

Dear Sir or Madam

I would like to make a submission concerning the above proposed regulation of Counsellors & Psychotherapists.

I write as an individual who is accredited to one of the main accreditation bodies.

Regulating Counsellors & Psychotherapists will expand the present services for people who need support to live well and fully. Though not recognized as professionals many people are presently supporting our Health Service through out the country. Supporting and saving lives. I have first-hand experience and privilege of meeting many clients who could not wait months for an appointment in the H.S.E.

I am a mature woman practicing as counsellor in Dublin for the past ten years on a semi-voluntary basis with two organisations. In my mid-forties I decided to follow my passion and train to work as a counsellor. I obtained a degree in Psychology(NUIM), did a Foundation Course in Counselling Skills (NUIM), Certificate in Addiction (NUIM) and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy(DCU). To qualify for accreditation to a particular body, I worked two years to gain the necessary 450 hours of client practice. No payment was made for this work. I came to believe I was fortunate to get the experience. This is happening today. Post accreditation, I have worked on a semi voluntary basis for one organization. There is no money to pay for the work. I have observed through the years that this particular organization is not exceptional. Until the recent past, when I have been looking for paid work (i.e. some pay for every hour worked) I have seen that well-known and apparently credible organisations were only taking on pre-accredited counsellors and psychotherapists. People at the frontline of dealing with life and death issues were not being paid while, most likely, those in administrations were getting paid. I believe the recent scandal with Console has highlighted much.

The talk of regulating this profession was happening in 1993 when I did my Foundation Course in Counselling Skills.

The counsellors and psychotherapists that I have encountered throughout my time have, in the main, been people I would approach for counselling myself. However, I have met people who were chancers.

Mental Health issues affect nearly all of us throughout our life. Regulating Counsellors & Psychotherapists will enhance the services we can offer those needing support. Regulating the profession will give a status that will promote recognition of mental health issues and promote confidence in a profession that can help.

All counsellors and psychotherapists cannot afford to be altruistic and afford to counsel for no payment. Presently there are accredited counsellors who can hardly pay to stay accredited; the costs of supervision, travel and continual professional development cancel any payments received.

I hope to live to see the day that like teachers, doctors, nurses, solicitors..... counsellors and psychotherapists are respected and enable to continue the work they know is worthwhile.

Sincerely

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