

Eden Programme

Collaboration in Action: Community Healthcare West (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon)



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Eden

Eden is an educational programme with a therapeutic element for people who have attempted or are thinking of suicide. It runs one day a week for 26 weeks. It is a truly life changing programme that supports participants to develop their skills to monitor and manage their own mental health, build a broad range of supports and to move away from suicide as an option of choice in times of crisis. The Eden Programme originated from the personal experience of the founder of Suicide or Survive (SOS) who survived death by suicide and went on to develop this evidence-based programme. It continues to be informed by the voices of people who have experienced suicidal thoughts and/ or made a suicide attempt, which is in line with current government policy.

The HSE, National Counselling Service (NCS) and the Resource Office for Suicide Prevention in Community Healthcare West in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon are working in partnership with SOS to deliver the Eden Programme in three sites, Galway City, Castlebar, Co. Mayo and Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon.

Testimonials

“One of the most beneficial elements of the programme for me was to come and meet other individuals who have also experienced very distressing situations...and who have experienced that taboo and you can discuss it freely. That you felt so bad that you wanted, you were considering taking your own life. That in itself was a relief...” (Eden Participant)

*“...I have a lot more respect for myself and my journey. Suicide is no longer an option for me and that is very real”
(Eden Participant)*

*“I have learnt the triggers for my depression and suicidal ideation which means that I can call for help much sooner and maybe the crisis won't be as bad”
(Eden Participant)*

“...flexible, committed, anything that did occur we worked it out, the partnership was key to the success of the pilot”(SOS)

The Resource Office for Suicide Prevention played a crucial role in facilitating the connection between the two partnership organisations

“There is a philosophical fit in terms of viewing people as being traumatised by life experiences rather than having a focus on mental illness...it addresses a gap in mental health services and fits with the service expansion plan...” (NCS)

Evaluation

The Eden Programme was externally evaluated by Dublin City University in 2014 and 2016

Participant reports in Community Healthcare West were similar to those of participants who attended Eden Programmes run by SOS in Dublin. They experienced:

- Benefits to daily living
- More hope
- More belief in themselves and the future
- Positive changes in their relationship with suicide
- Increased motivation for change

The partnership worked well because of:

- Communication
- Commitment
- Flexibility
- Governance
- Local knowledge
- Reputation
- Fit

Facilitators' understanding of suicide and their competence in working with this group significantly increased through the Eden facilitator training

The programme has demonstrated transferability with effectiveness in key areas of personal and interpersonal functioning and acceptability among attendees, facilitators and service providers. Thus, the rollout of the current manualised version of the programme is endorsed across a range of settings, including both within and outside mental health services

We are especially grateful to HSE National Mental Health/National Office for Suicide Prevention for their ongoing commitment and the financial support they provide for this programme.