



**Irish Psychosocial Oncology Network's 2024 Conference**  
***Enhancing Psychosocial Cancer Care & Survivorship in Ireland:***  
***We Are All in it Together***

13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences, St James's Hospital in Dublin

Kindly supported by National College of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, and the National Cancer Control Programme. Endorsed by the International Psycho-Oncology Society.

From 8:30 **Registration**

9:30-9:45 ***Welcome***

Amanda Kracen, IPSON President, National College of Ireland

Wendy WT Lam, IPOS President, The University of Hong Kong

9:45-10:15 ***The Future of Psychosocial Oncology in Ireland***

Helen Greally, National Clinical Programme Lead in Psycho-Oncology, NCCP, & Director of Support Services, Cancer Care West

Louise Mullen, National Lead for Cancer Survivorship, NCCP

10:15-10:45 ***What Did We Learn from Members: Findings from IPSON's 2023 Survey***

IPSON Steering Committee Research Team

Naomi Algeo, Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist (Cancer Services), St James Hospital & Adjunct Assistant Professor, Trinity College Dublin

Chiara Besani, Principal Clinical Psychologist, Children's Health Ireland Crumlin

Emer Guinan, Associate Professor, Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship, Trinity College Dublin

Amanda Kracen, Associate Professor, Psychology, National College of Ireland

Mairead O'Connor, Research Officer, National Screening Service

10:45-11 **Break**



11-12 ***Working in Partnership to Enhance Psychosocial Care and Survivorship***  
KEYNOTE: Claire Foster, Professor of Psychosocial Oncology, University of Southampton

12-1:15 ***Delivering Psychosocial Support: A Clinical Case Study Highlighting Multidisciplinary Teams Working Together***

Elaine Corcoran, Senior Oncology Nurse, Cancer Care West Support Centre

Louise Finn, Senior Social Worker-Psycho-Oncology, Cork University Hospital

Fahmi Ismail, Consultant Psychiatrist in Psycho-Oncology, Cork University Hospital

Jennifer Kilkus, Principal Clinical Psychologist, Psycho-Oncology, University Hospital Waterford

Deirdre Leavy, Senior Speech and Language Therapist, Head and Neck Oncology, St James Hospital

Moderated by Nicola Elmer, Principal Psychologist, St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network

1:15-2:15 ***Lunch/Facilitated poster walk***

2:15-3:45 ***What You Told Us You Wanted to Learn: 15 Minutes with an Expert***

***1. Working with Fear of Recurrence***

Sonya Collier, Principal Clinical Psychologist, St James Hospital

Catherine O'Brien, Advanced Nurse Practitioner Cancer Survivorship, St James Hospital

***2. Community Cancer Support Centres Engaging with Cancer Research***

John Conroy, Service Manager, Dóchas Offaly Cancer Support Group

***3. Working with Children and Families***

Edel Lawlor, Child and Adolescence Psychotherapist, Expressive Play

***4. Working with Grief***

David Shannon, Senior Chartered Counselling Psychologist, St Luke's Hospital

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***Enhancing Psychosocial Cancer Care & Survivorship in Ireland: We Are All in it Together***

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**



Professor Claire Foster graduated in Psychology from University of Warwick in 1992 and University of Exeter in 1998 with a PhD in Health Psychology. She worked at the Institute of Cancer Research for 7 years on the first UK cohort study to assess psychosocial impact of predictive genetic testing for BRCA1/2. She joined the University of Southampton in 2004 where she led a programme of research funded by Macmillan Cancer Support (Macmillan Research Unit, later Macmillan Survivorship Research Group). She is Professor of Psychosocial Oncology in the School of Health Sciences and Deputy Head of School (Research and Enterprise). She is Co-Director of the Centre for Psychosocial Research in Cancer: CentRIC. Her research focuses on advancing understanding

of the impact of cancer on people's lives and developing and testing solutions to manage this impact. Her research includes UK wide prospective cohort studies (CREW, HORIZONS, UK co-lead for Movember TrueNTH Global Registry) to understand the consequences of cancer over time, how this can affect people's daily lives, and identifying areas for intervention. Her team is developing complex interventions, including web-based resources, to enhance confidence to self-manage cancer related problems such as fatigue and mental health and working closely with NHS Partners to inform health care transformation to improve psychosocial outcomes; and developing web-based decision aids to support people facing decisions about genetic testing for cancer susceptibility and associated risk management (CanGene CanVar CRUK Catalyst programme 2019-2025). Claire works in partnership with patients, caregivers, health professionals, academics, policy makers and third sector organisations to design and deliver research, evaluations, health services and resources that inform the psychosocial care and support of those affected by cancer.

