

## MIC PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL AND CHILD PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER

---

You are very welcome to the second edition of the MIC Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology Newsletter. It's been almost 2 years since Covid arrived on the island of Ireland, with all the associated upheaval and adjustments to our way of living. Beyond the general impact of the pandemic, it's important to acknowledge the personal losses experienced by many, as the virus took hold and spread through our communities.

To our trainees, our MIC and departmental colleagues and our core team, a huge thank you for your resolve to keep going when faced with the myriad of challenges presented. A special word to our placement supervisors, who, in the midst of adjusting to a new way of working with their clients and service users, made huge efforts to support the continued training of the future generation of Educational and Child Psychologists. With the exigencies of the pandemic over the past number of months, educational psychology service provision has changed. What has remained the same is the demand for the skills of our profession in working with clients and their families for better outcomes across a wide range of life domains including social, emotional and adaptive functioning, mental health and education.

This newsletter provides an insight into what's been happening from a programme perspective, and also in the lives of our trainees and the broader DECPsy team. From a team perspective, we were delighted to welcome our DECPsy trainees back to campus this semester. The opportunity to meet again as a group was really valued by all. We had the pleasure of hosting a group of Year 3 trainees for a nature-based retreat in August, where it was possible to reconnect in the safety of the outdoors, to place a focus on self-care and peer support ahead of another busy academic year.

A warm welcome also to our new DECPsy Year 1 group who are the first to enrol on the re-designed DECPsy programme. The newly designed programme has incorporated trainee and stakeholder feedback, as well as contemporary research into post-graduate psychology training, to meet the evolving needs of our trainees as they embark on their careers in an ever-changing professional landscape.

We were really delighted that the achievements of our 2021 and 2020 graduates were recognised in an on-campus ceremony this year; the photographs in this issue illustrate what it meant to our graduates to celebrate their accomplishments together.

Finally, I am very grateful to everyone involved with the DECPsy for their perseverance, good humour and tolerance during this very challenging period and I look forward to working and learning with you all in the coming year.



**Dr Therese Brophy**  
Programme Leader, DECPsy, MIC

## DECPsy 2021: Viva Voce Success

Seven students undertaking the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology successfully defended their *viva voce* exams in June and July.

Huge congrats to :

- Dr Aoife Cassidy and supervisors Dr Stella Long and Dr Paul Mulcahy
- Dr Claire Donnelly and supervisors Dr Paul Mulcahy and Dr Therese Brophy
- Dr Eibhlin Ryan and supervisor Dr Margaret Farrelly
- Dr Hannah Browne & supervisors Dr Laura Ambrose, Dr Suzanne Egan & Dr Marc Scully
- Dr Hollie Hayes and supervisors Dr Laura Ambrose and Dr John Perry
- Dr Lisa Moran and supervisors Dr Siobhan O’Sullivan and Dr Margaret Farrelly
- Dr Saoirse MacCarthaigh and supervisors Dr Claire Griffin and Dr John Perry

The range and scope of the research conducted by the DECPsy students is worthy of note. Research studies varied in focus from parental smartphone use, sleep hygiene, affective working memory and pupil achievement to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), autism and the continuum of support. A number of the external thesis examiners commented on the impressive focus on dissemination and impact of the research, and the implications for practice in educational and child psychology.

Also, a huge thank you to the DECPsy team; and the EPISE department led by Dr Fitzgerald, who ensure that a level 10 standard is maintained across the placement and taught strands of the programme. We are also very grateful to Caroline Coyne, Dr Amy Healy and Dr Julianne Stack and all at the Research and Graduate School for their support in coordinating the viva process for all of the DECPsy students,. To Michelle Glasheen for psychometric support and Mary Collins and the MIREC committee who support the ethical approval process.

The EPISE Department also celebrated its first ever PhD *viva voce*. Dr Louise Curtin, under the supervision of Dr Margaret Egan, successfully defended her research to Prof Michael Shevlin, TCD and Dr Kevin Cahill, UCC. Well done to Louise and Margaret!



Pictured at graduation in October, the 2021 graduates:

From left to right: Dr Eibhín Ryan, Dr Hollie Hayes, Dr Aoife Cassidy, Dr Saoirse MacCarthaigh, Dr Hannah Browne, Dr Lisa Moran, Dr Claire Donnelly

## Graduation Celebrations 2021

We were delighted that the achievements of both the DECPsy 2020 and 2021 graduates were recognised at this year's conferring ceremony in October, following the disappointment of last year.

