

## Group Feedback

*As part of the 2016 seminar series, over 90 participants across three seminars came together to learn from experts and from each other- they posed questions themselves for collaborative peer support, and also specific questions from some of the event facilitators.*

*This feedback and peer learning is collated below. It will be of use to those planning or facilitating training and/or education with Family Carers, along with those in a general support role.*

*We encourage all those planning or facilitating training to be reflective in their practice, and to ask themselves some of the questions outlined below. The feedback from the attendees is also valuable to ensure that the mistakes and successes of past projects can be learned from and avoided (in the case of mistakes) and incorporated into successful projects (in the case of successes).*

### ***Suggested questions from attendees, along with responses and suggestions from peers.***

#### Q) How can we support carers who are aging?

- Practical support- the service to visit the carer instead of carer visiting the service
- Support carers to access service that can best meet their needs
- Make sure health is a priority
- Access to respite- individual to access long-term accommodation
- Have an open mind when situations/ risks emerge
- Building a self-worth, reassuring them their role is important
- Information
- Reassurance to carer that ongoing care for caree is secured
- Support carer to let go and plan their life post main carer role
- Additional support provided to allow carer to continue in the caring role
- Provide safe space for carer to reflect on their caring experience

#### Q) How can we support carers who are physically isolated?

- Internet access- in order to get information etc.
- Phone support
- Any form of telecare
- Identify community assets
- Volunteer resources/ peer supports/ befriending services (e.g. organising lift to events, etc.)
- Explore how other people are doing in a similar situation and how that works
- Organise care support for a break/ respite for the carer to attend training
- Transport- organise for the carer

- Location of groups can change to suit individuals where they are living
- Therapeutic days fully organised
- Outreach services/ Hub in the local area
- Routine
- A person has to want to combat the isolation

Q) How can we support/ manage a co-dependent carer/caree relationship?

- Take time to get to know the person
- Needs, information, strengths, hopes, positives
- Praise
- Counselling
- Peer support
- Access & entitlement information
- Advocacy
- Peer support
- Encourage individual pursuits
- Education
- Opportunities to do things together outside of the co-dependent dynamic

***Reflective practice questions & answers from attendees***

Q) What has surprised you about yourself and/or your colleagues?

- Broad range of talents and experience within the team
- Personality types/ leadership styles
- Power dynamics/agency politics
- Learning from other team members/ new roles
- Being "ok" to accept own limitations
- Value of the lived experience/ valuing colleagues
- Shared frustrations
- Lack of motivation from regional centres
- Lack of willingness to change/ try new ideas
- Handing over responsibilities
- Colleagues getting excited about my new project
- Ideas are stimulated and the team is motivated
- Being part of change for the better
- Energy & inspiration
- Enhanced partnership across disciplines in group work
- Adapting role from professional to participant in facilitation
- Some colleagues were not as flexible in making themselves available
- Suspicion about the project
- Enjoyment
- Resilience- particularly in supporting victims of trauma
- Motivating, refreshing, challenging

- Working to combat a peers negativity
- Willingness of colleagues to help when possible
- Surprised at how stressed I have been by the project- how much it is on my mind- I want it to be a success and meaningful for the participants
- Don't really enjoy public speaking/ presenting
- Emotional aspect- listening to carers share their stories- this is what makes my job worthwhile and meaningful
- Level of relief that we finally got started- and that people showed up!
- Levels of isolation and lack of awareness by carers about how many other carers are out there and experiencing the same things they are- they feel so alone
- How labour intensive running the project is

Q) What has surprised you about the project?

- Lack of support/ information in community mental health
- Participants from far and wide- no support
- Stigma
- Crises- signposting
- Lack of uptake in further training
- Difficult to fill places on training courses
- Increased level of support for participants in terms of support to care for person while trainee attends course
- Lack of identification as a carer- missing out on social/ financial support
- Lack of awareness of level of support in the community
- Level of trauma family carers have to cope with
- Lack of awareness about the need to take care of themselves- "she is my Mum, of course I'll do it" etc.
- The feedback from Family Carers of how they perceived professionals perceiving them
- They want to get involved in young carers support groups- despite a parallel lack of recognition of this role
- The lack of value given to family carers/ relatives/ friends from policy makers and financial funders
- How relatives/ family carers can become so medicalised and focussed on diagnosis & medication, losing sight of recovery and personal relationships
- Don't often look at holistic approach
- Trust in services
- Facilitators not wanting payment (professionals)
- Sense of responsibility that carers take on
- Resistance
- Difficulty accepting that it's ok not to be ok
- Who chooses to engage, and how they engage
- Resilience of the group- supporting peers post bereavement in group/ programme

Q) How will you know the project has been a success?

