

Public Consultation,  
Professional Regulation Unit,  
Department of Health,  
Hawkins House,  
Dublin 2, D02 VW90



Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Submission for registration of titles Parent Mentor and Relationship Mentor**

Irish Association of Relationship Mentors hereby submits a proposal for registration of titles Parent Mentor and Relationship Mentor and the application is detailed herewith.

Yours sincerely,

Bronwyn Drury,

Secretary,  
Irish Association of Relationship Mentors

[www.iarm.ie](http://www.iarm.ie)

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## **1. Interest in being included:**

Parent and Relationship Mentors along with their professional body Irish Association of Relationship Mentors (IARM) recognise:

- a. The core psycho-social unit in society is the family and research consistently shows that the emotional and social maturity of each parent is the main determinant of family wellbeing
- b. Parenting as a profession and the need for parents to be prepared for this complex and multi-task profession
- c. Adult relationship with self and others lies at the heart of effective family, social, educational and work systems

Parent and Relationship Mentors, through their 3-year University (NFQ level 7 and 8) training and stringent validation process through IARM, are well placed to provide parents and parenting groups with a *holding* environment that creates safety for reflection, for inquiry, for increasing their understanding of themselves, child development and the needs of children and teenagers. Mentors are also trained to create a relational depth that makes it emotionally, intellectually, socially, behaviourally and creatively safe for the person(s) seeking help to explore their relationships to date and to see what needs to be seen and to do what needs to be done – for the benefit of all.

Mentoring practitioners also work on both a one-to-one and group basis with heads of social, religious, educational and work systems as well as providing intensive training courses for groups of individuals – heads and members – who occupy these systems. Mentors are cognisant of the ingredients of mature relationships and how relationships in all the different life settings can be seriously interrupted. They are well aware that *affectiveness* is critical to the resolution of interruptions. They can readily detect whether or not listening occurs and whether or not communication is open, direct and clear and whether or not definite boundaries around each individual's wellbeing are in place. Most of all, Mentors know that it is the nature of each person's relationship with self that is the bedrock of personal maturity, the maturity of relationships with others and professional effectiveness.

## **2. Service to the public:**

The vision of the professions of Parent and Relationship Mentoring is for the relief of human suffering. Mentors are cognisant that individuals who head the important places where we live, work, learn, pray, heal and play, depending on their inner relationship with self, can create harmony or wreak havoc in their relationships with others. At the core of the

Mentoring approach to human distress is an appreciation of the individuality of the person seeking help, a recognition of the person's power beyond measure, an affirmation of the sacredness and unconditional worth of the person and an awe response to the intelligent and creative ways that a people protect themselves in the face of the defensive behaviours of others. Crucially, an understanding of the substitute/defensive behaviours presented is sought and the creation of safety for the person(s) to bring to consciousness what lies hidden – one's true self.

### **3. Qualifications:**

The 2-year part-time Diploma in Parent Mentoring, NFQ Level 7, programme has been running in University College Cork (UCC) and as an outreach programme in Dublin since 2003 and the 2-year part-time Higher Diploma in Relationship Mentoring, NFQ Level 8, programme has been running in UCC and on an outreach basis in Dublin since 2008. Both programmes have been fully subscribed each year and the majority of the students have undertaken both programmes. In 2015, in line with feedback from lecturers, past students and from the External Examiner at UCC, some restructuring of both programmes took place and nowadays the 3-year part-time Parenting and Relationship Mentoring training is set out as follows:

- a. 1-year part-time Certificate in Interpersonal Communication, NFQ Level 7, which forms the foundational training for those wishing to train as Parent and Relationship mentors through its strong emphasis on self-exploration and the development of the participants' personal and interpersonal maturity. The programme comprises six 5-credit modules and is delivered by practising psychotherapists and psychologists. For details of the modules please see Appendix 1.
  
- b. 2-year part-time Higher Diploma in Relationship Mentoring, NFQ Level 8, is substantially rooted in the theories and practices of psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, sociological theories and experimental psychology. The core of the programme continues to focus on the development of participants' personal and interpersonal maturity primarily through opportunities for personal reflection made possible by the facilitation of the programme in an interactive manner by experienced practitioners. Further opportunities for the deepening of participants' levels of self-development are created by the programme requirement to attend for one-to-one psychotherapy or relationship mentoring. This programme comprises twelve 5-credit modules. For details of the modules please see Appendix 2.

Admission to the Certificate in Interpersonal Communication is on the basis of being over 21 years of age and the completion of a detailed application form together with a 500 word statement outlining reasons for wishing to register for the programme. Entry to the Higher Diploma in Relationship Mentoring is based on being over 21 years of age, successful completion of the Certificate in Interpersonal Communication or interview for those with other relevant qualifications and/or experience.

