smooth running of the Centre. Their hard work and perseverance during the lockdown periods and the time and energy that went into overcoming the many challenges of re-opening the service in a safe manner is most appreciated. All of this work was in tandem with the continued work carried out by the Governance, Finance and Staffing Sub Committees who met regularly outside the many board meetings that this period of unprecedented change called for.

The support of the Trustees, the Loreto Sisters, is crucial to the continued success of the Centre. Their support, financial and otherwise, is, as always very much appreciated. They have been the mainstay of the Centre since its establishment and we are very grateful for their ongoing and continued support.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our various funders for their financial support over the past year. It is very much appreciated and the work of the Centre would be severely compromised without your continued support.

While much of this great work has taken place with limited resources, the Board is very conscious of the need for a reliable and constant funding stream that will provide core funding for the Loreto Centre. The Covid 19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the key role that the Loreto Centre plays within the community in terms of educating, connecting and supporting members of the local communities in terms of their mental health and it is with this knowledge in mind that funding is to the forefront of our strategic plan for the coming year. The Board is committed to ensuring that the resources required to maintain the effective running of the Centre remain in place.

Finally, I would like to thank, most sincerely, all those who avail of the services in the Centre. We could not go on without your continued support and involvement and we look forward to opening our doors once again to you all with a safer, brighter future ahead.

It has been my privilege to Chair the Board of Management over the past year. I have received unwavering support from the Board Members, whose advice, commitment and support is essential to the smooth running of the Centre and was particularly valued and appreciated during the many unprecedented challenges in the later months of the past year.

Beatrice Hughes,

Loreto Centre Chairperson

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 September 2018 shall be deemed expired on the 31st January 2021.

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 1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020

<i>Chairperson:</i>	Beatrice Hughes	<i>Treasurer:</i>	Tom Scott
	Emily Banville		Elaine Dillon
	Catherine Lynch		Ann Kenny

One member of the Board completed the second term of office on the Board on the 31st January 2020.

The Board was faced with the challenge of the pandemic in early March that proved it difficult to recruit a board member to fill the vacancy.

From the very onset of the pandemic the board met with the manager twice as much as the previous years to discuss and plan the health and safety measures for the centre in line with the national guidelines.

The board had to set-up several extraordinary meetings online to ensure the centre took the necessary steps to adhere to Government's restrictions. Throughout the past year, the centre had to close its doors twice, once in early March until late June along with national lockdown. The centre re-opened the counselling service from July to October on restricted hours and limited number of counselling rooms (due to social distancing requirements).

The following policies were updated by the board during the past year:

- Records Management Policy
- Loreto Centre Records Retention Schedule
- Staff handbook

LORETO CENTRE CRUMLIN BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

September 2019 — August 2020

BOARD MEMBERS	09/09	21/10	02/12	20/01	09/03	12/03 E BOM	27/03 E BOM Online	15/04 E BOM Online	20/04 Online	05/05 EBOM Online	18/05 EBOM Online	05/06 EBOM Online	29/06 Online	06/08 Online	T 14
Eugene Banks	v	x	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	13
Emily Banville	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	14
Barbara Murphy	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	x	v	v	x	12
Tom Scott	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	14
Elaine Dillon	v	v	v	x	v	x	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	12
Ann Kenny	v	x	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	x	v	12
Beatrice Hughes	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	14
Catherine Lynch	x	v	x	v	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

Governance Sub-Committee

In January 2020, the board set-up the Governance Sub-committee to review the centre's policies and procedures, to make recommendations to the board and to analyse and complete the Governance Compliance Record Form. The sub-committee members appointed are: Eugene Banks, Emily Banville and the centre manager. The sub-committee had 9 meetings (7 online during the first lockdown), completed the Governance Compliance record form and identified additional documents for board's approval as follows:

- Loreto Centre Risk Register
- Key Performance Indicators

Finance Sub-Committee

In April 2020 the board set-up the Finance Sub-Committee to review the finance policies and procedures, to prepare for the audit and to plan the budget. The sub-committee members had 4 meetings between June and July, reviewed the accounts, the budget and prepared the budget for the incoming year that was presented at the board in September.

LORETO CENTRE ADMINISTRATION

The last year has been particularly challenging due to the start of Covid-19 pandemic in March which influenced the running of the centre activities and operations. The Board along with the manager had to review, plan and evaluate the administration, co-ordination and running of the centre to ensure the health and safety of their clients, team members and therapists in line with the national guidelines and the requirements.

This meant meeting more often, remotely, to review and plan the centre activities. While the centre activities stopped on the premises in March, the manager and the clinical directors have continued to work remotely to ensure that: the therapists were kept updated on the work, the therapists remained in contact with the clients, the manager continued to be in contact with the team, therapists, adult education tutors and learners and continued to provide support by phone, emails and online media platforms. The team had to be trained to follow up the HSE protocols and training in returning to work and keeping safe.

The centre resumed its counselling service in June by providing telephone therapy and therapy on the premises with reduced and restricted hours in line with the national and HSE health and safety guidelines prioritising vulnerable clients.

The manager and the clinical directors started to explore online therapy, identifying training required for therapists and secure platforms online.

This change to online/remote therapy demanded a massive shift in thinking and practice for the therapists whose training was very much based on being present in the room with the client in order to develop a trusting relationship through face-to-face counselling.

Online therapy was offered later in the year when Ireland faced a second lockdown.

In late August, the centre was saddened by the sudden death of one of our team members, Garret Finnegan, who worked in Loreto Centre for many years and who loved and gave so much to our centre. He is dearly missed by all. May he rest in peace!

During the summer the centre operated on restricted hours and rooms. The centre had to review and rethink the counselling room allocations and hours for the therapists. Due to social distancing restrictions, the centre used only 5 out of the 10 counselling rooms. We identified a one way route in and out of the centre, return to therapy and work forms, sanitizing hands stations and isolation area. These measures and the planning involved gave our therapists and clients the confidence to return to the centre safely, who expressed their trust and confidence in our services.

Due to rooms allocation restricted, the centre was faced with a waiting list with clients who needed support. While we tried to accommodate all of them, it was challenging to assign them to a therapist, due to their availability, health and personal circumstances.

We continue to face this challenge but we are very grateful that we can support the existing clients and the therapists and that the centre managed to keep the services going successfully during these challenging times.

