MAYO RAPE CRISIS CENTRE LTD

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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**Mission Statement**

The Mayo Rape Crisis Centre aims to provide a safe, confidential and anonymous space for anyone who has experienced any form of sexual violence recently or in the past. The Centre is a space where survivors of rape and/ or sexual abuse can talk and be heard. The basic philosophy is informed by the values of Equality, Empowerment and Inclusiveness. Anyone can be a victim of sexual violence, irrespective of race, age, economic circumstance or social status. In supporting survivors we provide practical information and resource additional supports.

*“There`s just something, your presence, the way you stay with me, it`s like there`s nothing so crazy or so dark that I cannot say to you. You just stay, you stay with me.” (Client Mayo RCC)*

*“I would be dead if I was not coming here.” (Client Mayo RCC)*

**Chairpersons Introduction**

The Mayo Rape Crisis Centre has provided a unique and essential service to the people of Mayo for the past 20 years, helping and supporting anyone whose life has been affected by sexual violence at any time.

For the person who has experienced sexual abuse, assault or rape, the Mayo RCC offers them a safe and confidential space where their story can be heard, where they will not be judged and where they will receive support, information and counselling to deal with the traumatic and complex impact of the abuse on their life.

This annual report clearly shows the continual demand for the services of the Mayo Rape Crisis Centre at a time when their funding under Tusla is under threat. For a Centre such as this to have its support and counselling services reduced will be detrimental to the whole community of County Mayo.

I wish to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board of Directors to thank Ruth MacNeely, retired Director and founder member of the organisation for her outstanding work and to wish her well for the future.

I wish to also convey our thanks to each member of the staff at the Centre, led by the Acting Director Loretta McDonagh, including the wonderful volunteers, for their incredible hard work and commitment in these challenging and uncertain times.

**Agnes Larkin**

Chairperson

Board of Directors.

**Acting Directors Foreword**

It is my privilege to introduce the 2014 Annual Report and statistics from Mayo Rape Crisis Centre. 2014 was a landmark year for us involved in the Centre. We celebrated 20 years working in the county while also becoming gender neutral and offering a counselling service to the men in our community who experienced sexual violence. We honoured a founder member Ruth MacNeely who retired as our Director. We are very thankful for all she has given to the Centre in the past and are delighted that she continues to be involved with us in a different capacity.

2014 saw the launch of Tusla, The Child and Family Agency under the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Funding for the Rape Crisis Sector was then transferred from the HSE to Tusla. As we adjust to working within a new overall framework of service delivery, there are still many challenges facing us in relation to our position as we work to maintain the independence and autonomy of the Mayo Rape Crisis Centre. As there are ongoing funding insecurities for our Centre it is very challenging to plan sustainable service delivery. The decision by Tusla to no longer fund our national body, the RCNI has been disappointing. This is a huge loss to smaller rural Centres such as Mayo as it makes it more difficult to ensure that our experience is valued and recognised at a national level.

While we strive to see victims of recent sexual assaults and rape as quickly as possible, we continue to have a waiting list for people who experienced childhood sexual abuse. Our phone line is busy on a daily basis with calls for support, information and advocacy as well as for counselling. Our outreach clinics in Ballina and Belmullet provided an essential fortnightly service to many victims of sexual violence in 2014. Sadly, these outreach services are threatened with closure due to funding restraints. In this annual report for 2014 we read the statistics knowing that behind each statistic there is an individual story, a personal experience of hurt and trauma but also for many a story of recovery and healing. The Mayo RCC has a highly dedicated and competent staff and volunteer team, including the voluntary Board of Directors and I would like to express my own personal thanks to each one of them for their time, their energy and their hearts which sustains the work of the Centre. I would like to close with a word of thanks to the clients of the Centre who on a daily basis trust us with their stories and their pain. It is an absolute privilege to bear witness to their journeys.

