

SEVENTH IRISH NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS CONFERENCE 2025

EARLY INTERVENTION

#INEDCONF2025

The GAS Building, TCD School of Nursing and Midwifery,
D'Olier Street, Dublin 2.

Friday February 28th, 2025

Programme and Abstracts

In association with Conference Networking Ireland

(www.conferencenetworking.ie)

and

BODYWHYS (www.bodywhys.ie)



BODYWHYS is the Irish national voluntary organisation supporting people affected by eating disorders. Our mission is to ensure support, awareness and understanding of eating disorders amongst the wider community as well as advocating for the rights and healthcare needs of people affected by eating disorders.

Thank you to the following organisations and individuals without whom today would not have been possible: Trinity College Dublin; Jeni Ryan (Administrative Officer – Events) and the staff at the School of Nursing & Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin; Jacinta Hastings (CEO), and all the volunteer staff of BODYWHYS; KC Catering for the wonderful food; Print Bureau, Inchicore, Dublin.



Irish National Eating Disorders Conference 2025

I wish to extend a warm welcome to you all, especially those who will have travelled some distance to attend this 7th Irish National Eating Disorders Conference, rounding off Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2025.

I was delighted when such distinguished international researchers and clinicians, **Karina Allen**, **Annemarie van Elburg**, and **Gwen Dieleman**, accepted the invitation to come to Dublin and present their research to us today. I have little doubt that their vast bank of knowledge and practical experience will be of benefit for us all to hear. Apart from updating us on recent research on early intervention in eating disorders, I expect we will have lots of positives to take away from their presentations and help ensure an enhanced quality of life for those whom we treat. As with all illnesses and problems we may face, early intervention is key to preventing long-term problems at a later stage. I believe our main speakers will give us a lot of guidance in this area of early intervention and challenge our thinking too.

I am especially pleased this year that we also have the opportunity to hear presentations from our three Irish-based speakers, **Zuzanna Gajowiec**, **Alice Richardson**, and **Fiona Flynn** sharing 3 very different perspectives on eating disorders. Please make them all feel welcome!

I wish to encourage you to keep an open, enquiring mind to all you hear today and thus help make this conference a success.

Enjoy your day, maybe talk with some people you haven't met before, and make new connections! Your feedback is welcome and please do complete the feedback form in your conference pack.

Gerard Butcher
Conference Organiser



IRISH NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS CONFERENCE 2025

“Early intervention is not a race, but a chance to change a life.”

PROGRAMME

08:30 – Registration

09:15 – Welcome and Opening Remarks: **Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, TD**, Minister for Health, & **Gerard Butcher**, Conference Organiser

09:30 – 11:00 **Morning Workshop:**

Dr Karina Allen, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust & King’s College, London

Topic: *‘Emerging adulthood and identity development in eating disorders: Learning from FREED (First Episode Rapid Early Intervention for Eating Disorders) and MANTRA (Maudsley Model of Anorexia Nervosa Treatment for Adults)’*

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee/Tea Break; Registration area

11:30 – 12:45 **Short Paper Session**

11:30 – 11:50 **Zuzanna Gajowiec**; Certified Eating Disorder Specialist & Supervisor CEDS-S Clinical Psychologist/Family Therapist, Psychology Hub

Topic: *‘Nourishing Neurodiversity: Integrating Inclusive Approaches in Eating Disorder Treatment’*

11:50- 12:10 **Alice Richardson**; Peer Support Worker, National Eating Disorders Recovery Centre, Dublin

Topic: *'The role of a peer support worker as part of a Multi-Disciplinary Team'*

12:10 – 12:30 **Dr Fiona Flynn**; Youth Development Manager, BODYWHYS.

Topic: *'A Real-World Perspective: Promoting Positive Body Image & Awareness of Eating Disorders in Secondary Schools'*

12:30 - 12:45 **Panel Discussion**

12:45-14:00 – Lunch; Registration area

14:00 – 16:00 **Afternoon Workshop:**

Prof Annemarie van Elburg, Professor of Clinical Psychopathology, Utrecht University, Netherlands & **Dr. Gwen Dieleman**, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Erasmus Medical Centre-Sophia Children's Hospital, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Topic: *'VIBES' – A family-based early intervention programme for eating disorders*

16:00-16:15 Feedback Session and End

Dr Karina Allen



Dr Karina Allen, PhD, MPsych, BA (Hons) is Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust Adult Eating Disorder Service and an Adjunct Reader in the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London. She has worked in the field of eating disorders for over 20 years, holding academic and clinical roles in Australia and then the UK. She was heavily involved in the England-wide roll-out of First Episode Rapid Early Intervention for Eating Disorders (FREED) and co-leads the NHS England training for Maudsley Anorexia Nervosa Treatment for Adults (MANTRA). Karina also co-leads the new UK-wide Eating Disorders Clinical Research Network, funded through the Medical Research Council.

