E-Nurse. Mental Health on the Internet.

Introducing internet mental health services to Cork city and county.
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The Prevalence of Mental Health Issues

1 in 4 people will have a mental health issue at some life stage.
1/6th of the population will have a common mental health disorder at any one time.
1 in one 100 currently have a serious mental disorder. (Appleby and Butterworth 2009)

It is estimated 35-50% of people with severe mental illness are in receipt of treatment in high income countries. (World Health Organisation 2013)
There were 18,457 admissions to psychiatric inpatient units in 2013. That is 402.3 people per 100,000 population. 33% of these people were first admissions. 67% were people being readmitted to psychiatric inpatient units. 11% of all admissions were involuntary, 12% of first admissions were involuntary. (Health Research Board 2013)

In 2011 there were 554 deaths in Ireland from suicide. (Central Statistics Office 2014)

The economic cost of mental health disorder in Ireland is estimated to be 11 billion euro/year. (Institute of Public Health 2014)
Mental health information

Health Information should be clear, with no jargon and, easily understood.

The users of health services increasingly demand the provision of appropriate information that will enable them to manage their own care and, make healthy choices (Johnson et al 2008).

Health care workers often do not give people health information that adequately address their needs (Kinnersley et al 2009).

People with mental health difficulties have been shown to receive information about treatments less often than other health populations (Volmer et al 2008).

Health care providers must give information in a format that meets the needs of users (Johnson et al 2008).
The internet

The amount of everyday activity performed via the internet is rising.
The amount of people that access health information online is increasing.

The amount of people that access information and support about mental health via internet resources is increasing.

Around the world;
81% of Irish households have internet access at home (Central Statistics Office 2012).

Seeking information on goods and services was one of the most popular internet activities in Irish households when assessed over a 3 month period (Central Statistics Office 2012).

The emergence of internet use by people in health information seeking activity appears to be a proportional response to wanting to have more control in their healthcare (Renahy et al 2010).

Provision of quality health information cannot take the place of quality health services but, quality health information enables people to consider treatment options and make informed health choices (Pomerantz et al 2010).
The use of the internet for mental health interventions has been growing worldwide (Donker et al 2009).

It has been in use for at least a decade with research existing for the same period (Ritterband et al 2006; Tate et al 2009).

With the increase in this technology, interest in internet interventions for mental health issues is becoming more common (Tate et al 2009; Lindenberg et al 2011).
The internet has been utilised for a wide variety of mental health interventions including;

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Pier et al 2008; Andersson 2010; Titov et al 2010).

Online counselling (Elleven and Allen 2004).

Health information (Wagner et al 2004; Burns et al 2009; Deitz et al 2009).

Treatment of depression and anxiety (Warmerdam et al 2008; Donker et al 2009; Mohr et al 2010).

Alcohol support services (Wallace et al 2010).

Internet support groups (Griffiths et al 2009).

Email support (Sheaves et al 2011).

Treatment of eating disorders (Lindenberg et al 2011).
Some Advantages of Internet Mental Health Services

Support in understanding mental health problems (Renahy 2008; Deitz et al 2009).

Increased confidence in accessing mental health services (Deitz et al 2009).

Counteracts inability to access traditional services, such as geographical location and, helps reduce isolation (Pier et al 2008; Griffiths et al 2009).

Help with issues occurring outside of health professionals working hours (Titov et al 2010).

Reduces stigma attached to using mental health services (Warmerdam et al 2008).

Lower maintenance costs in comparison with traditional mental health services (Wagner et al 2004; Tate et al 2009; Wallace et al 2010). Other research cites that there is no cost reduction in comparison to traditional mental health services and, that the internet should not be used for that purpose (Burns et al 2009).

Convenience of use once the user has internet access (Wagner et al 2004).
People want information about mental health and will often seek it on the internet but, they want that information from sources they feel are trustworthy.
Research was performed that investigated if internet services would be of benefit to the users of mental health services in Cork.
Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research activity was to harness the power of the internet, to help people develop the capacity to manage their own health needs.

Objectives included;

- To provide a health information internet based resource.
- To increase transparency of local mental health services.
- To provide a resource that meets the needs of service users.
- To ensure ease of access to mental health professional advise.
- To provide an effective, economical, sustainable service.
- To provide a community based service aimed at health promotion and prevention of illness.
100 users of mental health outpatient services completed a questionnaire.

This questionnaire was of mixed methods design, seeking both empirical data and service user insight.
Areas Investigated;

Types of mental health information received in the past

Was this information useful

Ability to utilise a computer and the internet

Would access to more information about mental health be useful

Would internet access to information on local mental health resources be useful

What types of mental health information would people like to access
When people are experiencing mental health difficulties they often do not know:

What help is available.

How to access help.

Where to access help.
There is support available but people need helped to access it.
E-Nurse
Cork Mental Health Services has developed an internet resource that can be accessed by the public.
This internet service provides health information in 3 main areas;

Information on community supports

Links to trusted sources providing information on mental health topics

Information about all mental health services in Cork city and county (currently being developed)
There is an interactive element.
A visitor to the site can send an email to a qualified mental health nurse and a reply will be sent within a specified time period.
Information about Cork mental health services and supports can be accessed from a person's own home via the internet.
The site is also accessible by smartphone.
Ask the e-Nurse
Information for mental health in County Cork

E-NURSE
OTHER INFORMATION
LOCAL HELP

TYPE IN YOUR QUESTION BELOW...

If you live in Co. Cork and have a question about your mental health or mental health services, you can ask our Mental Health Nurse by typing into the box below. Questions will be answered within 24 hours Monday to Friday (or on Monday if asked during the weekend). We’ll send an answer to the email address that you provide. We will give a full answer to your question, or we will send you contact details for where you can find a better answer.

If your question is dangerously urgent or life-threatening, go for immediate medical attention or phone the Samaritans (Freephone 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org).

This e-nurse page is run by nurses from the Mental Health Services in Cork and will be updated as we receive more questions to help answer you better. Words from your queries might be quoted as part of ongoing research to help this service develop, but always in a way that hides any hint of your identity. We promise that any e-mail address you give us will only be used to reply to you - we will never pass your address on and we will not send you any more e-mails once your query is answered.
This is a support service.

It will not replace one to one contact with mental health care workers.
This service was developed as part of a PhD programme of study at the University of Limerick.

It’s development is supported by the Centre for Recovery and Social Inclusion, Cork, Ireland.

It is also supported by Cork Integrated Service Area Mental Health Services.


