

Workforce Development

Alcohol & Other Drugs

Training & Education



September to December

2026

Build a Skilled, Confident & Compassionate Workforce

Frontline professionals face growing challenges including trauma, mental health issues, homelessness, family breakdown and substance-related harm on a daily basis. A need for practical, evidence-based training has never been greater in this rapidly changing world.

Our Workforce Development Alcohol & Other Drugs Training Prospectus (Q4 2026) equips multidisciplinary professionals with the knowledge, confidence and real-world skills to respond effectively to alcohol and drug-related issues. Grounded in a health-led, trauma-informed and harm reduction approach, the programme covers emerging drug trends, Motivational Interviewing, trauma-informed communication, hidden harm, family support, workforce resilience and much more.

As well as this programme we offer exclusive specialised 'in-service' training designed specifically for your workforce.

Designed for professionals across health, social care, education, housing, youth work, mental health and community services, this training strengthens frontline practice, enhances workforce wellbeing and helps create safer, healthier and more inclusive communities.

TO BOOK SCAN THE QR CODE



Or use this link

<https://forms.office.com/e/e6hdeVeCsh>

You can also call Christina on 0879369312

At a glance

COURSE	DATE	TIME	In person or online
Essential Group Facilitation skills in the context of alcohol and other drugs 2x full days	Thursday 3 rd September & Friday 4 th September	10 am - 4pm each day	in person Raddison Hotel Sligo
Inhale with caution: Understanding Vaping Risks	Tuesday 8 th September	2.30-4pm	online
Cocaine : A highly Addictive & Destructive Drug	Thursday 10 th September	2.30pm-4pm	online
Introduction to Motivational Interviewing Skills 2x full days	Wednesday 16 th & Thursday 17 th September	10am-4pm each day	in person Radisson Hotel Letterkenny
Drug Related Intimidation & Violence, Frontline Worker Training 1x full day	Thursday 28 th September	10am-4pm	in person Radisson Hotel Sligo
Drug Related Intimidation & Violence Brief Advisor Training ½ day	Thursday 1 st October	10am-1pm	in person Radisson Hotel Letterkenny
Ketamine: Illicit Use	Friday 2 nd October	2.30pm-3.30pm	online
Introduction to Motivational Interviewing Skills 2x full days	Wednesday 14 th & Thursday 15 th October	10am-4pm each day	in person Radisson Hotel Letterkenny

At a glance

COURSE	DATE	TIME	In person or online
Inhale with Caution : Understanding Vaping Risks	Friday 23 rd October	11.30am-1pm	online
Emerging: High Risk Drugs Supporting Frontline Workers	Wednesday 28 th October	2.30pm-4.30pm	online
Understanding addiction 4x 2 hr sessions	Wednesday evenings 4th,11th,18th,25 th November	6.30-8.30pm	in person Donegal ETB Port Road Letterkenny
Cannabis & Mental Health	Tuesday 10 th November	2.30pm-4pm	online
Drug Related intimidation & Violence Frontline Worker Training 1x full day	Friday 20 th November	10 am - 4pm	in person Radisson Hotel Letterkenny
Drug Related Intimidation & Violence Brief Advisor Training ½ day	Friday 27 th November	10 am -1pm	in person radisson Hotel Sligo
Emerging: High Risk Drugs Supporting Frontline Workers	Wednesday 2 nd December	2.30pm- 4.40pm	online
ketamine: Illicit Use	Thursday 10 th December	2.30pm- 3.30pm	online
Community Addiction Studies January -June 150 hrs	January 2027 commences Wednesday 13 th January in Letterkenny. Commences 14 th January in Sligo	6pm-9pm each week	Blended online & in person

Essential Group Facilitation Skills

in the context of alcohol & other drugs

2 days

This Essential Facilitation Skills training is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and confidence to effectively plan, lead, and evaluate clinical meetings and group discussions. The training will explore how to create safe, inclusive, and psychologically supportive environments by establishing clear objectives, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and upholding confidentiality. Participants will develop practical skills to manage group dynamics, hierarchy, conflict, and strong emotions while applying trauma-informed approaches to facilitation. The training will also cover effective methods for capturing actions and decisions, closing sessions with appropriate containment, recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns, and using reflection and feedback to continually enhance facilitation practice.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this training session, participants will be able to:

- Plan and structure clinical meetings/groups with clear outcomes
- Safety, confidentiality, boundaries and inclusion
- Manage group dynamics, hierarchy, conflict and strong emotion
- Apply trauma-informed, psychologically safe facilitation skills
- Capture actions/decisions clearly and close with containment
- Recognise and respond appropriately to risk/safeguarding escalation needs
- Evaluate and improve facilitation practice through reflection and feedback



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Inhale with Caution : Vaping

Online : Free of Charge

As the scientific and medical evidence builds on vaping, this session offers opportunity to examine the risks with vaping. The session is designed to increase awareness of the health risks associated with e-cigarette use and nicotine addiction. Participants will gain an understanding of current vaping trends, learn how to support informed decision-making, and explore practical approaches to discussing vaping with young people and adults in a supportive, non-judgemental way.

Learning Outcomes

- Describe what vaping is and identify the common substances found in e-cigarettes and vape products.
- Recognise the potential health risks and effects associated with vaping, including nicotine addiction.
- Understand the factors that influence vaping behaviours, particularly among young people.
- Discuss vaping-related concerns confidently using a supportive and non-judgemental approach.
- Identify appropriate sources of information, support, and cessation services for individuals who wish to stop vaping.



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COCAINE

A Highly Addictive & Destructive Drug

ONLINE : Free of charge

The use of cocaine is on the increase in Ireland. Cocaine is at record levels of production in the world. Like every other illegal drug it has side effects and risks. In light of the increase in the use of cocaine, this educational session will provide solid knowledge base on cocaine the effects, the risks. and cocaine addiction.

Learning Outcomes

- Explore common reasons people may use cocaine, including social, psychological, and environmental factors.
- Discuss the impact of cocaine use on relationships, employment, families, and communities.
- Explain the short-term and long-term physical, psychological, and social effects of cocaine use.
- Identify the signs and symptoms of cocaine use, intoxication, and withdrawal.
- Understand the risks associated with cocaine use, including dependency, mental health impacts, overdose, and polydrug use.



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Introduction to Motivational Interviewing

2 x full days

1n person : Free of charge

Course Content:

Motivational Interviewing is a psychosocial evidenced-based method of intervention in health behaviour change that works on facilitating and engaging intrinsic motivation within the client in order to change behavior. MI is a goal-oriented, client-centered counseling style for eliciting health behaviour change across a range of disciplines helping clients.

Learning outcomes

- Gain a good understanding of motivational interviewing and how it works.
- Critically reflect on personal values and belief systems.
- The art of conversation
- The four processes of MI
- Enhance MI practitioner skills.
- Spirit of MI.
- OARS and other tools for engagement.
- Ability to elicit and develop change talk.
- Respond to change / sustain talk.



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Drug Related Intimidation & Violence

Building Capacity to Respond to Drug-Related Intimidation and Violence

-Frontline Worker Training (Full day)

-Brief Advisor Training (Half day)

DRIVE (Drug Related Intimidation & Violence)

DRIVE is a national interagency project funded by the Department of Health that supports individuals, families, communities, and services affected by drug-related intimidation and violence in Ireland. The programme helps build the capacity of frontline services and communities through specialised training, practical resources, and signposting to local support services. Informed by lived experience and expert knowledge, DRIVE promotes a non-judgemental, trauma-informed approach, ensuring those affected can access appropriate support and information.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of DRIVE training, participants will be able to:

- Define drug-related intimidation and violence (DRIV) and understand its impact on individuals, families, and communities.
- Recognise the signs and indicators of drug-related intimidation and associated risks.
- Understand the effects of fear, shame, and stigma on help-seeking behaviour.
- Apply a compassionate, trauma-informed approach when supporting those affected by DRIV.
- Identify appropriate supports, referral pathways, and specialist services.
- Respond appropriately to disclosures while maintaining professional boundaries and confidentiality.
- Understand the role of frontline and community services in supporting those impacted by DRIV.
- Promote awareness and strengthen local responses to drug-related intimidation and violence.