Graduation from the DECPsy in the midst of a pandemic is a testament to the resolve, hard work, creativity and commitment of all of our graduates, and we hope that you enjoyed a well-deserved celebration with your family and friends to mark your achievements in obtaining the highest academic qualification in the land.

Thanks to Brendan for representing the group on submissions to the college regarding the group's wish to celebrate on campus.



Well done to:

(From left to right) Dr Brendan Delaney, Dr Katie Curtin, Dr Aoife Lalor, Dr Deirdre Egan, Dr Niamh Moore, Dr Eoin Harte and Dr Roisin Hogan.

Congratulations also to Dr Emma Hilliard (absent from photo), Dr Fiona O'Brien and Dr Elaine McCarthy (recognised in absentia).

## Nature-based Retreat

The DECPsy Team hosted a group of DECPsy Year 3s on a nature-based morning retreat at *An Maidrin Rua Nature Connection School* in Nenagh last August. The focus of the retreat was self-care and peer support. Trainees reported an enhanced commitment to self-care and peer support in a follow-up evaluation.

The team also hosted a nature-based ‘*Meet n’Greet*’ for the new Year 1 cohort which afforded the new group the opportunity to meet in a less formal setting than on-campus orientation day.



Pictured at the nature-based retreat were:

(Back row left to right) Eoin Hassett, Alison McFadden, Sarah O’Shea, Dr Keeley White.

(Front row, left to right:) Evie the dog, Dr Therese Brophy, Dr Aoife McLoughlin, Maria Holland, Kate O’Brien, Ronan Cunningham, Caoimhe McCarthy, Sophie Gallagher, Liz Lane.

## DECPsy Personal News



Congratulations to Cathy O'Shea and her husband, Colin on the arrival of baby Bowie back in April

Congratulations to Dr Lisa Moran and Dr Claire Donnelly who both got engaged last summer.

Congratulations also to DECPsy Year 3, Lydia Mannion and her new husband Richard on their recent wedding day.

Well done to Lydia on planning and organising a wedding in the midst of the DECPsy workload, very impressive!



## Where are they now??

We caught up with a number of our graduates, who let us know what life is like post-DECPsy!

### 2019 Graduate News

Dr. Orla Murphy got in touch to say that she is keeping busy and really enjoying her work as an EP. Orla says 'I am now working with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in the Ennis office since November 2020. Also, I recently published a research paper based on my Doctorate thesis with Learn: The Journal of the Irish Learning Support Association'.

### 2020 Graduate News

Dr Emma Hilliard is working with the HSE North Kildare Children's Disability Network Team.

Dr Aoife Lalor is currently working across both the North and South Kerry Intervention & Disability services

Dr Eoin Harte started working on the school age team at St Gabriel's Centre, Dooradoyle, Limerick in September 2020. Eoin says 'While it's not the same as Cork, life in Limerick is going well and hoping to have more options for enjoying the weekends and free time very soon! Sending my very best wishes to all the DECPsy lecturers and current students.'



Dr Therese Brophy, Dr Eoin Harte, Dr John Perry pictured post-graduation ceremony in October.

Dr Fiona O'Brien is working as a psychologist in NEPS in the Dublin region.

### 2021 Graduate News

Dr Eileen Ryan has been appointed as a psychologist to Enable Ireland Nenagh.

## DECPsy Awards and Achievements

Congratulations to James Groarke, DECPsy Year 2, on being selected as the recipient of the 2021 MIC Postgraduate Studentship Award for his research into climate change anxiety among young people in Ireland.

Congratulations to Catriona Kennedy, DECPsy Year 2 who has been awarded research funding by An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) for her research into the experiences of young people with Down Syndrome in Gaelscoileanna.

Elaine O'Keefe was named the overall prize winner (postgraduate) for her presentation at the BPS NIBS Annual Conference back in April. Well done Elaine! Elaine was also awarded 2nd place in the elevator pitch presentation in the SRPRC 2021- Shannon Region Postgraduate Conference during the summer.



Elaine with her award.

Well done also to Maria Holland who presented the review component of her thesis at the Northern Ireland BPS conference on April 16th . The title was: A thematic review of barriers and facilitators to collaboration between NEPS psychologists, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Senior Leadership Teams in Irish post-primary schools.

