

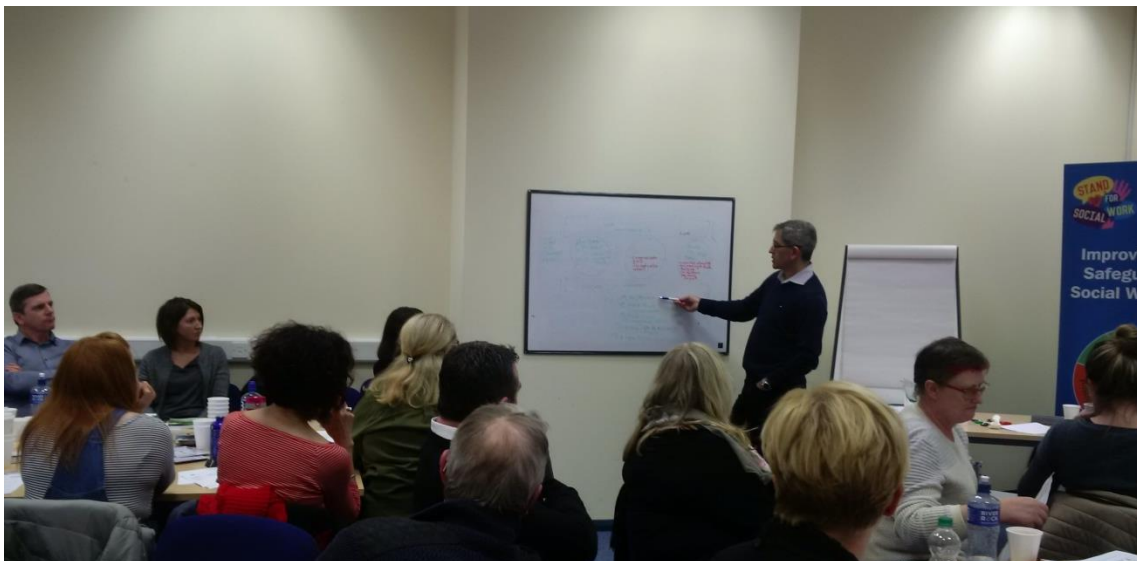
The Think Family Social Work Assessment Pilot: A comprehensive approach to family focused recovery practice for mental health services

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Regional Think Family Subgroup in partnership with the Health and Social Care Board recently hosted a workshop in Antrim. The workshop was to give the Social Work staff who are taking part in a Social Work Pilot the opportunity to gain an Intensive Knowledge and skills overview of The Family Model. It provided a forum for dialogue between Social Work staff in adult mental health, Social Services Trainers, Service users and carers and child care Social Work staff and local academics to agree a process to motivate and sustain the social work pilot within current Health and Social Care Trusts. The Think Family Social Work Assessment Pilot is being taken forward in partnership with the Department of Health ten year social work strategy: A Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland, 2012-2022.



Dr Adrian Falkov and Health and Social Care Trust colleagues at the Think Family Social Work Assessment Pilot workshop

The workshop was facilitated by Dr Adrian Falkov, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Director from the Royal North Shore and Sydney Children's Hospitals, Sydney Australia who shared with colleagues attending the workshop an overview of the intensive knowledge and skills from the Think Family Model. Speaking from the event, Dr Falkov said 'The Health and Social Care Board has shown ongoing commitment to family focused practice in mental health services and I commend this event that has provided a focussed training day for social workers using The Family Model, as part of the Think Family programme. This workshop has brought together representatives from five Health and Social Care Trusts alongside individuals with a lived experience. Feedback from participants on the day has been overwhelmingly positive and the aim is to build on progress with a Health and Social Care Trust based Train the Trainer approach. This is undoubtedly an innovative and ground breaking approach which aims to improve delivery of services to adults experiencing mental illness, their children and families and which is likely to generate substantial overseas interest'.



Dr Adrian Falkov, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Director from the Royal North Shore and Sydney Children's Hospitals, Sydney Australia sharing the Think Family Model at the Think Family Conference in February 2017

The workshop provided social workers, team leaders and trainers from each of the Health and Social Care Trusts with opportunity to learn about using The Family Model, in partnership with service users who are parents. This was followed by site visits to a number of the Trusts on subsequent days to further build on skills development when working with families where a parent is experiencing mental ill health. There has been substantial interest and commitment to improving family focused practice internationally and there were a number of visitors from University of Oslo who were keen to observe and learn about implementation of The Family Model from the Northern Ireland experience. Aspects of the programme are being evaluated via a partnership between the Health and Social Care Board and Queens University Belfast.

Mary Donaghy, Think Family NI Regional Lead in the Health and Social Care Board has acknowledged the success of the Social Work Assessment workshop and has said, 'The Social Work staff involved in the Pilot felt very energised about the development of this work and the contribution they will make by embedding family focused conversations using The Family Model (TFM). Our service users in attendance were enthusiastic about TFM and wished that family focused conversations occurred more in adult mental services

Contact Us:

For further information about the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Regional Think Family Subgroup please visit

<http://www.cypsp.org/regional-subgroups/think-family/> or alternatively contact Mary Donaghy, Social Care, Health and Social Care Board by email at mary.donaghy@hscni.net.