The manager worked closely with the board, the clinical directors and the team to ensure the centre reaches out to the community it serves by engaging with the local agencies, by using online platforms such as the website, facebook, emails, ZOOM, Microsoft Teams to update and get feedback on its services.

The centre will continue to review, evaluate and build on its strengths, ethos and values in the year to come.

The pandemic had a huge impact on the centre and the priority for next year is to provide these much needed services to its community and to identify resources and funding necessary to maintain the operation of the centre stable and financially safe.

EVALUATION & STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 - 2024

During the first lockdown, the board decided to engage with Lucy Franks, research consultant and coach, in an evaluation process of the centre activities that will guide the strategic direction and plan for the next 4 years. A questionnaire was devised and issued by email to approximately 150 centre stakeholders. The stakeholder group was drawn from learners, tutors, therapists, staff, board, trustees and community professionals. Several meetings were conducted online, individual and group meetings, which focused on the strengths, administration, communication and ethos of the centre.

“The Centre’s ethos is viewed as particularly good – there is a ‘way’ of doing and being in the Centre that is co-operative, supportive and inclusive. There is recognition of the root and value of this way of ‘being and doing’ in the Loreto sisters’ Ignatian spirituality - where the person is met where they are, and appreciated for the unique individual they are; there is no judgement; reflection is encouraged; people are accompanied on their life’s journey – not isolated. The hospitality offered at the Centre – not just being ‘looked after’ but being welcomed was praised. Respondents felt strongly the ethos should be safeguarded.” (Loreto Centre evaluation report, Lucy Franks Consulting)

“The work of Loreto complements the ideals of Vision for Change in the community it serves. It is appropriate that the Loreto Centre continues to recognise its own value and worth to the community and that it continues to plan to ensure it survives and thrives by conserving its current ethos and by being creative in ensuring its continuation.” (Loreto Centre evaluation report, Lucy Franks Consulting)

Some described the Centre as a ‘life saver’ for people in the community who are isolated or struggling. It is described as a Centre where ‘humanity meets you at the door’ rather than bureaucracy. The fact that staff are from the local community and have had the benefit of many of the educational programmes and are good advocates for the Centre contributes to that sense of its embeddedness in the community. The approach taken at the Centre is more individualised than most. It was commented that this is quite different from other agencies, or religious organisations which champion or advocate – the Centre is seen as apolitical in that regard. This seems to work for the local community, and the holistic approach taken to the individual often reaches in a positive way beyond the confines of the learning or counselling session, for example to connect with those who may be absent or ill to ensure they know they are appreciated and supported.

The evaluation report was presented at the board meeting in September 2020. This identified the key aims and objectives for the centre going forward. The findings from the evaluation will inform the drafting of the strategic plan for the next 4 years for the centre.

In continuing to review the public benefit of the centre, the centre undertook to look at how the local community is benefitting or could benefit from the service that the centre offers. One of the priorities for the board will be the strategic plan and identifying strategies and resources to implement them.

ONGOING SUPPORT

The Centre is very grateful to the Loreto Sisters who give considerable support in the form of providing a building and finances for the service as well as providing a manager to work in the centre and for their support with the administration of the centre.

The counselling service is supervised by two clinical directors who volunteer their time and energy for many years. Their contribution and commitment to the centre is paramount and very much valued and appreciated.

The board would like to acknowledge the financial and staffing contribution made by other agencies such as CDET B Crumlin, Department of Social Protection through schemes such as JI, CE and TUS, Dublin South City Partnership, TUSLA, Cork Street Fund and The Stars Group Charity Committee.

ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Loreto 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

- ◆ Personalities and Personal Development
- ◆ Meaning and Personal Development

Holistic Education

- ◆ Tai Chi
- ◆ Introduction to Mindfulness
- ◆ Mindfulness Practice Beyond The Beginnings
- ◆ Mindfulness for everyone
- ◆ Horticulture
- ◆ Introduction to Flower Arranging
- ◆ Flower Arranging
- ◆ International Women's Day Project
- ◆ Art
- ◆ Yoga

These classes were delivered in term one (September to December 2019) successfully and started in the second term (January to April). Due to the pandemic, classes were stopped in March 2020 for all learners.

Even though the classes have stopped during the second term, the yoga, tai-chi, mindfulness and horticulture tutors sent in regular videos for all the learners that were posted on social media for the second and the third term.

Academic Education

An Introduction to Women, Gender & Social Justice course was due to start on the 22nd April 2020, but due to Covid 19 level 5 restrictions this course had to be temporarily put on hold.

COURSES DELIVERED

From 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020, 242 people attended classes in the Loreto Centre. There were no classes held in Summer 2020 because of Level 5 Covid 19 restrictions.

The breakdown for each class is as follows:

Class	Autumn 2019	Spring 2020	Summer 2020
Tai Chi	17	19	N/A
An Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation	6	N/A	N/A
Mindfulness Practice Beyond The Beginnings	12	N/A	N/A
Mindfulness for Everyone	N/A	15	N/A
Horticulture	14	8	N/A
An Introduction to Flower Arranging	14	13	N/A
Art	13	9	N/A
International Women's Day Project	N/A	11	N/A
Personalities and Personal Development	8	N/A	N/A
Meaning and Personal Development	N/A	9	N/A
Yoga I	19	20	N/A
Yoga II	18	17	N/A
Total	121	121	
Overall Total	242		

COURSE TERMS:

