

# Learning Disability Special Interest Group

July 2006



## LDSIG - E-zine

Welcome to the second edition of the LDSIG's e-zine. There was a very positive response to the initial offering and feedback is always appreciated.

The purpose of the e-zine is to facilitate communication between Committee members and Group members as well as providing a forum for sharing information and promoting debate on issues relevant to the field of intellectual disability.

In this edition, you will find;

- a review of the Easter Workshop,
- an outline of plans for the LDSIG's contribution to the PSI annual conference in November ,
- a review of books/websites,
- an update on the review of the challenging behaviour document
- other details of the Group's activities

As usual, there is an open invitation for members of the LDSIG to submit material for inclusion in this publication and the email address is [info@psihq.ie](mailto:info@psihq.ie)

*John Buttimer*

Editor

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### New Committee for 2006 - 2007

At the Group's AGM in April, the following Committee was elected.

Margaret Farrelly –	Chair
Seamus Feehan –	Chair Elect
John Buttimer –	Hon Secretary
Aoife Moran –	Hon Treasurer

### Committee Members:

Mary Atkins (NEPS), Isabelle O'Donoghue, Mark Quinn, Pat McCourt, Ciara O'Keefee, Damien Connolly, Suzanne McHugh, Maureen Costello, Margaret O'Leary, Kathy O'Grady and Niamh Whyte.

### Rosemary O'Connell – An Appreciation

At the AGM, Rosemary O'Connell, former Honorary Secretary, and long time friend and colleague to many in the LDSIG, stepped down from the Committee. As Rosemary will be retiring later this year, the Committee would like to publicly thank her for her contribution to the LDSIG, the field of psychology and intellectual disability and the development of psychology as a strong and vibrant profession in Cork over the years. All her friends in the LDSIG would like to wish her well, in what we know, will be an active and fulfilling retirement.

### Plans for Conference:

The LDSIG plans to host three events at this year's PSI Annual Conference:

- A General Meeting of the Group
- A symposium of research papers celebrating a diversity of research by Group members
- A workshop in conjunction with the Psychology Department of Stewarts Hospital on issues regarding assessment and intervention with non-national children.

This promises to be an interesting workshop. It is hoped to raise awareness of the issues and challenges involved and to identify best practice. The Committee are being assisted in the preparation of this workshop by Jackie Flannagan and Clodagh Power of Stewarts Hospital.

Application forms for the above events have been submitted to the Conference Committee and further details re the conference are available on the PSI website [www.psihq.ie](http://www.psihq.ie)

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## **Challenging Behaviour: Creating a new policy for the future**

The LDSIG in keeping with its aims, held a one-day seminar of interested members, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, to discuss the PSI policy document on challenging behaviour. It is almost ten years since the publication of that policy document and the Committee felt it was an opportune time to take stock of the current situation, to review current best practice and to review and revise the document as appropriate.

Three well-known and respected psychologists presented interesting and topical papers under the banner of '*Multi-element positive behaviour management: Creating a new policy for the Future.*' Dr. Brian Mc Clean (Brother's of Charity – Roscommon) presented on developments in knowledge and practice in relation to challenging behaviour, Dr Michael Reen (Brother's of Charity – Clare) spoke on community models of positive behaviour management and Dr Pete Walsh (Galway Community Association) presented on the physical management and related challenges relevant to challenging behaviour.

There was lively debate and discussion during the breaks and afternoon session. There was overwhelming interest from group members in starting a process of review. The tone of the meeting was encapsulated by the opening comments of Brian Mc Clean when he asked the group – '*How radical do you want to be?*'

All three speakers agreed to form part of a core group that would tackle reviewing the existing policy document with a view to making it current and relevant, not only, for clinicians, but more importantly, for the people we work with and for, those individuals with intellectual disability and challenging behaviour.

The working party has produced an initial draft document and is busily working on a second more extended version. If you would like to contribute to the process or if you have views in relation to the development of policy in this issue please contact Brian, Pete or Michael or any committee member or by emailing us at [info@psihq.ie](mailto:info@psihq.ie)

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## **LDSIG EASTER WORKSHOP** *Learning Disability, Mental Health and Treatment issues in practice.*

The Annual Easter Workshop found a new home and a new date this year but delegates demonstrated their ability to cope with change and adapt to new circumstances.

The Workshop was extremely successful, not only judging by the large attendance but, more importantly by the quality of the presentations made over the course of the two days.