DRIVE Frontline Worker Training (1 Day)

A one-day programme for professionals working in drug and alcohol, family support, and related services who support individuals experiencing drug-related intimidation and violence through key working, care planning, and case management.

DRIVE Brief Advisor Training (Half Day)

A half-day awareness programme for community-based staff and volunteers who may encounter individuals affected by drug-related intimidation and are able to provide information, support, and signposting to relevant services.

For more information, visit: <https://driveproject.ie/drive-training/>.

Ketamine : Illicit Use

1.5 hrs

Online : Free of Charge

This 1.5-hour training session provides participants with an overview of the illicit use of ketamine, an increasingly prevalent drug within recreational and nightlife settings. The session will explore what ketamine is, its effects on the body and mind, patterns of use, and the short- and long-term risks associated with misuse. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the impact of ketamine on individuals, families, and communities, while exploring harm reduction approaches, responding to concerns, and identifying appropriate support and referral pathways. The training aims to increase knowledge, reduce stigma, and support informed, evidence-based responses to ketamine use.

Learning Outcomes

- Describe what ketamine is and understand its legitimate medical uses and illicit uses.
- Recognise the signs, symptoms, and effects of ketamine use and intoxication.
- Understand the short- and long-term health risks associated with ketamine misuse.
- Identify patterns and trends in ketamine use and the factors that may contribute to use.
- Apply harm reduction principles when responding to individuals who use ketamine.
- Respond appropriately to concerns relating to ketamine use using a non-judgemental and supportive approach.
- Identify relevant support services, treatment options, and referral pathways for individuals affected by ketamine use.



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Emerging: High Risk Drugs

Supporting frontline workers

Online : Free of Charge

This training provides frontline practitioners with an up-to-date, practical understanding of emerging high-risk drugs, patterns of polydrug use, and the implications for overdose risk. The programme focuses on real-world trends across the Republic of Ireland, equipping participants with up to date knowledge and confidence to respond to drug use.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand why today's substances present increased and unpredictable harm.
- Differentiate between the short-term acute harms and the long-term physical and neurological impacts of these substances.
- Recognise the typical presentations and behaviours of individuals using these high-risk drugs.
- Comprehend how combining substances (alcohol, benzos, opioids, stimulants, prescriptions) increases toxicity and overdose risk.
- Describe the effects and risks associated with synthetic cannabinoids, street benzodiazepines, pressed pills, ketamine, and other dissociative drugs.
- Grasp the underpinning principles of Harm Reduction.



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Understanding Addiction

4 x sessions

In person : Free of charge

Understanding Addiction (4 x 2-Hour Sessions)

This is a four-session course that explores the causes and impact of addiction on individuals, families, and communities. Participants will gain an understanding of substance and behavioural addictions, and the factors that contribute to addiction and recovery pathways. The course promotes a compassionate, trauma-informed approach, helping participants recognise addiction, challenge stigma, and identify appropriate sources of support.

Learning Outcomes

- Define addiction and describe the factors that contribute to its development.
- Recognise the signs and impacts of substance and behavioural addictions.
- Understand the effects of addiction on individuals, families, and communities.
- Explain key stages of change and recovery and the barriers people may face.
- Use a compassionate, trauma-informed approach when supporting individuals affected by addiction.
- Challenge stigma and misconceptions associated with addiction.
- Identify appropriate support services and referral pathways for those seeking help.
- Reflect on their own attitudes and practice to enhance their understanding and response to addiction.



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Cannabis & Mental Health

online : Free of charge

Cannabis is one of the most commonly used psychoactive substances worldwide, and its effects on mental health can vary significantly depending on factors such as age, frequency of use, potency, and individual vulnerability. While some people report short-term benefits such as relaxation and reduced stress, regular or heavy cannabis use has been associated with increased risks of anxiety, depression, impaired cognition, dependence, and, in some individuals, psychosis. Young people and those with a personal or family history of mental health difficulties may be particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of cannabis. Understanding both the potential benefits and risks of cannabis use is essential for making informed decisions and promoting mental wellbeing

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the short-term and long-term effects of cannabis on mental health and wellbeing.
- Identify factors that increase an individual's vulnerability to cannabis-related mental health difficulties.
- Explain the relationship between cannabis use and conditions such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis.
- Recognise the signs and symptoms of problematic cannabis use and dependence.
- Evaluate the potential risks and perceived benefits of cannabis use using an evidence-informed approach.



