The Irish Hospice Foundation

The Irish Hospice Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the hospice philosophy and supports the development of hospice care.

Our vision is that no one should have to face death without appropriate care and support. This includes support for families and loved ones, extending into bereavement.

The Irish Hospice Foundation runs a number of education and training programmes, primarily concerned with bereavement and loss.

Irish Hospice Foundation
Morrison Chambers
32 Nassau St, Dublin 2
www.hospice-foundation.ie

Tel: (01) 6793188
Fax: (01) 6730040
E-mail: maura.dunne@hospice-foundation.ie
Background

Loss, grief and bereavement have a significant impact on our development as human beings and through the life cycle. The understanding of bereavement is a cross-sectoral issue, spanning health, social services, education and voluntary sectors. Until recently, there have been no third-level programmes focussing on these issues. This programme (originally a Higher Diploma) had its first intake of students in 2004. It was designed to meet a number of needs, specifically gaps in formal knowledge relating to the support of bereaved individuals and a lack of bereavement infrastructure and training in Ireland. This education programme equips palliative care and health and social-care professionals from varied disciplines with the theoretical knowledge and practical skill to develop appropriate responses to bereavement at individual, community and regional levels.

Course structure

The Irish Hospice Foundation and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland invite applications for this part-time programme. The programme is a two year MSc course (with the choice of exiting with a Postgraduate Diploma after one year).

Invitations are invited from representatives of a wide range of professional disciplines whose work or volunteering roles involve the provision or organisation of bereavement support services.
Aims and Objectives of the Programme

The Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Bereavement Studies aims to promote the development of a bereavement support infrastructure in Ireland which is evidence-based, sensitive to Irish culture, to the range of grief reactions experienced by individuals and which acknowledges the fundamentally normal context of loss. The programme aims to promote competent, sensitive and ethical practice in bereavement care in Ireland and to support researchers and practitioners in their efforts to apply research findings to practice.

Course Details

This is a part-time course. Successful completion of six modules will result in the award of Postgraduate Diploma Bereavement Studies. Completion of a further three modules in year two will result in the award of MSc Bereavement Studies. Each module consists of 250 hours of learning including lecture time, self-directed learning, course preparation, examination time, and supervision. The two year programme equates to 90 credits and it is devised to support Level 9 learning outcomes (National Framework of Qualifications).

Modules - Year I and II

M1: Theories and models of grief, bereavement and mourning (Year I)
The main emphasis will be on grief as a psychological and social phenomenon. Opportunity will be given to explore grief through the life cycle, paying particular attention to how theories of grief have evolved. Attention will also focus on how models have adapted and changed as empirical studies have challenged previously strongly held beliefs about the grief process.

M2: Bereavement Counselling (Year I)
This module provides a framework for bereavement counselling and a general understanding of pertinent issues. Course content will include; current research in the area, working with different populations and impact on self. Topics include personal experience of loss, models translating to practice, working with complicated and uncomplicated bereavement, counselling bereaved children, legal and ethical issues, working with difference and the role of support and supervision.

M3: Research - methods and appraisal (Year I)
The main approaches to research and methodology will be introduced – quantitative and qualitative. Research design and research methods will be studied in order to help participants to critically evaluate published research material. Participants will learn how to use technology to retrieve published literature. Research specific to bereavement will be explored and the contemporary sources identified.

M4: Perspectives on grief (Year I)
The objective of this module is to apply different lenses to examining grief – for example; sociological and cultural approaches; age and development; family and spirituality. This module explores some factors that may influence the experience of loss and the language we use to describe bereavement. It identifies dimensions across which individuals will differ, and it moves beyond a purely individual framework to explore grief.

