

Online Family Carer Support Project - April 2024



Links

Group Link URL

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FamilyCarerOnlineSupportGroupIreland/>

Video explaining how to join Facebook and join the group

<https://youtu.be/9Trsk6mF4Ko>

Promotional video

<https://youtu.be/mEAg-xJORAY>

Safeguarding

1. Consult team
2. PM/Phone call/Zoom to family carer
3. Consult local Mental Health Service
4. Contact Gardai

Objectives

Mitigate the possible negative impact of family caring, reducing the risk of:

- Isolation
- Anxiety
- Reduced quality of life & wellbeing

This is achieved through a professionally moderated online platform, using peer support and a variety of online activities.

Application

Inclusion / Participation criteria:

- Must be willing to use Facebook
- Live in the ROI & aged 18+
- Provide unpaid care to family / friend or neighbour
- Agree to rules of group (NB - respect privacy of caree)

Participant Recruitment (Family Carers)

- Facebook
- 95 NGO member orgs of Care Alliance
- Word of mouth (v. important)

Application Process

1. Apply to join the group through Facebook (private group)
2. Answer 3 screening questions (per inclusion criteria above)
3. Application considered by CAI staff / volunteers
4. Request approved or refused - If questions are not answered in full, applicant is private messaged, asking to resubmit the request to join and answer all questions

Members of Group

(7,814)

Volunteers and Moderators

- Private FB online 'Mods/Vols' group
- Peer support for volunteers
- Monthly zoom meeting for volunteers
- Discuss practice issues/dilemmas
- Discuss group posts/tone/engagement
- Information/policy updates
- Moderation training

Activities

- **Posting messages** (Core Activity) c 5 p/d:
 - Comments / discussion (c 140 per day, c 338 reactions) – anonymous posts facilitated, NB / GDPR
 - Peer support – 'I am not alone'
 - Information
 - Dilemmas
 - Top Tips
 - Positivity Posts
 - Cooking Posts
- **Pinned posts / threads:**
 - Remembrance
 - Petitions
 - Research
 - Accessible places
- **1-2-1 Input/Casework core activity c125 clients:**
 - PM's / phone calls / e-mails - variable levels of engagement
 - Refer to carer support orgs / SW Mental Health Services
- **Educative Inputs**
 - Video pre-records
 - 'Subject matter Expert'
 - Live Q&A's
- **Zoom Quizzes**
 - Monthly-Informal/Fun
- **Book Club**
 - Bi-monthly
 - Distribute Books
- Weekly Online Drop In
- Informal Competitions
- Regular Books/Gifts/Care Packages
- Gardening Club - 'Carers In Bloom'
- Online Art Classes
- 'Crafty Carers' Group

Resourcing

- Volunteers (12) & Staff (1)
- Current and former family carers (11)
- Health and Social Care professionals (8) (Some identify in more than one group)
- 7 day and on-call rota

Roles Of Staff / Volunteers:

- Screen membership applications
- Share informational documents within group
- Approve / reject suggested posts
- Welcome new members
- Monitor / moderate posts / comments
- Communicate / reiterate / values
- Share other NGO's relevant posts
- Consider new activities
- Protocols - regularly updated document
- Ensure sustainability / finances

Engagement Data

- April 3rd 2023 - March 31st 2024
- 1,786 posts
- 51,165 comments
- 123,391 reactions
- 0 complaints
- 1000's of positive comments and feedback

Feedback / Efficacy

- Extensive positive qualitative feedback
- 97% member retention over 12 months
- Key impacts / processes emerging - peer support - possible improvement in QOL / anxiety / isolation
- Long-term efficacy / meaning University of Limerick PhD
- Consultation via School of SW, Indiana University (Dr D. Wilkerson)

Reflections

- Volunteer strength
- Tight moderation
- Peer support
- Evolution of group purpose - A very *social* Social Media
- Managing risks of GDPR breaches
- Project evolving post Covid19