09:30-11:00 Morning Workshop

Emerging adulthood and identity development in eating disorders: Learning from FREED (First Episode Rapid Early Intervention for Eating Disorders) and MANTRA (Maudsley Model of Anorexia Nervosa Treatment for Adults)

Emerging adulthood refers to the developmental period between 18 and 25-30 years of age. Approximately 50% of eating disorders develop in this period, which is characterised by considerable neurodevelopmental, educational and social change. Eating disorders can disrupt these changes and the process of identity development. This workshop will focus on (1) the concept of emerging adulthood and why this developmental period is relevant to understanding eating disorders, and (2) how to work effectively with emerging adults and consider identity development as part of evidence-based eating disorder treatment.

The workshop will draw on learning from FREED (First Episode Rapid Early Intervention for Eating Disorders) and MANTRA (Maudsley Model of Anorexia Nervosa Treatment for Adults). FREED is an evidence-based early intervention model for eating disorders which reduces waiting times for treatment, reduces Duration of Untreated Eating Disorder, improves clinical outcomes, and offers cost benefits through reducing the need for inpatient care. FREED was specifically developed for 16 to 25 year-olds with an eating disorder of <3 years duration and encourages attention to emerging adulthood in treatment. MANTRA is one of three first-line evidence-based treatments for anorexia nervosa in adults. It is based on a cognitive interpersonal maintenance model and includes attention to identity and identity formation. Attendees do not need to be familiar with FREED and MANTRA to benefit from this workshop, as key principles of each will be considered. The workshop content will also be relevant to other treatments, e.g., for clinicians using CBT for Eating Disorders (CBT-E/CBT-ED) and family-based interventions.

Zuzanna Gajowiec



Zuzanna Gajowiec is a Clinical Psychologist and Family Therapist, first Certified Eating Disorder Specialist and Consultant (CEDS-C) in Ireland with a profound dedication to supporting individuals and families on their journey towards healing and recovery. As the International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals (iaedp) Chapter Chair of Ireland, she is at the forefront of advancing awareness and understanding of eating disorders in her community. With over a decade of experience in the field, she has worked across all levels of care, from residential treatment centers to outpatient settings and private practice. Her comprehensive approach to recovery encompasses physical healing, body image issues, and the cultivation of deep connections within families. In addition to her clinical work, she is actively involved in teaching, consulting, and supervising other therapists and eating disorder clinicians. She is a Clinical Lead in a Residential Eating Disorder Treatment Centre and maintains a thriving private practice.

11:30 – 11:50 Zuzanna Gajowiec

Topic: *'Nourishing Neurodiversity: Integrating Inclusive Approaches in Eating Disorder Treatment'*

The Nourishing Neurodiversity presentation will highlight the importance of inclusivity in traditional, evidence-based treatment approaches for eating disorders. It will emphasize the need for a person-centered approach and a deeper understanding of the unique recovery challenges faced by neurodiverse individuals, ensuring the implementation of sustainable and effective interventions.

Objectives:

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the considerations and accommodations necessary for treating neurodiverse individuals with eating disorders.

Participants will explore case examples of clients with lived experience of both eating disorders and neurodiversity.

Participants will learn strategies to cultivate a recovery-focused environment where neurodiverse clients feel safe, supported, and empowered.

Alice Richardson



Alice is a qualified Peer Support Worker based in the National Eating Disorder Recovery Centre (NEDRC) in Dublin and is the only full-time Peer Support Worker for Eating Disorders in Ireland. Alice is an Expert by Experience, having recovered from an eating disorder herself and successfully completing a level 8 certificate in 'Peer Support Working in Mental Health' in Dublin City University. Alice previously studied English Literature in Trinity College Dublin and has completed multiple Continuous Professional Development courses since commencing her role. Alongside her role as a PSW, Alice now supervises other student Peer Support Workers on placement in NEDRC. Alice's lived experience, insights and support are not only gratefully received by clients, but also her team members. Alice is an active member of the multidisciplinary team, engaging 1:1 peer support sessions, meal time/post meal support and facilitating multiple therapeutic groups a week. Alice is very positive for change in eating disorders, is proactive in putting her words into action, a true advocate and leader.