**Loretta McDonagh MA**

Acting Director of Services

**Reflections from Retired Director**

In 21 years of the comings and goings in and out of the rooms of MRCC, first in Ellison Street and then in Newtown there are many things that remain with me but what remains most powerfully and always will, is the sacredness of the work that is done in the centre by the clients firstly, by the deep listening and witness of all the workers and by the commitment and advocacy of those who support the service. The often fragile person who comes to the door and begins often slowly to lay down their burden, their secret, their shame and their hurt, does so in safety. The safety of each client of the centre has always been a core value of all involved with the work. The tenderness, respect and holding provided by the volunteers, the workers and the board is an awesome work ethic.

The unfaltering recognition of the crime of sexual violence, the understanding of the impact of the violation of sexual violence and the understanding and expertise garnered over twenty one years is a profound gift for the communities that call Mayo their home. It is also honest work. There are some people we cannot help. That is not a reflection on them or MRCC. The damage can be such that some needs are better met within other services.

The difficult aspects of this work are the various communities still silenced by a myriad of fears, some new and some old and still not able to access supports safely: The young of both sexes, the travelling community, migrants and refugees. The dearth of services for children who have been sexually abused is another concern. To witness the response of both the Government and Tusla, both in attitude and response to the one effective and excellent support that emerged from within the RCC movement: the Rape Crisis Network Ireland has been deeply disappointing and an indication of the true priority of victims of Sexual Violence in Ireland.

However, no matter what any day brings, whoever comes to the door of MRCC is treated with heart and hearing and witness. The changes that our clients become able to manifest in their own life’s, families and communities is inspiring and unseen. The sacred and privileged element of the work of MRCC, is the empowerment of the client that in turn changes the world around them. Whilst I do harbour the hope that sexual violence will be a thing of the past one day, we have a long way to go and this is cross generational work. The sooner a victim gets good help the less trauma is created and the safer Mayo is for all possible victims.

It has been nothing short of the greatest privilege to be involved with MRCC. Long may its presence continue to make Mayo a safe place for all victims of sexual violence.

Ruth MacNeely Founder member and Retired Director of Mayo RCC

**Headline Statistics**

**1410** Helpline Calls

**1157** Counselling appointments

**51** Support appointments

**61**  New Contacts

**100** Participated in MRCC training

**68.6%** of all survivors knew their abuser

**15.68%** of all survivors did not know their abuser

**42.14%** of CSA survivors were abused by family member

**12.74%** of survivors were abused by an acquaintance

**10.7%** of survivors were abused as both an adult and as a child

**12.74%** of clients were asylum seekers

**40.1%** of asylum clients were subjected to multiple incidents

**24.35%** of survivors reported incidents to Gardai

**Services We Provide**

**Freephone Helpline**

The helpline is provided by trained helpline staff and volunteers, who can give you support and information. The service provides support for men and women who have experienced rape, sexual assault or childhood sexual abuse. It doesn’t matter if these experiences happened a long time ago or if they were reported to the Gardai. You are under no obligation to disclose to us what has happened to you, we can work with you on the issues and symptoms you have as a result of your experiences.

**Counselling**

We offer one to one counselling to both men and women who have experienced any form of sexual violence recently, or in the past. This continues to be the heart of the service with approximately 35-40 appointments weekly. The demand for our counselling service in 2014 was such that we had an ongoing waiting list. As Mayo is such a large rural county our Outreach services in both Belmullet and Ballina have also experienced a waiting list during 2014.

We believe that counselling provides a space to help survivors gain a clearer understanding of themselves and their situation. Every survivor is different as are their needs therefore the length of time they spend in therapy is client lead.

**Crisis Counselling**

We endeavour to respond as soon as possible to those clients that contact the centre in crisis, whether due to a recent assault or the sudden recollection of an historical assault. The helpline staff will respond within 24 hours and an offer of a face to face session will be offered within the week.

**Advocacy and Accompaniment**

This is an important and valuable part of the services that Mayo Rape Crisis Centre offers. A large number of clients need very basic help with their rights or safety issues. This can involve meeting with CWO, Social Workers, housing dept etc. We also offer our experience and support to clients going through the legal system, accompany them to Gardai meetings, statement taking and Court.