September - December - 10 weeks

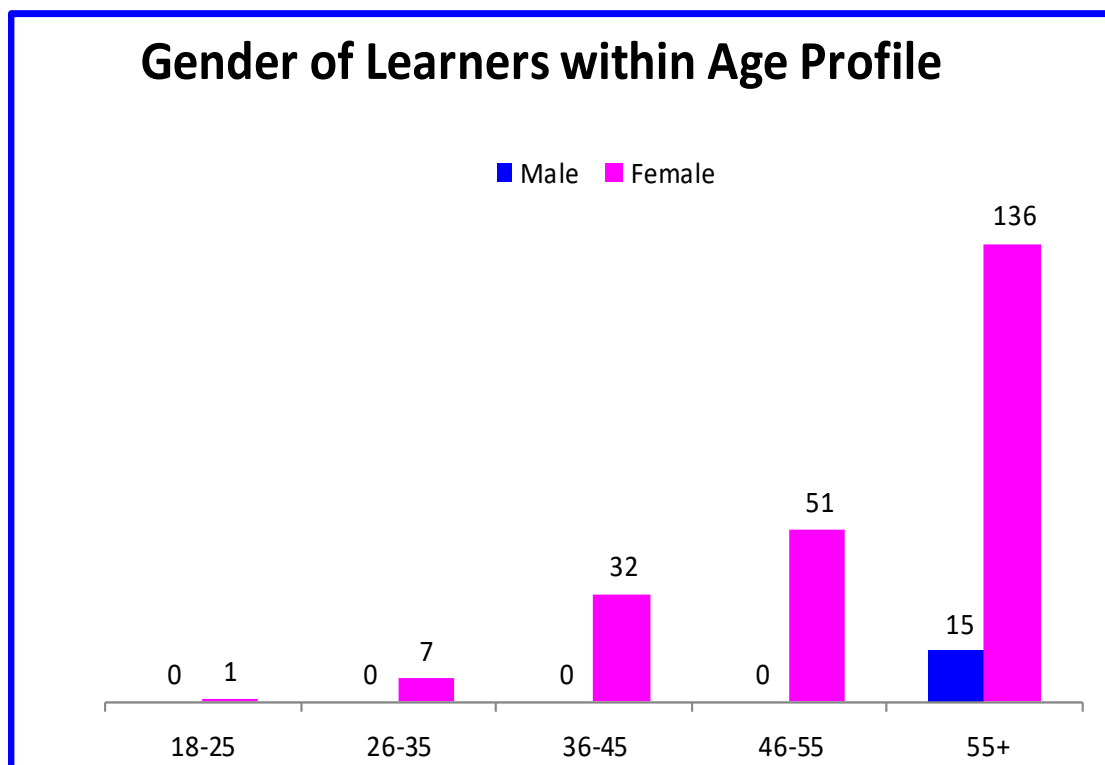
January - March - 7 weeks

May - June - Covid19 lockdown

STATISTICS OF LEARNER POPULATION - 242 LEARNERS

Table 1 describes the age profile and the gender of the learners. This is similar to the trend noted in the last Annual Report.

Table no 1



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:

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.



COURSE OUTCOMES

In each Annual Report we offer an insight into the outcomes from a selection of the courses which have been delivered over the past year from the point of view of the learners.

Horticulture Autumn 2019 (Tutor Eoin O'Brien)

"Eoin was one of the best teachers I have ever met. He was so clear and worked so hard, I learned so much. I would highly recommend this course to anyone. I found that the course was very easy to follow. The course was very well set up and given in a very good clear manner. The course tutor picked one topic and followed throughout with it for the full class. This made it easy to understand. Course was well delivered with good notes and slides and ample time to answer questions also a well presented and interesting class."

(Learner)

Flower Arranging 2019 (Tutor Maura Gilchriest)

"I thoroughly enjoyed the course. I learned so much about flowers and how to put them together. Maura was extremely informative and inclusive. The class was so friendly and warm. It was so nice to meet new people and to have some beautiful flowers to bring home and to gift to people."

(Learner)

"This is a wonderful class and teacher is so generous with her time and we learn so much. Lovely friendly atmosphere in class. This course was extremely well delivered."

(Learner)

Art Autumn 2019 (Tutor Angela Shiven)