## DECPsy Research Dissemination

The DECPsy is developing into a real hub of research activity. The trainees and the team have been involved in a broad range of conference presentations, poster presentations and publications. See just a sample below:

### Conferences:

- Browne, R., Brophy, T., & O’Sullivan, S. (2021, Nov). The perceptions of Irish school personnel of critical incident training and critical incident response from school psychological services and other agencies:an appreciative inquiry. In A. McLoughlin (Convener), *Promoting Wellbeing in Schools*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- Cunningham, R., & Farrelly, M. (2021, Nov). Exploring father engagement with disability services: The perceptions and experiences of fathers of children with and Intellectual disability/Developmental Delay. In K. White (Convener), *Facilitating Inclusion in Educational Psychology*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- Hassett, E., Brophy, T., & McLoughlin, A. (2021, Nov). Facilitating Inclusion in Educational Psychology. In K. White (Convener), *Facilitating Inclusion in Educational Psychology*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- Gallagher, S., O’Brien, T., & Scully, M. (2021, Nov). Perceptions of Refugee Youth on their Experiences of Education in Ireland. In A. McLoughlin (Convener), *Working with Diverse Populations in Irish Schools*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- Holland, M., & Fitzgerald, J. (2021, Nov). Barriers and facilitators to collaboration: Experiences of NEPS psychologists, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Senior leadership teams in Irish post-primary schools. In K. White (Convener), *Facilitating Inclusion in Educational Psychology*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- Lane, E., & Dunleavy, M. (2021, Nov). School Life following and Acquired Brain Injury: experiences of adolescents with ABI, their parents and teachings in the Irish context. In A. McLoughlin (Convener), *Working with Diverse Populations in Irish Schools*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- Mannion, L., Harmon, M., & O’Brien, T. (2021, Nov). Exploring the relationships between religiosity, religious coping, and psychological wellbeing amongst adolescents at the Senior Cycle level in Irish post-primary schools: An empirical enquiry. In A. McLoughlin (Convener), *Promoting Wellbeing in Schools*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- McCarthy, C., Egan, M., & White, K. (2021, Nov). “All singing off the same hymn sheet”?: An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Joint Work between School Psychologists and Primary School Staff to facilitate the inclusion of children with special educational needs in Ireland from 2015-2020. In K. White (Convener), *Facilitating Inclusion in Educational Psychology*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- McFadden, A., Tynan, F., & Perry, J. (2021, Nov). Promoting Wellbeing in Schools: Test Anxiety and the Effectiveness of a School-Based Intervention at Primary Level. In A. McLoughlin (Convener), *Promoting Wellbeing in Schools*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- O’Brien, K., Slattery, O., Bowles, R., & Kitching, N. (2021, Nov). An appreciative inquiry into coaches’ experiences of and perspective on including young people with autism in Irish community sporting organisations. In K. White (Convener), *Facilitating Inclusion in Educational Psychology*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.
- O’Shea, S., & Ambrose, L. (2021, Nov). The Effectiveness of Dialogic Reading Intervention on the Orla Language Skills of Students Attending DEIS Schools in Ireland. In A. McLoughlin (Convener), *Working with Diverse Populations in Irish Schools*, Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference 2021, Virtual.



O'Brien, K. (2021, April). Parent, Young People and Coaches' Perspectives on the Inclusion of Young People with Autism in Community Sport Organisations in Ireland. Poster presentation at the British Psychological Society's Virtual Conference on April 15th 2021

O'Brien, K. (2020, November). Parent, Young People and Coaches' Perspectives on the Inclusion of Young People with Autism in Community Sport Organisations in Ireland. Research presented at Sport Inclusion Ireland's Sport Inclusion & Disability Officer Virtual Network CPD Conference.

O'Brien, K. (2020, November). The Experience of Grief in Special Education: In-service Workshop regarding Support for Staff on Deterioration and Death of Students. Poster presentation at the Psychological Society of Ireland's Virtual Conference.

O'Keefe, E. and McLoughlin, A. (April, 2021). The Impacts of Autism Awareness Interventions on Secondary School Students' Attitudes toward students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Presented at British Psychological Society's Conference ,April 15th 2021 (virtual).