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Community Addiction Studies

January 2027- June 2027 : Donegal & Sligo

Blended : in person and online

Community Addiction Studies is a QQI Level 5 accredited programme designed to provide learners with a broad understanding of addiction and its impact on individuals, families, and communities. The course explores the social, psychological, and biological factors associated with substance use and addictive behaviours, while examining the wider effects of addiction on families, relationships, and society.

Participants will study key theories of addiction, the role of trauma and hidden harm, the influence of media, gambling addiction, and the effects of a range of substances including cocaine, cannabis, ketamine, heroin, MDMA, novel psychoactive substances (NPS), and over-the-counter medications.

The programme also introduces brief psychosocial interventions and recovery-oriented approaches, equipping learners with practical knowledge and skills to support individuals affected by addiction and contribute to healthier, more informed, and resilient communities.

Topics covered

- Theories of addiction
- The family & the impact of problem substance use
- The media and addiction
- Brief psychosocial interventions
- Gambling addiction
- Drug types & effects: Cocaine , Cannabis, Ketamine, NPS, heroin, MDMA, OTCs etc.
- Hidden Harm / Trauma

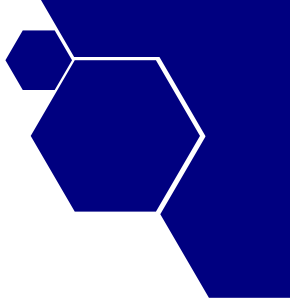


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Specialised in-service training

Investing in specialised in-service training is an excellent way to enhance staff knowledge, confidence, and professional practice within your organisation. We offer tailored training programmes designed to meet the specific needs of your team, delivered at a time and location that suits you.

Organisations with a minimum of 10 participants can book bespoke training sessions with Christina across a range of topics, ensuring staff receive relevant, practical, and evidence-based learning that can be applied directly to their roles.

In-service training provides a cost-effective opportunity to build skills, strengthen team capacity, and promote consistent, high-quality support and service delivery across your organisation.

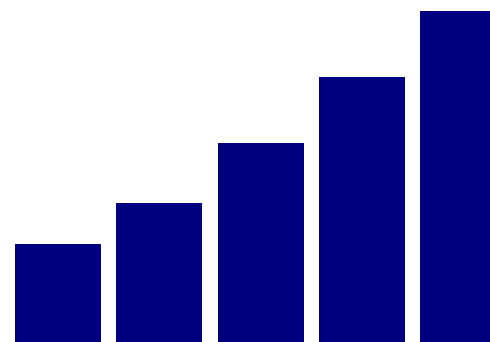
Contact: Christina to organise in-service training.



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Meet the trainer



CHRISTINA MURRAY-MCELENEY

CO-ORDINATOR

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

EDUCATION & TRAINING NW REGION

Christina Murray-McEleney BSc(hons);PGcert ;PGdip; ICF; AHPI. is an Educational Specialist in alcohol & other drugs. She is Coordinator of Training & Education in alcohol and other drugs for the NW region. Christina works in partnership with the NW Regional Drugs & Alcohol Task Force and the HSE.

Christina designs & delivers training and education to a wide range of medical, health and social care professionals, community workers and volunteers. She was course writer and teacher of the Foundation Degree in Responding to Alcohol & other Drugs for NW Regional College & University of Ulster and a course writer and teacher for the Masters in Therapeutic Interventions for Alcohol & other Drugs in ATU and coordinated the University of Limerick Diploma in Drug & Alcohol, Studies on an outreach in the NW region. Christina has guest lectured in Sligo ATU

She is a health promotion professional specialising in Health Promotion, Workplace Wellbeing, and general wellbeing. Christina the lead advocate on wellbeing for the Donegal ETB.

In her personal time she delivers short programmes for organisations in various wellbeing topics as part of her business called Live Well : Be Well. Christina has extensive experience in working in the private sector, public sector and the community sector.



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