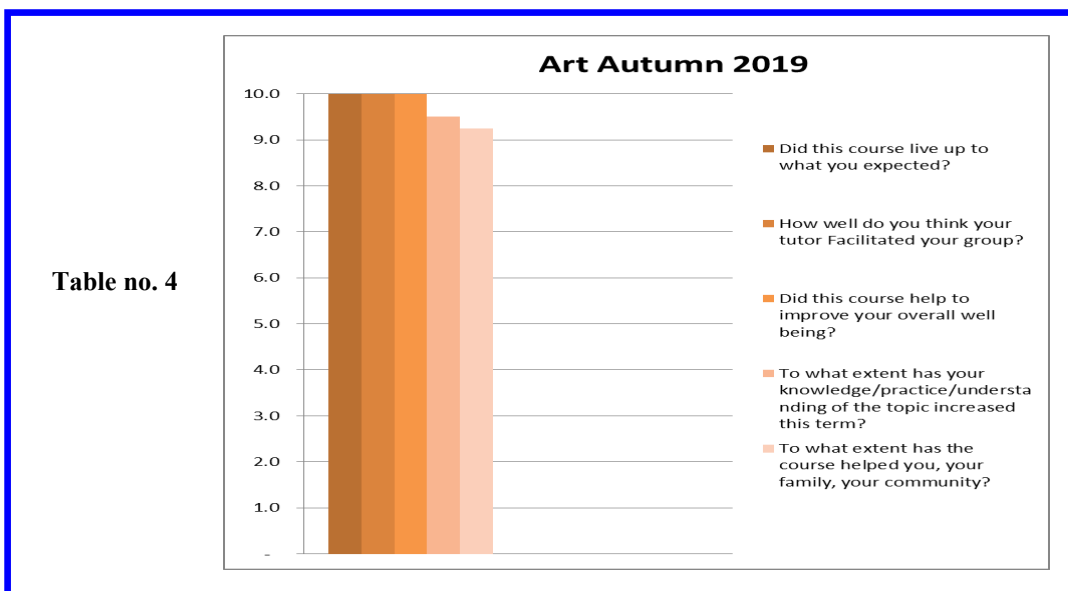
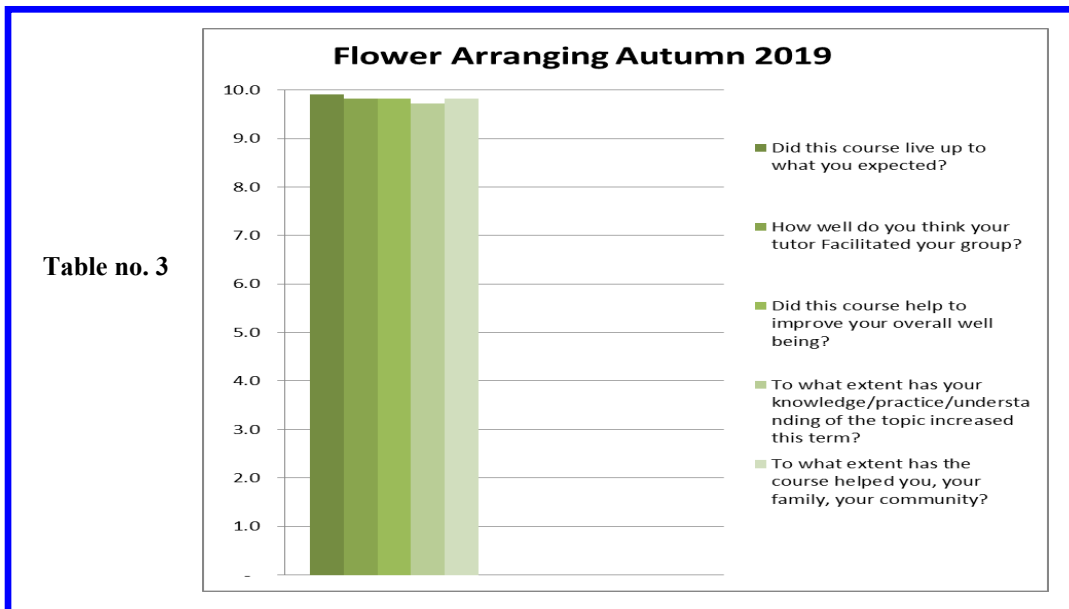
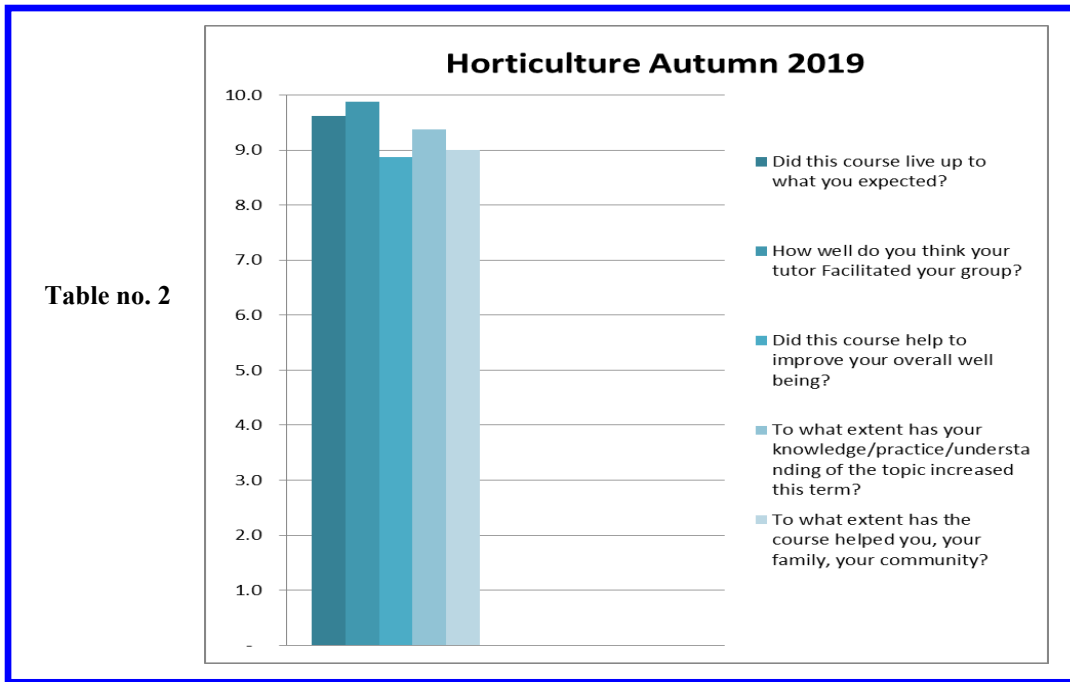
"This course is amazing. You can express yourself, learn new skills. Angela has time for everyone. The class has a very relaxed atmosphere, there is no pressure. I love coming to the class every week. Learn new skills and enjoy the social aspect."

(Learner)

"Found this course surprisingly good fun with the teacher and classmates, really nice sense of community, and looked forward to it every week."

(Learner)

Table 2, 3 & 4 capture the feedback from learners over two terms.



International Women's Day Project - March 2020

In the second term a new project started as a result of the flower arrangement class being oversubscribed. 11 learners decided to come together to continue to develop their skills and share their passion for flowers with a floral exhibition presented on International Women's Day in Loreto Centre.

Loreto Centre organised "Each for Equal" exhibition presenting floral arrangements on 12th of March 2020 from 3pm. 11 experienced and skilled women got together for 10 weeks to work on a project celebrating women and their achievements over the years for International Women's Day. The group was facilitated by 2 former learners, Nuala Lavelle and Colette Ryan, with the support of the manager and the centre staff.

Their flower arranging skills acquired in Loreto Centre over the years under the guidance of Maura Gilchrest, CDETB tutor, their passion and creativity, brought them together to create individual and group floral arrangements that was part of an exhibition displayed in Loreto Centre.

The exhibition had an opening speech, a presentation of the floral arrangements and the participants, followed by light refreshments in the company of over 100 guests.

PROJECT EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK FROM FACILITATORS

Objective

The objective for this project was reached, people jelled, and worked well together as a group. There was a very good attendance each day. The group had a wide range of artistic, technical and practical skills and this resulted in good teamwork. The support from the Centre Manager, Anca Lupu, and her administrative team was immeasurable. The practical support from Jean and Gareth contributed significantly to the smooth running of the project.

Feedback

We got a feeling from participants that they would like each day (or part of the day) to be creating floral arrangements. It may be worthwhile to ask them to complete an evaluation form and this could be clarified then. Time management was an issue, in particular in relation to the group project. More time could have been spent developing this earlier on, and would have avoided the rush, the day before the exhibition. In the end however, all participants worked extremely hard and an excellent "Each for Equal" arrangement was produced, and it was said that they did enjoy having to put a lot more thought into their work than they would normally do.