Built on the above foundations, this 3-year programme prepares participants to work in the holding worlds of family, school settings, community and workplace settings.

#### **4. Governing Body**

The governing body for Parent and Relationship Mentors is Irish Association of Relationship Mentors (IARM). The mission of IARM is to act as a self-regulating professional body for Relationship Mentors to protect clients, and the profession itself.

IARM sets stringent training and validation standards, ethical frameworks, and supportive policies and procedures. These include providing a validation process for practitioners and ongoing professional practice including regular supervision. In meeting these objectives IARM seeks to support the further development of relationship mentoring.

At IARM it is recognised that it is the nature of relationships within the 'Holding Worlds' of family, school, community, workplace and wider society that largely determines the level of wellbeing and maturity of each individual within these worlds.

The vision of IARM is to provide opportunities for parents, teachers, managers and leaders to bring to their conscious awareness what may necessarily lay hidden (unconscious) in the face of the many threats to the real and spontaneous expression of their individuality. However, what remains unconscious manifests in ways of being that pose threat to that individual and to others with whom he or she interacts.

The ethical foundations of IARM are:

- Recognition that all mentoring starts with oneself
- Continuous reflection on the state of one's own internal world is the best guarantee of ethical practice.

- Self- realisation is the best guarantee of ethical practice
- Self-realisation is the key to being open and fully present to the client in the way s/he deserves

Ethical practice can be broken down into:

- Trustworthiness
- Empowerment
- Commitment
- Justice

The key principles behind the psychosocial foundation of the profession of Relationship and Parent Mentoring are:

- The self as creator
- Unconditional love corresponds to the deepest longing of each person and when unconditional love is absent, unconscious defences will wisely but unconsciously be created by the self
- Individuals are always in relationships; the quality of those is a crucial influence on our felt experience of life
- A person's relationship with self determines his/her relationship with others
- It is what happens within rather than between individuals that needs to be the main focus of relationship mentoring
- Individuals operate primarily from their unconsciously formed protective places
- Unconscious protectors pose a threat to the well-being of others
- Consciousness is essential for relationships to shift from protective to open and mature relating
- Raising consciousness of what lies hidden is the first major step towards personal, interpersonal and societal maturity
- Emotional and social safety provides the critical holding for a shift from unconsciousness.
- Metaphorical rather than literal interpretation of human behaviour is a key aspect of relationship mentoring.
- A person always knows – albeit unconsciously – what is going on in internal and external worlds.
- All that arises in another belongs to and is about and for the emergence of his/her self.
- Self-reliance is always present- either as unconscious protection or conscious openness
- All behaviour makes sense
- Communication is about getting through to self
- Listening is an act of affirmation and acceptance of self

- Conflict is a creative opportunity
- Personal affectiveness and effectiveness is the basis for professional affectiveness and effectiveness

IARM membership currently stands at approximately 70 which is made up of validated members, pre-validated members, associate members, student members and affiliate professional members.

(For further details on IARM see [www.iarm.ie](http://www.iarm.ie))

### **5. Similarities between Mentoring and Counselling:**

As with person-centred counselling, mentoring is based on a *potentiality* model of human behaviour and its goals are to offer opportunities for clients to deepen their sense of self and from that interior stronghold to create more mature relationships with others.

The orientation of mentoring is primarily non-directive – in that it relies on the relationship between the mentor and the client to bring about the desired security and safety for the client to understand consciously what he/she already unconsciously knows. When the person makes the connection between how he/she relates to others is a mirror of how he/she relates to self, possibilities for new choices and new actions emerge.

Additionally, Relationship Mentors facilitate parenting, teenage, family wellbeing, self-realisation, professional effectiveness and organisational effectiveness programmes, crucially reaching sectors of the population who may not, for their own deep reasons, attend for counselling. The regular feedback from Mentors is that once a relationship has been established in a group setting and a *safe holding* provided, requests for one-to-one mentoring or further group work are frequent. In cases of deep-rooted emotional distress, Mentors will refer such individuals for psychotherapeutic help.

## Appendix 1:

### CERTIFICATE IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

NFQ Level 7

#### AUTHENTIC SELF EXPRESSION

The Nature of the Self; The Emergence of the Self; The Early Years; The Eclipse of the Self; The Concepts of Self-Image, Self-Esteem, Self-Concept; The Realisation of the Self.

#### FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Defining the Family; Parents as the Family Architects; Types of Families; Family Relationships; Family Communication; Family Conflict; Conflict Resolution.