Valerie Sinnasson opened proceedings on the Thursday morning with a thought provoking discussion on the use of psychotherapy with adults with intellectual disability. She reminded us of a quotation from Winicott '*We are who we see*' and this theme was developed during the talk and her identification of five central themes in working provoked discussion during the breaks. These five themes were

1. The disability itself
2. Loss
3. Dependency Needs
4. Sexuality
5. Fear of being murdered (a cultural experience of where disability is not wanted).

In the second session of the workshop, Patricia Richard-Clarke presented on issues of capacity, consent to treatment and the new Mental Health Act. Changes in the mindset of legislators were noted in terms of their acceptance of a functional

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definition of capacity and a recognition of equality for all regardless of difference or disability. The ethical issue of consent and ability of people with LD to give informed consent was again a lively topic of debate. Patricia emphasised that there is now a willingness to look at consent as being a process which can be reviewed overtime, rather than something which is adjudicated on at one point in time only. The ability of people with LD over the age of 18 years, to give consent for a variety of interventions, generated much debate, especially in light of the there being no formal system of guardianship, other than being made a ward of court.



Patricia Richard-Clarke (left) and Isabelle O'Donoghue at the Easter Workshop in Galway.

Laurence Taggart presented on Friday morning on the issues of Dual Diagnosis and LD. He began by asking a series of challenging questions posed to him by the mother of a client. These set the theme for the remainder of the day. Laurence presented from both the academic literature on mental health need as well as providing many salient personal experiences. He went to describe in detail the Government's document on mental health services 'A vision of change' as this may contain the blueprint for the development of mental health services for people

with intellectual disability. This document is available as a pdf file and can be accessed from the Department of Health's website.

At lunch time on Thursday The Institute of Psychotherapy and Disability was launched. This new group is affiliated to the British Council for Psychotherapy.

The LDSIG is anxious that the Easter Workshop continues to meet the needs of members and if you have any suggestions re the Easter Workshop (speakers, themes, etc.) please contact us at [info@psihq.ie](mailto:info@psihq.ie)

## Useful Websites?

There are possibly thousands of websites available to browse and download relevant to intellectual disability. The question often is – are they any good?

In this e-zine we hope to review a number of websites each edition to give a flavour of what's available nationally and internationally.

<http://hebw.cf.ac.uk/index.html> The *Health Evidence Bulletins* act as signposts to the best evidence across a broad range of evidence types and subject areas. The statements represent a methodical summary of the evidence in this area found through a formal literature search across a wide range of sources. The evidence has been critically appraised using internationally accepted methods. The types of evidence used are

- 'Type I evidence' - at least one good systematic review and meta-analysis (including at least one randomised controlled trial).
- 'Type II evidence' - at least one good randomised controlled trial
- 'Type III evidence' - well designed interventional studies without randomisation
- 'Type IV evidence' - well designed observational studies

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'Type V evidence' - expert opinion; influential reports and studies

Overall, this is an extremely useful website and provides access to empirically based knowledge and information reflecting current clinical practices.

<http://www.disability-federation.ie> Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation and advocate for voluntary organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions. DFI represents and supports over 150 voluntary disability organisations and groups, of which 73 comprise its National Council, and 23 of which are Associate Members. Allied to this it works with and supports over 200 organisations and groups around the country that have a significant and growing disability interest, mainly coming from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The website has specific sites for a newsletter, publications, and current issues. The site is updated regularly and well worth a visit.

[www.intellectualdisability.info/home.htm](http://www.intellectualdisability.info/home.htm)

The main aim of this site is to provide up-to-date information for practitioners and students about the health needs of people with intellectual disabilities. It covers a broad focus. Articles include not only subjects such as prevention and diagnosis, but also social care issues, family issues, and the perspectives of people with intellectual disabilities themselves.

If you have found a particular website, book or article, useful, interesting or just awful please let us know so we can let others know.

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## Representing and Responding

The LDSIG is often asked to nominate a representative to attend meetings, workshops or seminars on topics relevant to intellectual disability. The LDSIG is also asked to provide the President and CEO of the Society with statements of current and future trends in service provision as well as on matters of policy, initiatives and

Some recent examples include

- **The Informing Families Project, which was initiated by the Federation of Voluntary Bodies,**
- **A working group on offenders with intellectual disability**
- **Representation at Inclusion Ireland (NAMHI) and**
- **A response to the National Council on Special Education.**

## Have your Say!

If you have any comments, suggestions or items for inclusion in future issues of the e-zine please contact us by email at [info@psihq.ie](mailto:info@psihq.ie)

If you would prefer not to receive the e-zine in future please let us know by email at [info@psihq.ie](mailto:info@psihq.ie)

Please mark all correspondence care of LDSIG e-zine.

We look forward to hearing from you!