The Exhibition

The exhibition was excellent. Arrangements were displayed professionally, both inside and outside and in the entrance hall. The exhibition room was transformed and the variety of arrangements and props created a wealth of interest. Karen and the team were on hand to facilitate last minute changes to titles or displays, and this was done in true professional style. The buttonholes were a nice touch for guests. There was a good relaxed atmosphere in the room, with all guests fully engaging in the exhibition.

The reception

A very relaxed atmosphere was created, and once again our classroom was transformed. Jean and Gareth ensured we all got served quickly and were well prepared. Exhibitors and guests enjoyed this, with many guests giving positive feedback on the exhibition.

Nuala Lavelle and Colette Ryan



COMMUNITY COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICE

Loreto Centre appointed 2 new Clinical Directors in September 2019. Terry Kelleher and Jim Murphy, both senior therapists, have been working with the centre for a long time and kindly accepted the new roles.

The counselling service was hugely impacted in March by the national restrictions imposed by the Government due to Covid-19 pandemic as follows:

- Many therapists and clients could not travel due to travel and/or health restrictions
- Donations dropped significantly due to high unemployment rates
- Increased expenses for PPE equipment acquired
- Training required for online/telephone therapy
- Guidelines and procedures required for clients' and therapists' safety when providing telephone/online therapy and face-to-face therapy

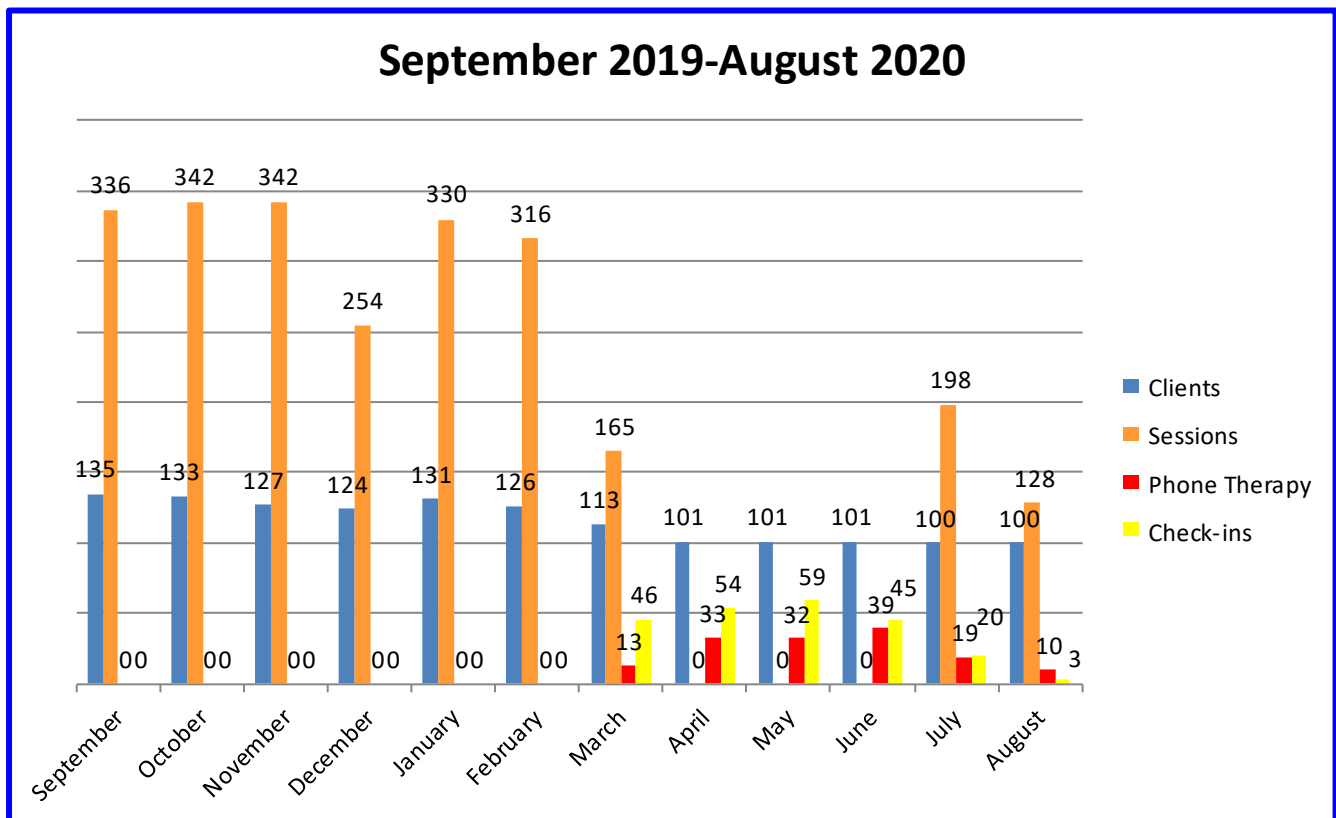
Manager worked with Clinical Directors and the Board to ensure all the necessary steps and actions were followed in line with national and HSE health and safety measures before resuming the counselling service in June.

The service operated on reduced hours providing a combination of telephone therapy, regular check-ins and face to face therapy to vulnerable clients between June to August 2020.

The table below shows the number of clients and sessions throughout the year with a visible impact during the first lockdown. While our therapists maintained contact with some of their clients by phone, some clients found it challenging to continue the therapy due to personal, health or vulnerable circumstances they faced during this time.

Table no 5 below illustrates the activity of the counselling/ psychotherapy over the past year.

Appointments & Counselling hours delivered in the Loreto Centre



COUNSELLING TEAM

Our team of 30 volunteer therapists provide integrative humanistic psychotherapy to the clients. As well as a core team of fully accredited therapists, the Centre has qualified therapists working towards the requirements of professional accreditation and third and fourth year therapy students.

