

Memory Works in DCU school of Nursing's Healthy Living Centre

Dr Kate Irving

Academic practice

- Academic practice is defined as the deliberate integration of research and education with practice. The HLC is a community focused centre with both a local and national remit and practitioners include those from medical, nursing, psychology and psychotherapy backgrounds with experience in primary, secondary and tertiary care sectors.

Main Aims

- A primary care support service where people who are concerned about their memory can get advice and assessment
- A primary care service providing holistic assessments for GPs who feel a patient might benefit from a more detailed approach and the provision of a full report
- A holistic assessment of factors that impact on memory problems such as sleep disturbance, mood disorders, stress, grief, diet, exercise and social interaction.
- Individualised advice on cognitive strengths, coping mechanisms and risk reduction strategies.
- Onward referral for counselling or psychotherapy where appropriate
- Advocacy for the family and person with dementia when they are finding it difficult to get clarity or support for the problems they are facing.

Philosophy

- Positive approaches to healthy ageing / Strengths based
- Open up the social taboo of talking about cognitive problems whatever age
- Early identification of memory problems should not be an end in itself
- Memory is complex and regardless of disease status there are modifiable risks that will benefit anyone in they are concerned about their memory

Set up

- Clinic in the School of Nursing – purpose built Healthy Living Centre
- Supported by the school + means tested fee
- 1-2 clients a week
- 1 clinician plus counselling and psychotherapy
- Self referrals, referrals from the Alzheimer's Society Helpline, GP referrals
- About $\frac{1}{4}$ get referred to a secondary health service

Process

- Interview to ascertain, social supports, psychological coping mechanisms, life events, sleep patterns, dietary habits, exercise, social interaction, cognitive stimulation, medical history, drug history, mood etc
- Mini-cog, MMSE, GDS. (about 1 ½ hours)
- Feedback, follow up letter, letter to GP and or memory clinic
- Into the future...

With ourselves in mind: Strengths based dyad support group- 8 weeks

- Remember who they are and preserve their valued identities;
- Live with significant losses;
- Pace themselves, activate themselves and take it easy on themselves;
- Stand up for themselves and assert independence;
- Accept the help of others and make use of community resources;
- Keep going when times are tough;
- Prepare for and shape their futures;
- Work together with their relatives on each of the above.