**SPEAKERS**



Dr Naomi Algeo is a Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist (Cancer Services), St. James’s Hospital and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Trinity College Dublin. Her PhD research focused on the development of a work-focused programme to support women with breast cancer in returning to employment. In 2022, Naomi was awarded the *Irish Cancer Society Allied Health Professional Cancer Research Award* alongside Prof. Deirdre Connolly (Discipline of Occupational Therapy, Trinity College Dublin). Their 18-month study will inform future service development by identifying physical, psychological, and social health issues of adolescent and young adult (AYA) cancer survivors that impact on return to education and work and exploring what services AYA cancer survivors want to support successful reintegration post-treatment. Naomi is a member of the IPSON Steering Committee Research Team and led in the recent 2023 IPSON Survey.



Dr Sonya Collier is a Principal Clinical Psychologist in St James's Hospital, Dublin where she has worked for 24 years. She is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor in Trinity College Dublin. She is a graduate of the School of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin, where she undertook both her undergraduate degree and her clinical doctorate training. She completed post graduate therapy training in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy at Oxford University. Together with Dr Anne-Marie O’Dwyer, Consultant Psychiatrist, she established the first multi-disciplinary Psycho-Oncology Service in Ireland in 2002. She is co-author of the award winning “Understanding and Managing Persistent Cancer-Related Fatigue, A self-help programme using cognitive behavioural strategies”. Her clinical and research interests are in the development of cognitive behavioural interventions for alleviating distress caused by cancer, and / or its treatment.



John Conroy is the Service Manager at the Dochas Offaly Cancer Support Group. John is a service orientated Social Services management professional with 14+ years of experience in the social services industry. He is an accomplished manager with 12 years' experience in the disability sector holding a wide-ranging variety of roles in this sector. This includes Residential Manager and Behaviour Practitioner within the Psychology Department of St. John of God and Residential Manager and Trainer with The Muiriosa Foundation. John served on various committee through his time in this sector including as Vice-Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee, Chairperson of Risk Management and Policy Review Committee and Chairperson of Positive Behaviour Support Committee. John has been Service Manager of Dochas Offaly Cancer Support Group for nearly 3 years and his passion for Cancer Care and Support has grown in this time. He is part of a working group which successfully advocated for funding supports at government level for Full Members of the Alliance of Community Cancer Support Centres. This group was successful in securing funding of €3million for the network.



Elaine Corcoran has been a senior oncology nurse at Cancer Care West since 2007. She completed her Higher Diploma in Oncology from UCD in 2005. She has worked for the SAOLTA University Health Care Group in Galway and Castlebar as well as St. Vincents Private Hospital, Dublin. She has a specific interest in providing emotional support to cancer patients and their families and she completed a Certificate in the Psychology of Counselling from NUI Galway in 2013.



Dr. Fahmi is a consultant psychiatrist who specializes in psycho-oncology at Cork University Hospital. He received his degree from University College Cork in 2009 and completed his psychiatry training with the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland in 2018. Dr. Fahmi's special interest includes psycho-oncology, liaison psychiatry, and rehabilitation psychiatry. Dr. Fahmi's research interests include mental health comorbidities in cancer patients, steroid-related mental health disorders, and digital health transformation in healthcare.



Louise Finn is the Senior Social Worker-Psycho-Oncology at Cork University Hospital. She completed her Masters in Social Work from UCC in 2010. Following this, she worked in the Medical Social Work Department at Royal North Shore Hospital Sydney for 6 years. Her work here involved working with a variety of General and Oncology patients. In 2017, she returned to Ireland and began work in the Social Work Department at Cork University Hospital. She was working in Oncology/Haematology and the Intensive Care Unit. In 2022, she started working with the Psycho-Oncology team in CUH. The team is dedicated to supporting patients, their families and caregivers with various psychological responses following a cancer diagnosis.



Helen Greally is National Clinical Lead in Psycho-Oncology at the National Cancer Control Programme, where her role has focused on the development of an integrated patient pathway for cancer patients and their families, through the completion of Models of Care for Psycho-Oncology for both adults, children, adolescents and young adults as well as the completion of Best Practice Guidance for community cancer support between 2020 and 2022. For many years, patients have identified a significant gap in that when they finish active medical treatment, they face an uncertainty about continued support. The Models of Care offer a clear pathway so that this will no longer be an obstacle to integrated care. Investment in the Psycho-Oncology programme since 2020 has created 44 new posts in cancer centres across Ireland.

Helen is also Director of Psychology and psychosocial supports at Cancer Care West where her role has been primarily to advance and consolidate the delivery of Psycho-Oncology and support services to cancer patients and their families in the west of Ireland in line with best international practice. As the director of the service, she manages a team of cancer support specialists, including oncology nurses, clinical and counselling psychologists, exercise physiologists, complementary therapists, as well as a team of volunteers. The service supports approximately 1,200 people per year.



Jennifer Kilkus is a Principal Clinical Psychologist, Psycho-Oncology, at University Hospital Waterford. She is a board-certified clinical health psychologist with a passion for working in oncology. Her career has been focused on improving the quality of life for people navigating cancer through evidence-based psychotherapy, the development and enhancement of psychosocial programming in cancer centres, and training the next generation of psychologists to work in cancer care. She holds a voluntary faculty appointment as an Assistant Clinical Professor within the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut, and recently relocated to Ireland to assist in the development of a Psycho-Oncology Multidisciplinary Team at University Hospital Waterford.