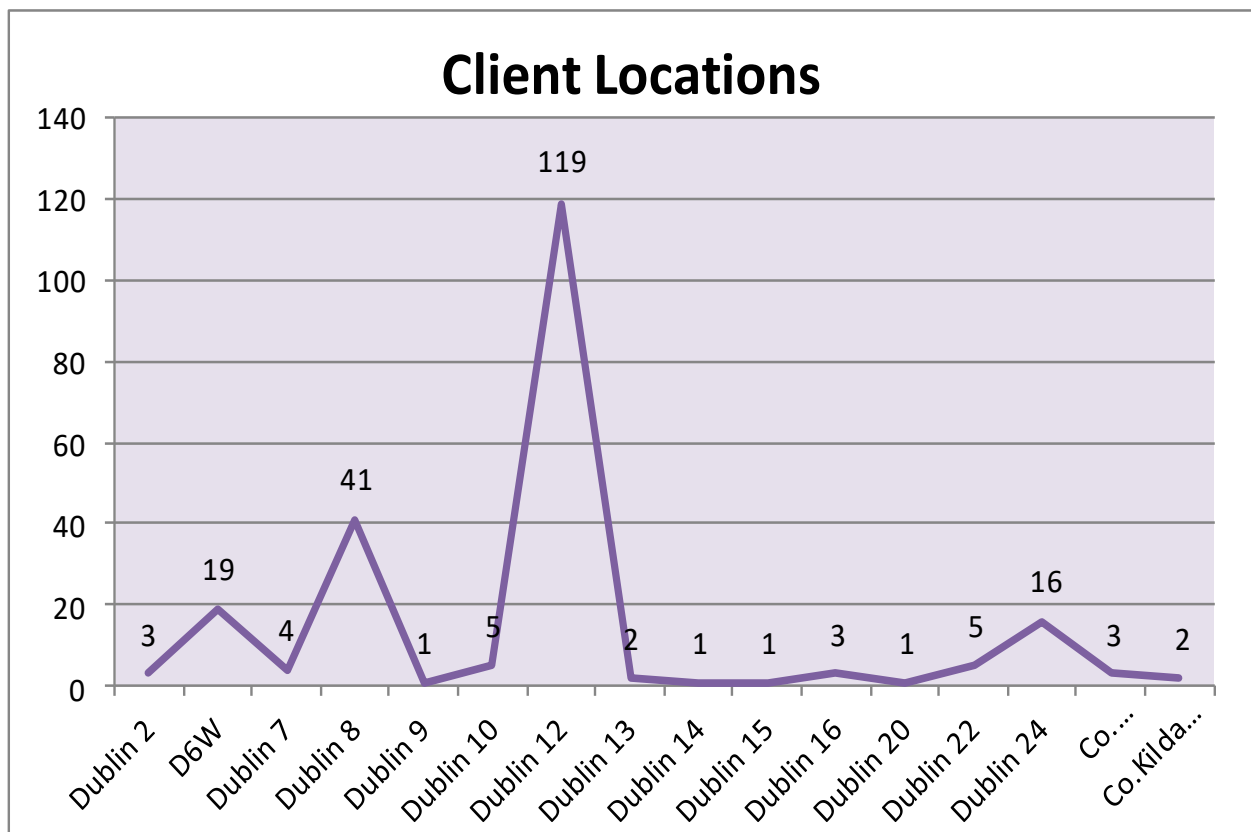
Our volunteer counsellors are all members of the main counselling and therapy accrediting bodies in Ireland, including The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) and the Irish Association for Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP). The volunteer counsellors are offered opportunities for continuous professional development either offered on the premises or by other agencies. During this past year the Centre management and Clinical Directors offered training to the therapists on note taking, child protection reporting and self-care.

COUNSELLING STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2019 - AUGUST 2020

After cancellations and non-attendance, 2731 counselling sessions were delivered in the Loreto Centre, including clients who were continuing therapy from the previous year. 254 clients attended counselling/psychotherapy sessions between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020.

226 appointments were made to see the Clinical Directors. Out of that figure there were some cancellations and no shows which brought the number of intakes to 146 new clients.

Table below describes the geographic area from which the clients come:



Tables below show the source of referrals for counselling and age and gender profile of our clients during the year September 2019 – August 2020:

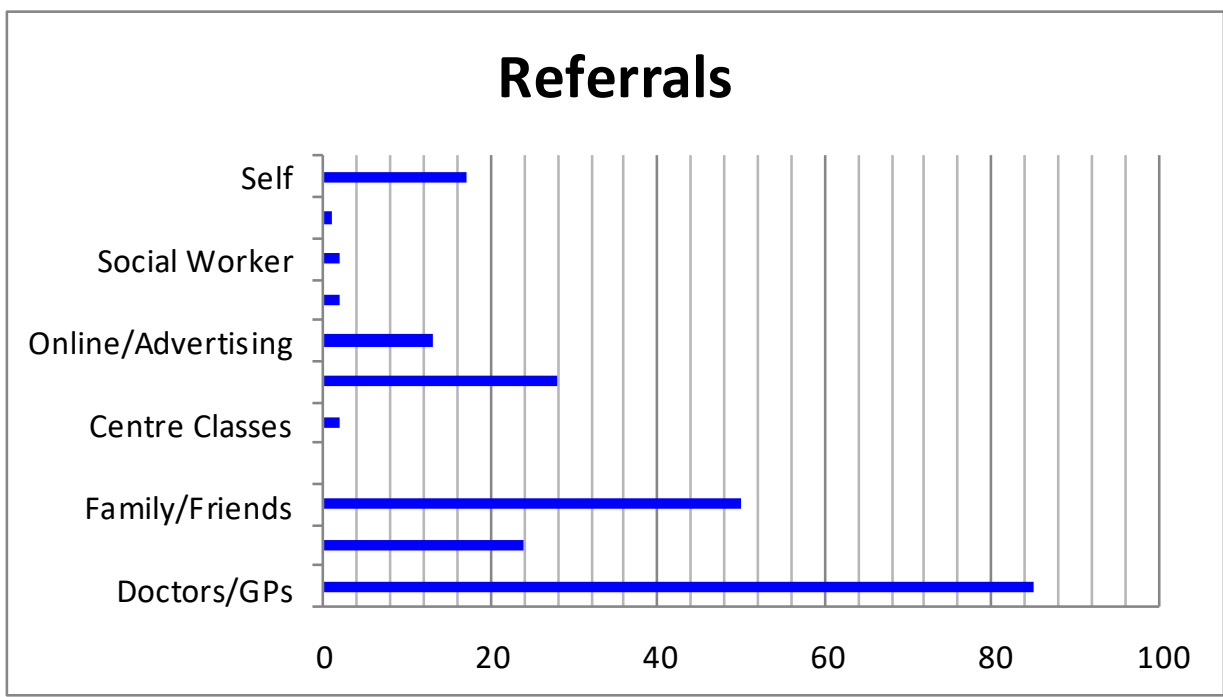
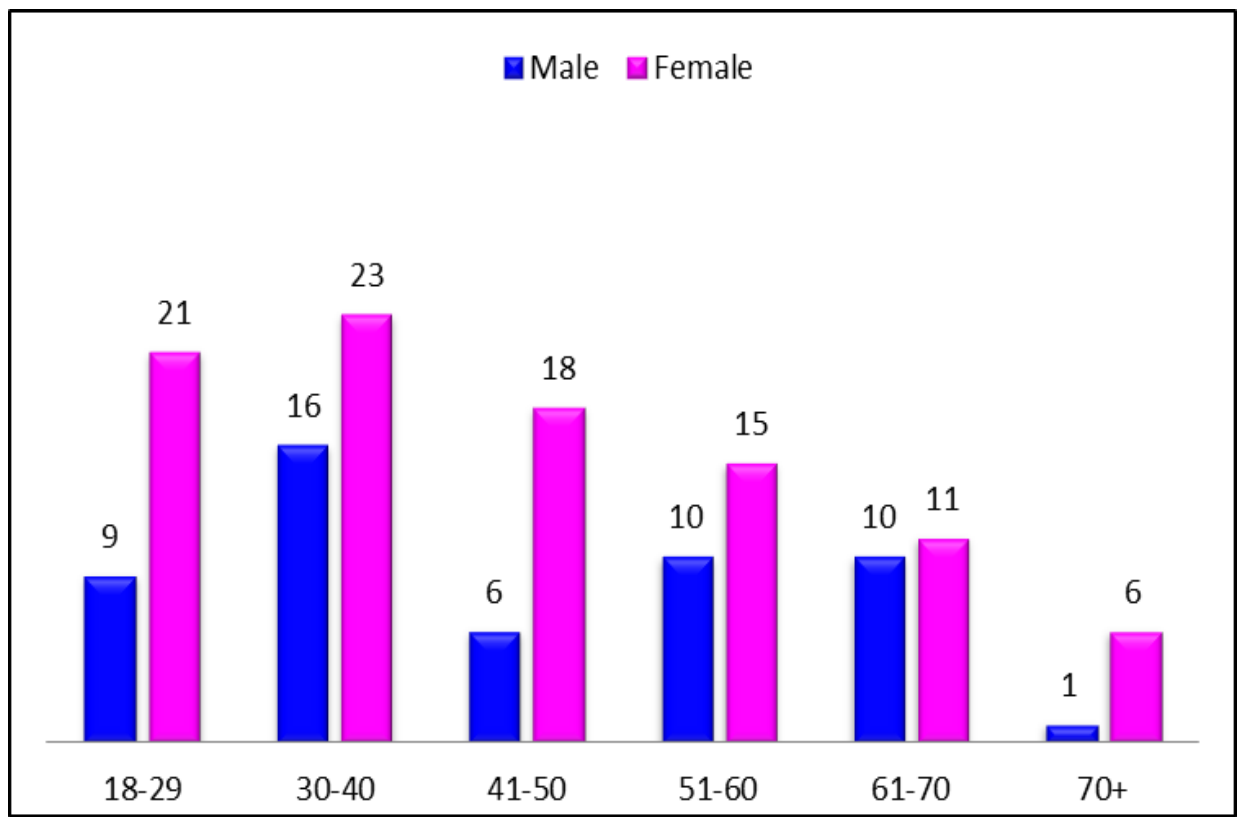


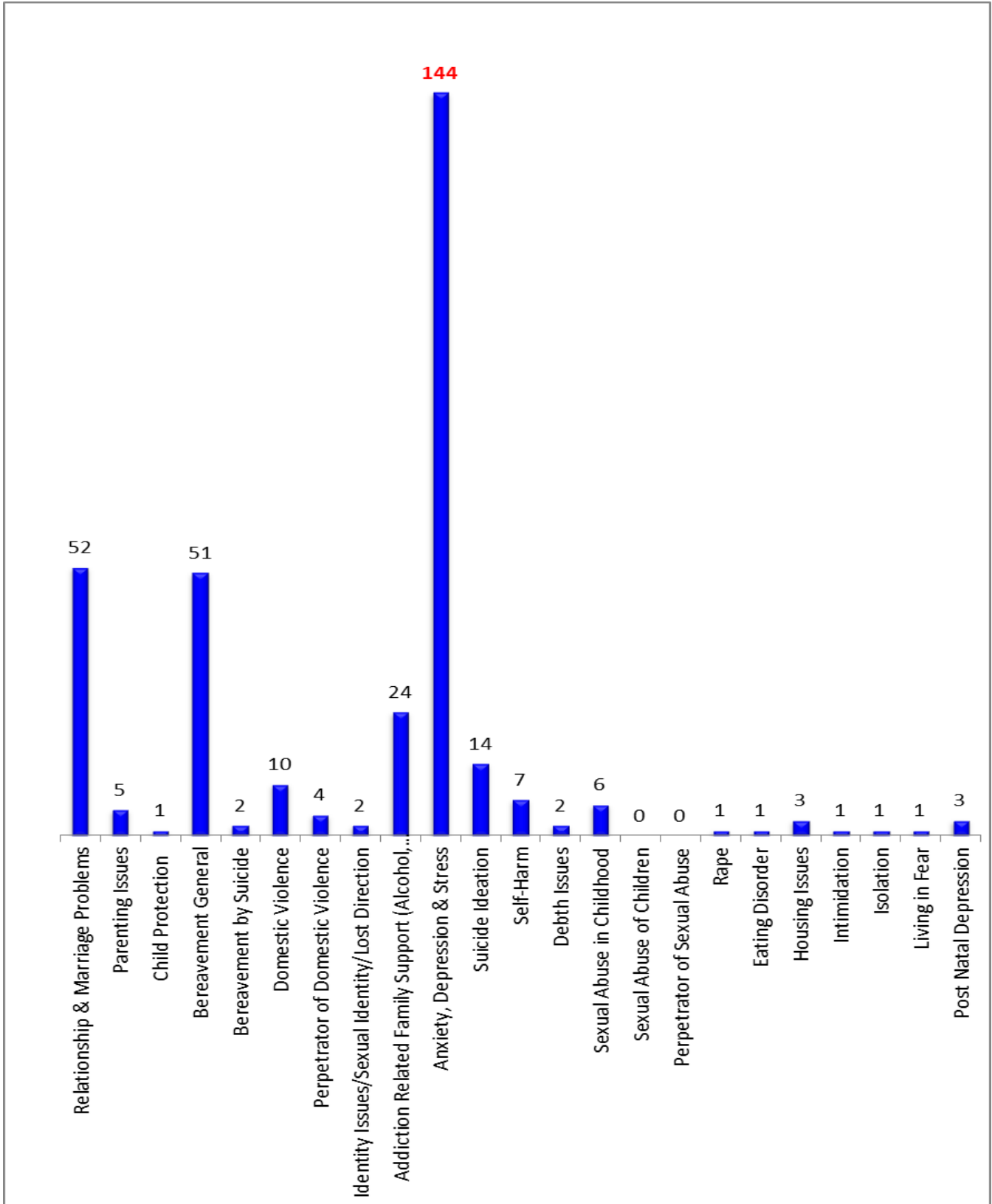
Table 8 describes the age and gender of clients for the same period