11:50-12:10 Alice Richardson

Topic: *'The role of a peer support worker as part of a Multi-Disciplinary Team'*

Peer Support Workers (PSW's) provide invaluable lived experience insights into recovery and service user needs that go beyond traditional therapeutic models (Repper and Carter, 2011). Acting as living, breathing examples of recovery, Peer Support is understood to be "the single most important factor contributing to changes towards more recovery-oriented services" (Repper, 2013). PSW's offer emotional, practical, and social support, serving to improve a person's overall well-being and enhance the outcomes of mental health care. Peer support has been linked to lower rates of hospitalisation, improved social functioning, and increased adherence to treatment plans (Davidson et al., 2012). This session will explore the role of a Peer Support Worker within the wider context of Multidisciplinary Eating Disorder treatment teams. I will highlight the differences between 'Lived Experience' and 'Expertise by Experience', while also exploring the specific role and responsibilities of Peer Support Workers in the treatment of eating disorders.

My goal is to answer commonly asked questions relating to Peer Support such as:

1. How does the role of a PSW contribute to the development of truly recovery-oriented services?
2. How do we integrate this role into existing infrastructure?
3. What is the value of lived experience perspectives of recovery from an eating disorder for both service users and clinicians alike?

I will also focus on the concept of identity functioning in Eating Disorders, and specifically the role of a PSW in supporting the exploration and formulation of an identity beyond the eating disorder.

Fiona Flynn



Dr Fiona Flynn is the Youth Development Manager with Bodywhys. Fiona has been working in the area of schools-based research to promote positive mental health for almost 20 years. Fiona conducted Research Ireland funded PhD research on school-based interventions to promote positive body image in young adolescents. Fiona is keenly interested in engaged research and particularly in prioritising the youth voice and ensuring meaningful engagement with young people in the development of resources to support their mental wellbeing. Her research over the past decade has involved young people, teachers and key decision makers across all stages of the research life cycle to develop resources for the 'real world' school environment which are relevant and engaging.

12:10-12:30 Fiona Flynn

Topic: A Real World Perspective: Promoting Positive Body Image & Awareness of Eating Disorders in Secondary Schools

Body image concerns and eating disorders are increasingly prevalent in children and adolescents. The primary objectives of this research were to: (1) co-design, in collaboration with adolescents and teachers, a school-based intervention to promote positive body image, social media literacy, and awareness of eating disorders in young adolescents; and (2) pilot test the new intervention in a sample of young male and female adolescents (aged 11-14 years). A secondary objective was to collaborate with stakeholders in developing a knowledge translation strategy to disseminate the research and highlight body image as a key issue to youth mental health.

This multi-stage project, involved (1) the development of the intervention, which incorporated engaged research approaches throughout; (2) a non-randomised pilot evaluation of the intervention involving 161 young people and three teachers from three schools; (3) the exploration of youth and teacher participants' experiences and views of the intervention and; (4) the development of a comprehensive website to promote positive body image with information for parents, educators and young people themselves.

The results suggest that participation in the intervention had positive effects on participant's attitudes to their body image, particularly among male students. Some positive changes were also noted in relation to social media behaviours and to perceived social support. The collective findings, despite some limitations, support the initial effectiveness and feasibility of the #MTAS programme for use in the school setting with both male and female adolescents. This research has a number of knowledge production, health and wellbeing, social and product development impacts.

Annemarie van Elburg



Prof Annemarie van Elburg is a Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist who has been working in the field of eating disorders for over 25 years. She is a clinician, a researcher and a teacher; since 2013 she is a Professor of Clinical Psychopathology, specialising in Eating Disorders, at the Dept of Clinical Psychology, University of Utrecht. She has served on numerous national and international committees and boards and has written extensively on the aetiology and treatment of people suffering from an eating disorder. Currently she is Medical Director of Co-eur, a Mental Health Institution specialising in the treatment of Eating Disorders in the Netherlands.