Dr Amanda Kracen (she/her) is an Associate Professor in Psychology at the National College of Ireland in Dublin. She is the current President of the Irish Psychosocial Oncology Network (IPSON) and serves on the HSE's National Psycho-Oncology Advisory Group.

Amanda earned her undergraduate degree at Brown University and her doctoral degree in Counselling Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University in the U.S. She has worked as a clinician and researcher in psycho-oncology and palliative care since 2003. Amanda has worked with cancer survivors, their loved ones, and healthcare providers at Washington University, Virginia Commonwealth University, St Louis Veterans Medical Center, and in private practice. Her research examines how people maintain wellbeing despite challenging circumstances and systems, considering issues through an intersectional lens, and has focused on oncology professionals, cancer survivors, and trans and gender expansive students.



Ms Edel Lawlor is the founder and director of Expressive Play. This is a hugely successful Child, Adolescent, and Training & Therapy Centre in Ireland.

Edel has been collaborating with Recovery Haven for 10 years as a child and adolescent psychotherapist specializing in Play therapy and cancer support for families. Ms Lawlor holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care, Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy, Diploma in Play Therapy. Edel is also a clinical supervisor and lecturer in the field of play therapy and trauma.

Ms Lawlor's work has been recognised globally and nationally and has won many awards for her work. Edel is very passionate about working with children and families who have been impacted by cancer.





Deirdre Leavy is a Senior Speech and Language Therapist on the Head & Neck Oncology team at St. James' Hospital, having gained her initial experience in swallowing and communication disorders post-head and neck cancer treatment in the UK, namely Barts & the Royal London Hospitals. Deirdre is a graduate of NUI, Galway and completed MSc in Dysphagia at Trinity College, Dublin. She is a guest lecturer with the department of Clinical Speech and Language Studies at TCD, and University of Malta. She is a member of the TSJCI Cancer Survivorship Network and currently sits as HSCP representative on the Council of the Irish Head and Neck Society (IHNS). Along with her St. James' colleagues, Deirdre leads a national forum for speech and language therapists with special interest in head and neck cancer. Deirdre's particular interests include complex swallow impairments after head and neck cancer treatment and the rehabilitation and survivorship of patients who undergo laryngectomy surgery (removal of the voice box).



Louise Mullen is the National Lead for Cancer Survivorship with the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP). This strategic role drives implementation of cancer survivorship supports and services nationally for cancer patients and their families. This includes service planning through input into the HSE national service plan with a particular focus on HSCPs. The vision and aim for the NCCPs work is articulated in the National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026. Louise led on the public consultation process for the National Strategy, provided expertise to the National Steering committee and drafted the survivorship chapter. Louise is the liaison person between the NCCP and the Cancer Patient Advisory Committee in the Department of Health. Louise has an academic background in both psychology and public health. She has worked in the HSE for over twenty years and believes strongly in collaboration and co-operation across sectors and disciplines. Louise collaborates nationally with many stakeholders including patients, healthcare professionals and voluntary agencies to develop and improve the provision of care in this area and is the current president elect of IPSON.



Catherine O'Brien is an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) Cancer Survivorship in Trinity St James's Hospital Cancer Institute. She has been working in Cancer Care for nearly 30 years, having qualified in Cork University Hospital in 1993. She moved to St James's Hospital in 2001 and completed her Graduate Diploma in Cancer Care (2009) and Masters in Clinical Practice (2010) through UCD. In 2017 she completed the Advanced Practice Certificate (UCD) and was appointed as the first dedicated ANP Cancer Survivorship in Ireland in the same year. As a member of the NCCP survivorship steering committee, she was involved in the development of the LACES programme (Life And Cancer – Enhancing Survivorship) joint initiative between the NCCP and the Irish Cancer Society which is currently providing advice and care to patients nationally following completion of chemotherapy. Catherine has been recently awarded the RCSI Fellowship of the Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery (FRCI) in recognition of outstanding work and exceptional leadership in Nursing nationally. Catherine will continue her life-long learning when she embarks on her PhD in March 2024 through support from the Cancer Research Nursing Leadership Award, a joint award from NCCP and Irish Cancer Society. Catherine's research will concentrate on *Fear of Cancer Recurrence* in cancer patients in the survivorship arena.



David Shannon has been working in psycho-oncology and palliative care since 2005. He worked as a Basic Grade psychologist with Cancer Care West where he was supported in developing his interest in mindfulness-based approaches to cancer care. Following this, he sought to deepen his understanding of mindfulness by joining the training and management team at the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (CMRP) at Bangor University in 2012. David led the Master's programme there until 2015. While working as a senior psychologist in Our Lady's Hospice (2015-2022), he completed a professional doctorate on the role of mindfulness with patients receiving palliative care. He joined the psychology team at St. Luke's Radiation-Oncology Network in 2022 and also continues to train and supervise others to teach mindfulness on behalf of CMRP/Mindfulness Network in the U.K.