- Met aims & objectives
- Positive feedback from participants
- Met the needs of the group
- Observed change/ learning in the group
- Profile & needs of family carers will be better understood within my organisation & recognised as valid piece of work.
- Ongoing participation- buy in from carers to keep coming
- Person being cared for reports benefit also
- Increased ability to care for self and individual reported
- Informal feedback
- New participants through "word of mouth"
- Establish a reputation for reliability & support
- Positive (improved) relationship between family member and carer
- Succession plan in place (medium to long term strategy)
- Increase in services & service users
- Evaluation & feedback
- Increase in uptake of service/ project
- Establish it as a longer term/core program/intervention
- Colleagues/ service value the intervention
- Empowering resilience
- When we get the last 10% funding!
- If you have met your grand agreement
- Competency assessments completed
- Independent evaluation
- Reduction in complaints
- Personal satisfaction when programmes completed
- That participants access further training

Q) What challenges have you experienced in relation to the project?

- Evaluation tool
- Relatives recovery 1<sup>st</sup>- buy in- not for their person
- Acceptance of U18's as secondary carers
- Transport
- Respite service to attend training
- Language
- Funding- meeting the criteria
- Lack of service for U18
- Services lack of support mainstream
- Paper work, stats, etc.

- Self-disclosure as a professional
- National service- not easily accessible to all families
- Assessing the needs
- Encouraging participation
- Logistics- organisation, minimising the impact of families attending & also on the wider service
- Resistance to pay peer supporters- funding
- Challenges of not being able to continue intervention/ do it again
- Trying to meet the needs of being specific AND general- finding the middle ground
- Knowing your audience
- Having to commit to a plan so early- little room for manoeuvre
- Time to do a project- huge commitment
- Covering a huge area
- Engaging some DAF recipients
- Getting through agenda
- Managing emotions
- Acknowledging lif stresses & impact on participants
- Financial commitment for participants
- Managing expectations
- Cultural diversity- managing barriers
- Public transport
- Filling places
- Identifying people who would benefit- do we think we know better?
- Confidentiality
- Boundaries
- Ground rules

Q) What successes did you achieve in relation to the project?

- Recognition of families own needs & ways of fulfilling them
- Commitment of attendance/ large numbers that expected
- Peer support/ families not feeling like they are on their own
- Transition from "carer" to "supporter"
- Variety of workshops e.g. legal issues, challenging behaviour
- Positive impact of intervention post bereavement
- Confident in self-advocating
- Feedback that people are implementing learning
- Raise profile of service
- Further funding
- Service is more accessible
- Seen as useful program on national level
- Addressing emotive/ complex issues
- Carer choosing to look after themselves for the first time
- Ability to provide a more in-depth training programme than in previous years

T +353 1 874 7776

E [info@carealliance.ie](mailto:info@carealliance.ie)  
W [www.carealliance.ie](http://www.carealliance.ie)

A Coleraine House  
Coleraine Street  
Dublin 7, Ireland  
DO7 E8X7

Registered Company No  
461315  
Charity Registration No  
20048303  
CHY No 14644



‘Guiding support for family carers’

- Overcoming obstacles to allow carers to attend (i.e. transport, respite cover, helping carers to overcome feelings of anxiety or being overwhelmed)
- Peer support networks developing
- Development of personal awareness, learning, and understanding of carers difficulties
- Identified gaps in services
- Learn how to facilitate groups
- Learn about own leadership & facilitator skills
- Foster a “carer-centric” culture
- Baseline measurement raised post-seminar
- Personal feedback from carers
- Computer skills
- Formal recognition of caring- certificate-job opportunity
- Increasing self-awareness
- Engaging with new services, people, and service-users
- People in recovery
- Personal development & confidence

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D07 E8X7

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Directors ; R Daynes, P Dunne, C.Duffy, J Duggan, D Maguire, D. McKenna, H Mulligan, F O'Rourke, D Shanagher, A Walsh