#### THE NATURE AND POWER OF EMOTIONS AND THOUGHTS

Introduction to Beck's Cognitive Theory; Albert Ellis's Rational Emotive Therapy and Fritz Perls' Gestalt approach to thoughts and emotions; The Nature of emergency and welfare emotions; The Nature of the Freudian Defences; Understanding specific emotions; Distinction between emotional receptivity and emotional responsivity.

#### THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION

Levels of communication; Non-verbal communication; Verbal communication; Meta-communication; Metaphorical and Mythical communication; Defensive communication; Open communication; Therapeutic communication.

#### HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO STRESS AND ILLNESS

Stress and illness as creations; The causes and the inner terrain of stress and illness; Intentions of stress and illness; The nature of psycho physiological and psychosomatic conditions; Psycho-social approaches to stress and illness.

#### SEXUAL MATURATION

Self and sexuality; Early experiences of sexuality; Current experience of sexuality; Exploration of meanings attached to sexuality; Defensive sexual expression; Open sexual expression; Common sexual difficulties; Therapeutic approaches; Safe holding of sexuality for children and adolescents.

Method of Assessment: Continuous assessment



## APPENDIX 2:

### HIGHER DIPLOMA IN RELATIONSHIP MENTORING

NFQ Level 8

#### PROGRAMME CONTENT – YEAR 1

##### DEVELOPMENT THEORIES & EARLY RELATIONSHIPS (5 CREDITS)

Jean Piaget's Stage Theory; Erik Erikson's model of Psychosocial Development; John Bowlby's Attachment Theory; Daniel Stern's work on psychological development in infancy; Frank Lake's 'womb as world experience'; D.W. Winnicott's 'good enough parenting.'

##### YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS (5 CREDITS)

The nature, origins, creative interventions of and maintenance factors of Children's Challenging Behaviours. Also, the development of methods of assessment, intervention and evaluation of intervention strategies.

##### ADULTS CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS (5 CREDITS)

The nature, types origins and endurance of adults' challenging behaviours; The influence of the unconscious and sub-conscious on parents' challenging responses; The creative intentions of parents' defensive reactions; The impact of labelling and medication on the defensive behaviours; The effects of parents' challenging behaviours on their own and on their children's wellbeing; Examination of approaches to parents' challenging responses and the development of problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.

##### THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY (5 CREDITS)

Psychoanalytic, psychotherapeutic and behavioural understandings of play, types of play, Partan's stages of play and playful parenting.

##### THE TEENAGE YEARS (5 CREDITS)

The nature of adolescent development; Peer pressure; Communication and adolescence; 'Persistent' versus 'new' problems in living; Adolescent depression and anxiety; Understanding the nature of adolescent inner turmoil; What it takes to guide adolescents towards self-reliance; Key issues in adolescence.

PARENT MENTORING AND FACILITATION OF PARENTING COURSES (5 CREDITS)

All mentoring /training starts with self. All parenting starts with how a parent parents self; Mentoring skills. The art of public speaking; Group dynamics; Evaluation methods; The importance of supervision.

YEAR 2

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOANALYSIS TO ADULT RELATIONSHIPS (5 CREDITS)

The Oedipal Relationship (Feud); Projection and Introjection (Klein); The process of Individuation (Carl Jung); The Holding Environment (Winnicott); Current Thinking (Adam Phillips, Neville Symington)

PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS – THE KNOWLEDGE BASE (5 CREDITS)

This module will provide knowledge of the dynamics of relationships in the personal, family, community and work spheres. The focus will be on how all of these relationships are ultimately determined by the quality of relationship with self.

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN WORK ORGANISATIONS (5 CREDITS)

Types of organisations; organisational cultures; power within organisations; change theories; the process of change; resistance to change; organisational conflict; methods of conflict resolution; the art of negotiation; types of management; staff relationships.

EVALUATION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL CONTEXTS, OBSERVATIONAL AND RESEARCH SKILLS (5 CREDITS)

Assessment interviews and tools; Observation – objectivity and intersubjectivity, Methodology in the Human Sciences; Staying up to date with current thinking, accessing information.

PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS – PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN PRESENTATION AND FACILITATION SKILLS (5 CREDITS)

Group dynamics, conflict assessment and resolution, active listening; listening to inner experience and using it to communicate and facilitate communications; facilitation and presentation practice and feedback.

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS (5 CREDITS)

Case studies, theoretical input and practice of relationship mentoring interventions in different work/social settings.

Method of Assessment: Continuous assessment and written examinations.