Gwen Dieleman



Dr. Gwen Dieleman is a Dutch Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and researcher at the Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry/Psychology at the Erasmus Medical Centre-Sophia Children's hospital in Rotterdam. She is the program lead of K-EET, a national steering group of medical professionals and policy makers, that aims to improve the early detection and long-term outcomes of children and adolescents with eating disorders in the Netherlands. It is her ambition to strengthen the care and knowledge at the interface of mental and physical disorders in childhood as a clinical researcher and by influencing mental health policy.

2:00-4:00 pm Afternoon Workshop

Topic: *'VIBES' – A family-based early intervention programme for eating disorders*

Early identification of anorexia nervosa, followed by efficient referral to appropriate care, is essential to promote a rapid and effective recovery process, ultimately leading to better outcomes and reduced societal costs. Within K-EET, a program to improve the care of children and adolescents with anorexia nervosa in the Netherlands (<https://kenniscentrum-kip.nl/keet/>), we have translated the ideas gained from F.R.E.E.D. (Austin et al, 2021), a treatment for young adults with anorexia nervosa who have been ill for less than 3 years to 'VIBES', a project for a younger age range. VIBES is a novel approach, based on the principles of FBT, to the treatment of anorexia nervosa in children and adolescents with early, first-episode illness to achieve rapid recovery and prevent the development of lifelong consequences of the illness.

Patients who are potentially eligible for VIBES are immediately scheduled for the next available intake (with a goal of < 2 weeks from referral). VIBES-eligible patients and their parents are then quickly (< 2 weeks from intake) assigned to two experienced ED therapists to begin stage-appropriate psychological treatment. The treatment has a strong focus on the parents, who work with their child in a small number of sessions to restore eating patterns. The goal is to help the parents along the way; at the end of the treatment, we assess the need for additional (co-morbid) treatment and schedule a follow-up appointment.

This workshop will explain what is covered in the intake and treatment sessions, what we have learned about (contra)indications, and discuss initial results. We would like to discuss with the audience the question whether experience is needed in working with eating disorders OR that experience in working with children & adolescents will suffice!

NOTES

NOTES

WORLD EATING DISORDER HEALTHCARE RIGHTS

(www.aedweb.org)

ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE: All patients have the right to immediate care for medical and/or psychiatric instability, followed by timely and non-discriminatory access to appropriate specialty care.

RESPECT: All patients, caregivers, and family members have the right to be treated with respect throughout the assessment, planning and treatment process. Patients and carers should never be judged or stigmatized based on symptoms, behaviours or past treatment history.

INFORMED CONSENT: When making healthcare decisions, patients and caregivers have the right to full disclosure by healthcare professionals about treatment best-practices, risks, costs, expected service outcomes, other treatment options, and the training and expertise of their clinicians.

PARTICIPATION: Families and other designated carers have a right to participate in treatment as advocates for the best interests of their loved-ones. Caregiving responsibilities and degrees of participation will necessarily vary depending on the age, mental state and diagnosis of the patient, as well as the caregiver's skills, availability, personal health, resources and other circumstances.

COMMUNICATION: All patients and carers have the right to establish regular and ongoing communications through clearly defined channels. Caregivers and family members have the right to communicate their observations and concerns to professionals and to receive information when the patient's medical stability and/or psychiatric safety is threatened or at risk.

PRIVACY: All patients and carers have a right to expect their health professionals to understand, communicate, and respect the applicable privacy or age-of-consent regulations that govern the communication of health and treatment information, as well as the circumstances and conditions that may override privacy concerns or transfer authority regarding treatment decisions.

SUPPORT: All caregivers have a right to receive information, resources and support services to help them understand and carry out the expectations and responsibilities of their roles as partners in treatment.

CALL FOR PAPERS

ECED 2025, Budapest, Hungary



Many of you will remember the wonderful time we had when the ECED Conference came to Belfast in 2022. If you enjoyed this, you have an opportunity to join us again, but in another wonderful location.

Please consider participating in the European Council on Eating Disorders biennial General Meeting and Conference taking place in Budapest, the beautiful capital city of Hungary, from September 11-13, 2025.

You can attend as a delegate but if you had a paper or poster to present you would be most welcome.

Registration for the conference is now open, and abstracts can be submitted until the end of May.

All the details at: www.eced2025.com