Raleigh, C., and McLoughlin, A., (April, 2021). The Age of Worry: Systematic Review of School-based CBT programmes for Adolescents with Social Anxiety. Presented at British Psychological Society's Conference ,April 15th 2021 (virtual).



Bohan, E., and McLoughlin, A., (April 2021). The Video to Recovery: The Effectiveness of Video Interactive Guidance Intervention in Improving Parental Mental Health Outcomes. Poster presented at British Psychological Society's Conference ,April 15th 2021 (virtual).

Holland, M., & Fitzgerald, J. (2021, April 16). A thematic review of barriers and facilitators to collaboration between NEPS psychologists, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Senior Leadership Teams in Irish post-primary schools. The British Psychological Society Northern Ireland Branch Annual Conference 2021.

Holland, M., & Fitzgerald, J. (2021, May 19). A thematic review of barriers and facilitators to collaboration between NEPS psychologists, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Senior Leadership Teams in Irish post-primary schools. Shannon Region Postgraduate Research Conference.

O'Keefe, E. (2021, May). 'Listening to the students: Inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Secondary Schools'. Paper presented at the Shannon Region Postgraduate Conference, Elevator Pitch Competition, Clare, Ireland. May 18th – 19th 2021.

O'Keefe, E. (2021, May). 'The Co-Occurrence of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gender Diversity'. Paper presented at the Shannon Region Postgraduate Conference, Clare, Ireland. May 18th – 19th 2021.

- Kennedy, C. & McLoughlin A. (in revision). Developing the Emergent Literacy Skills of English Language Learners through Dialogic Reading: A Systematic Review. *Early Childhood Education*
- Ryan, E. (2021). Utilising children's literature to foster emotional literacy and well-being [Conference Presentation]. 38th Annual Children's Literature Festival, Frostburg State University [University System of Maryland].
- Ryan, E. (2020). Conceptualising the “Voice of the Child” in educational psychology reports using the pyramid of participation [Conference Presentation]. NEPS National Business Meeting.
- Ryan, E. (2020). How do children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) attending special ASD classes make sense of themselves and their educational experiences? Child, parent and teacher insights [Conference presentation]. The Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Conference.

### **Publications:**

- Mac Cárthaigh, S. (2020). The effectiveness of interventions to reduce excessive mobile device usage among adolescents: A systematic review. *Neurology, Psychiatry and Brain Research*, 35, 29-37. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npbr.2019.11.002>.
- Mac Cárthaigh, S. Griffin, C., & Perry, J. (2020). The relationship between sleep and problematic smartphone use among adolescents: A systematic review. *Developmental Review*, 55C, 100897, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2020.100897>.
- O'Brien, K. & Gomes, M. (2021). Females with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Accurate Identification and Diagnosis of the Phenotype. *National Institute of Health Sciences Research Bulletin*, 8(4) 26-27.
- O'Brien, K.(2020). Inclusion of Adolescents with ASD in Community Sporting Clubs. In: Volkmar F. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Springer, New York, NY.
- O'Brien, K. & Gomes, M. (2020). The Experience of Grief in Special Education: Support for Staff on Deterioration and Death of Students. *Clinical Psychology Today*, 4(2), 59-76. Accessed from Microsoft Word - Clinical Psych Today Dec 2020 (wordpress.com)
- Ryan, E. & Hurst, H. (2021). “Bullying always seemed less complicated before I read”: Developing adolescents’ understanding of the complex social architecture of bullying through a YAL book club. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 55(4), 416-441.
- Ryan, E. (2020). John Hume: Reflecting on the life of a distinguished peacemaker through a developmental psychology lens. *The Irish Psychologist*, 40(4), 97-100.

You may also be interested to read a recent publication in *Research in the Teaching of English* from recent DECPsy graduate, Dr Eibhlín Ryan. The article, "*Bullying always seemed less complicated before I read*": *Developing Adolescents' Understanding of the Complex Social Architecture of Bullying through a YAL Book Club*", is available to read here: <https://library.ncte.org/journals/rte/issues/v55-4/31254>

This research study was conducted as part of Eibhlín's M.Ed. in Literacy Education in Frostburg State University [Maryland], under the Mary Immaculate College-Frostburg State University international scholarship. She and her M.Ed. supervisor, Dr. Heather Hurst, have presented this research at the 2019 International Literacy Association and American Educational Research Association annual conferences.