

## **Yellow Ribbon Annual General Report : January 2025..**

First and foremost I would like to say a sincere thanks to Cllr. Margaret Tinsley for chairing another AGM for our mental health charity. In addition, the ongoing work of saving lives and improving the quality of the community's mental health and wellbeing would be impossible had it not been for the ongoing help throughout the year from my committee. To each of you a very sincere thanks. Since our beginning some fourteen years ago David Brown has not only audited our finances but has been immensely helpful in giving advice and preparing our reports for the Charity commission. Above all else we wish to thank the Rector and select vestry of St. Matthias for their generosity over the past two years in the provision of accommodation here in their parish halls.

### **University of Ulster Psychology students**

Last year we had the University of Ulster School of Psychology placement students from the Faculty of Life & Health Sciences at Coleraine working alongside me in our psychological clinic. Hannah, Ellie, Kelsey, Anna and Courtney were immensely productive in a broad range of clinical and organizational duties. They assist me in the administration of the various psychometric assessments of GP referrals, but also in clinical note taking, and health psychology education for the surrounding colleges and schools. Their professional competences and self confidence has increased significantly over their placement year. They have been real ambassadors for Yellow Ribbon year after year. They have accompanied me to student health exhibitions at Southern Regional College Portadown and Lurgan Campus, beside Banbridge and Armagh student health Fairs. I would also on behalf of my committee to say a sincere thank you to Hilary for the training sessions she has completed year after after year with the students. They have enjoyed the AWARE Living Life to The Full booklets and course training, besides CBT introduction and associated materials.



**Yellow Ribbon**  
Mental Health & Wellbeing Centre

76 Bleary Road,  
Portadown, BT63 5NF

Tel: 02837 240951 and  
24 Hr Emergency Helpline: 079 9993 9220

e: yellow-ribbon76@hotmail.com  
www.yellowribbon-ri.org.uk

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**Psychological Support for**

- Cyberbullying
- Social Networking Issues
- Internet Trolls
- Suicidal Thoughts & F
- Anxiety
- Bereavement by Su
- Stress Management
- The Farming Commu
- College & University

**We Provide:**

- Research into Cyberabu
- Identity Exploration Res
- Mindfulness Training
- Police Training
- Suicide Prevention
- in Organizations
- Bespoke Youth Leader Tra
- Multisensory Environments
- Family Support and Advice
- in Social Networking

Stress Test



## **Finances**

The year 2023 to 2024 has seen a substantial decrease in donations received, and both I and the students have been utilizing Enthuse professional fundraising advice to encourage the community to consider giving what they can afford. However, with cost of living crises and government austerity measures we are utterly dependent on generous financial help from Knocknamuckley Parish church, Seagoe Parish and Portadown College each year. Capt. Mike Bower Merchant Navy now a good friend of our charity has saved us in the region of one thousand pounds

by his volunteer bi monthly cleaning of the Tropical aquarium and cleaning of filters. Mike on behalf of our committee a very sincere thanks.

## **Social Media**

With the increase in numbers receiving client centred therapy, mostly males, we have seen GP referrals for 430 clinical health sessions last year, from September 2023 until May 2024. In order to carry out therapeutic intervention using social media, the students have begun to apply health psychology principles to help educate the public. They are creative in producing eye catching videos for Tik Tok and Instagram to reach out to teenagers and young people with mental health issues. At Portadown College they produced video presentations on examination stress and coping, besides social media addiction and anxiety disorders

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## **Storm Eowyn**

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025 hundreds of thousands lost power across the UK and Ireland with the hurricane -force winds across the province. Students and patients were advised to remain at home in order to be safe. The Church suffered extensive damage on its roof, as did the roof above our own rooms and the adjacent roof and windows. As a result of the huge beech tree in the Church grounds crashing down across the road, it brought down power cables

which were dangerous to anyone who was in the vicinity. With no electricity our tropical fish all died due to lack of oxygen and hypothermia. We had to drain the aquarium in the meantime until all potential storms have passed.

The World health Organization's recent report (2024) has indicated the serious health concern social media has become for teenagers.

### **Teens, screens and mental health**

Sep 25, 2024,

New data from the WHO Regional Office for Europe reveals a sharp rise in problematic social media use among adolescents, with rates increasing from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022. This, coupled with findings that 12% of adolescents are at risk of problematic gaming, raises urgent concerns about the impact of digital technology on the mental health and well-being of young people. These findings come from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, which surveyed almost 280 000 young people aged 11, 13 and 15 across 44 countries and regions in Europe, central Asia and Canada in 2022.



Prof Siobhan O'Neill

“As Northern Ireland’s Mental Health Champion, one of my key goals is to increase awareness of the needs of those who are struggling, and the factors affecting mental health and wellbeing here. Accurate information and data is vital, not only to allow us to plan effective mental health services, but also to increase knowledge and understanding about the structural factors and inequalities that influence mental health and wellbeing. This is necessary to drive changes in the broader areas of policy, including in Justice, Communities, and Education, that can have an important impact on outcomes. NI has long been characterised as a population with a high level of need, and this report helps us to understand the nature of our needs, the origins of these difficulties, and actions that we must take to improve everyone’s lives. Importantly, it also highlights some of our strengths as a society, and positive changes in our perceptions of mental illness, stigma and helpseeking. Through the analysis of the correlates of poor mental health, the report highlights how early adversity, trauma, poverty, experience of education and exposure to violence can have such a huge impact on mental health. It also identifies important groups who are at higher risk, including carers, disabled people, people with health conditions, and LGBTQIA+ people. The report helps us understand the needs of those from minority ethnic groups, refugees and asylum seekers. As such the report is a guide to the aspects of policy which if addressed in a timely manner, would reduce the burden of suffering, and also the

economic costs. Far too often mental illness, trauma and distress result in addiction, self-harm and death by suicide. By understanding the nature and extent of these issues we are better placed to provide responsive services, and importantly, to direct resources to earlier intervention and prevention. Whilst public awareness of mental health is growing, and there is a welcome increase in the understanding of mental health and illness, there is also however much misinformation and inaccurate information. This report provides the accurate information that we need to make decisions going forward and is particularly helpful as we progress on our journey to reform mental health services and create a better future for future generations.

Dr Arthur Cassidy

1<sup>st</sup> February 2025