**Training**

**A Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Programme for Young People.**

The aim of this programme is to educate young people about all forms of sexual violence. Young people often struggle to name their unwanted sexual experiences as rape or sexual assault. Studies show that sexual violence is more likely to occur in a relationship or by someone known to the victim, which can often make it difficult for a young person to identify it as assault.  Also, commonly held myths that include, sexual assault must include physical force, result in physical injury, or is perpetrated by strangers in dark places, can diminish how they view their experience.

This programme defines and explores the different kinds of sexual violence, how to identify it, and its effects. It explores in depth the areas of consent, alcohol and how our present culture influences our views on sexual violence. Alongside this, the aim is to provide greater access to services for young people who have experienced sexual assault or abuse or may do in the future.

**Commonsense Parenting Course**

THE MAYO RAPE CRISIS CENTRE HSE COMMON SENSE PARENTING COURSE

The Centre runs the above Common Sense Parenting course with emphasis on parenting as a sexual violence survivor in both the 2 to 6 year old age group and the 6 to 16 year old age groups. The Centre added two modules to the course which looks at specific issues for survivors of sexual violence. Before taking part in the course a questionnaire is given and can be filled out with a clients counsellor or if finished counselling or if from another service/agency, with a trainer from the centre. It is recommended that those attending the course who have done some personal therapy but it is important to know that the course is a training not a therapy group.

Common Sense Parenting is a skill-based parenting programme where parents develop practical and effective  ways to:

* Encourage your children’s positive behaviour
* Discourage negative behaviour
* Teach your children alternatives to problem behaviour

You will develop and learn specific skills to use when interacting with your children, setting them up for success in their everyday lives and these include using effective praise for encouraging positive behaviour, developing techniques for using effective discipline, using consequences to change behaviour, preventing problems, correcting problem behaviour and teaching your children social skills that are beneficial for themselves and others.

**Training for other Professionals**

Disclosure training  
The Disclosure Training is for workers or individuals who may in their work or daily lives become recipients of a disclosure of sexual abuse or sexual violence. Or indeed may have a suspicion. The training is approximately four hours long and provides information on

* What do I do if someone discloses to me.
* How can I be supportive to a Survivor.
* When do I need to report the Information I have been given?
* Agency Roles.
* Looking after yourself in the event of such a disclosure.

We can provide to any group of individuals on the basis of 10 -12 people  per workshop.

**Awarness Raising**

We take every opportunity to raise awareness and challenge perceptions about the causes and impact of sexual violence through talks and public events and our Facebook page.

**Support for Families and Friends**

We at the Mayo Rape Crisis Centre know that sexual violence does not just affect the victim/survivor but also those around them. Because of this we offer information and support sessions for partners, family members and friends so that they may better support survivors.

**Helpline Calls 2014**

**Counselling and Support**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Financial Summary 2014 | | | | |  |  |  |  |
| Mayo Rape Crisis Centre. A company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital. | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Income and Expenditure 2014 | | | |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Annual Statutory Funding** | | |  | **2014** |  |  | **2013** |  |
| Child & Family Agency | | |  | €159,927 |  |  | €174,404 |  |
| Donations & Fundraising | | |  | €2,996 |  |  | €7,762 |  |
| Rape Crisis Network Ireland | | |  | €1,003 |  |  | €910 |  |
| Grants & Social Welfare | | |  | €5,628 |  |  | €12,413 |  |
| Grant - Erris Project | |  |  | €27,115 |  |  | €21,801 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | |  |  | €196,669 |  |  | €217,290 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Administrative Expenses** | | |  | €218,192 |  |  | €209,186 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Operating surplus/(deficit)** | | |  | -18,837 |  |  | -6,484 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Other Operating Income** | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Government Grants Received | | |  | €647 |  |  | €647 |  |
| Insurance Claims Received | | |  | €3,955 |  |  | 0 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | €4,602 |  |  | €647 |  |