Presenting Issues:

Throughout the counselling process a variety of issues may emerge. The following chart no. 10 illustrates the span of presenting issues that clients identified. A visible development this year is the increase in anxiety, depression and stress identified in the initial interview. Another major issue is relationship and marriage breakdown, followed by bereavement.

Table 10 shows presenting issues of clients:



FEEDBACK FROM COUNSELLING CLIENTS

While therapists who work with clients can see the benefit of the therapy process, this report does not give feedback on the confidential and private nature of the work being done. However, at times clients call in to the office or write a note to say thank you. Below is some feedback from their comments.

“I was adopted and recently my birth mother has wanted to make contact with me. It was such a shock after all these years and I struggled to cope her sudden interest in wanting to meet me. This caused me to have sever anxiety attacks and my doctor suggested I come to the Centre for therapy. This was the best thing for me to do as it helped me process my feelings and decide what I really wanted to do. “

(Client)

“Lockdown restrictions for me was a total nightmare. I have four children all of school going age and one with sever intellectual disabilities. Between home schooling, boredom and melt downs I needed help. A friend recommended I come to the Centre and I haven't looked back. Being able to talk about how I was feeling helped me so much. It is still difficult but I have learned new coping skills which have helped.” (Client)

“My elderly mother passed away a couple of months ago. She was in a Nursing home and caught Covid. It's been so difficult, we were not able to visit her and support while she was critically ill and that was devastating on all the family. We only got to see for her final hour and that broke my heart.. I have a whole lot of guilt and remorse around her being in a Nursing home, if only I had brought her to live with me she might be alive today. Coming for therapy is beginning to help, I know I have a long road ahead but I know I'll get there.” (Client)

“ A good friend recommended I come to the Loreto Centre as I was totally distraught and unable to cope after a personal traumatic experience. The shock and hurt I was going through caused me to go into a complete depression and I was suicidal. I lost all confidence in myself and I started to drink a lot. I was unable to look after my family and life was unbearable. Attending therapy has been hard but I have managed to work through the pain and anger and now I am slowly accepting that certain chapters in my life are over. I am more focused now on making a new life for myself and my family.” (Client)

FEEDBACK FROM LORETO CENTRE THERAPISTS

"I have just completed two-years of clinical work in Loreto Counselling Centre as a student therapist. My experience was a very positive one. The Centre works to the highest possible professional standards. In addition, the warm welcome care and support of all the staff allowed me to do the work with my clients in a safe and secure environment.

Furthermore, the manager and clinical directors were always available to guide, advice and empower me when needed which was very much appreciated. Respect, belonging and equality are the hallmarks of Loreto Counselling Centre who provide an invaluable service to the community. It gives me much pleasure to recommend it." Martin

"The Loreto Centre provided an excellent environment for my first experience of client work as a trainee Psychotherapist, the staff of the Centre are incredibly supportive, the Centre is extremely well run with structures and processes optimised to ensure a safe environment for all in an atmosphere that is friendly, homely and welcoming." Patricia

"I would like to express my gratitude for the period that I have spent in Loreto Centre. I have learned a great deal, and met some wonderful people in both the clientele and the lovely staff. I am blessed to have been assigned to Loreto Centre for my placement." Pat

"Starting off as a student therapist can be a scary experience. I feel very lucky that my experience started at the Loreto Centre Crumlin. From the beginning of time there, I was warmly welcomed by the team and inducted by the Centre Manager who was there to answer any questions and share her expertise. The Administrative Team is extremely well-organised and kind and all processes are clear in terms of note-taking and handling donations. The cohort of clients I met was diverse and I felt supported by staff at the Centre and the Clinical Directors whenever any more complex issues arose. It was incredibly helpful to have a team of both fellow students and accredited therapists to chat to during lunch and tea breaks in terms of learning and feeling part of a team. The Loreto Centre was an ideal place to start my journey as a therapist." Sinead

"I cannot speak highly enough of my experience in the Loreto centre as a trainee counsellor and indeed as a qualified counsellor taking his first steps towards accreditation.

The support framework that Anca and her team have in place is second to none. It boosts the confidence and competence of the young therapist getting to grips with note taking, boundary establishment, contracting and the wider ethical considerations that these topics segue into.

It would be remiss of me to fail to mention the emotional support that the community in the Loreto counselling centre offer the therapist. It is this sense of camaraderie that makes working in the centre a special experience.

The learnings that the centre has offered me have been central in my journey as a counsellor and the foundations that have been laid because of this experience will serve me indefinitely. " William

FUNDING AND RESOURCE SUPPORTS 2019–2020

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 Clinical Directors
- ◆ 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 projects along with the CDETB Crumlin Area who commit personnel resources to the Centre and who make a significant contribution to the day to day running of the Centre
- ◆ Lucy Franks Consulting for the evaluation and the strategic plan
- ◆ The Cork Street Fund
- ◆ 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.

Funders:



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



TUSLA Child and Family Agency



The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection through D12 Jobs Initiative and CE Daisy Chain Project



City of Dublin Education and Training Board (Crumlin Office)



Dublin South City Partnership and TUS Programme

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