Specific educational objectives:

- To provide students with theoretical understanding, skills, practice and knowledge of grief and grief support structures which may be applied in health, community and work organisations and in the voluntary sector.
- To develop core competencies in the application of grief theory and counselling skills in the context of loss and bereavement.
- To develop an understanding of different perspectives on loss and bereavement; including loss through the life cycle, family bereavement, cultural issues, gender issues, ethical issues.
- To examine the organisation of bereavement support and learn about the systematic development of bereavement support services.
- To develop an understanding of the importance of self-care and staff support in environments where people are consistently working with or meeting dying, death and bereavement.
- To develop skills in searching and critically analysing bereavement research.
- To develop research design capabilities in respect of a specific topic related to bereavement and/or loss, while considering the ethical implications of research in this area.
- To exercise theory, practice and research skill and knowledge through developing changes in work practices relative to an area of bereavement care.
- To exercise theory, practice and research skill and knowledge through developing teaching portfolios.
- To reflect on personal development and personal growth through the educational experience.
M5: Systems of Bereavement Support (Year I)
This module sets out to identify the principles and practice underlying a range of community and health-service based bereavement support systems. Bereavement support structures will be described and an attempt made to uncover dimensions of quality in practice. The module includes a discussion and forum on standards in bereavement care – drawing from UK Bereavement Care Standards Project.

M6: Self care and caring for carers (Year I)
The aim of this module is to provide a theoretical and experiential basis for the development of self and staff care programmes. The module will examine individual and organizational influences on health of carers – in work or volunteering roles. An introduction to the concepts of stress, burnout and compassion fatigue will be explored alongside the emotional dynamics of working with people who are facing and dealing with significant losses. Important organisational processes such as team work and conflict management are included. A mindfulness based stress reduction course is incorporated.

M7: Advanced Research Methods (Year II)
This module aims to equip students with skills to develop and execute a research piece focusing on an aspect of bereavement or loss. The advanced module builds on research and critical appraisal skills developed through the research module from Year One. Students will prepare a research proposal including literature, research design, ethics, data collection, analysis, timeframe and costing considerations.

M8: Education and teaching in grief and bereavement (Year II)
This module sets out to prepare course participants to understand the principles of death and bereavement education, to locate information and teaching resources and to become local training resources.

M9: Structuring Bereavement Support (Year II)
This module takes a change management approach to identifying a gap in current bereavement care in the participant’s setting and identifying a plan for development and action.

Assessment
A range of assessment methods will be applied as outlined in the table below. These include written coursework in the form of critical book review, case study, literature review, care plan and examination, research proposal, work plan and preparation of a teaching portfolio. One assignment will involve a group presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of Module</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Marks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theories and models of grief, bereavement and mourning</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Assignment, critical review of book</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling for bereavement and loss</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Assignment, case study</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives on grief</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Written examination</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems of bereavement support</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Assignment, Group presentation and exam question</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods and appraisal</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Assignment, literature review</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-care and caring for carers</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Assignment, Care plan(s)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced research</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating about bereavement and loss</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Teaching plan and portfolio</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring bereavement support</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Work project</td>
<td>100</td>
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Pass Mark
A candidate must obtain 50% in each module.
Honours Standard

a) Postgraduate Diploma (Year One)
   For distinction standard a candidate must achieve a minimum average of 65% of the total mark with all grades achieved on the first submission (i.e. a distinction may not be achieved if any single assignment was resubmitted).

b) MSc Bereavement Studies (Year Two)
   Awards may be made at First Class Honours, Second Class Honours Grade 1, Second Class Honours Grade 2, or Pass.

To be eligible for such an award at Pass or Honours level, a candidate must satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme, and pass examinations in accordance with these regulations.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>First Class Honours</th>
<th>A candidate must achieve a minimum average of 70% of the total mark.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Second Class Honours Grade 1</td>
<td>A candidate must achieve a minimum average of 65% of the total mark.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Class Honours Grade 2</td>
<td>A candidate must achieve a minimum average of 60% of the total mark.</td>
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An award at Honours classification may not be considered unless the candidate has passed all examinations at the first attempt.

Compensation
Compensation between subjects will not apply.

Accreditation
The course is convened by the Irish Hospice Foundation and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. It is accredited by the National University of Ireland.

Admission Requirements
The candidate must fulfil the NUI entry requirements or be eligible for matriculation.

The candidate is required to hold a primary degree or equivalent in any subject (each candidate’s application will be considered on an individual basis) or a professional qualification in relevant fields with significant work experience and responsibilities.

Time Commitment
The programme runs from September 2011. Classes for Year One are held every Wednesday from 1.30pm to 6.00pm. There are six Saturday sessions in Year One. No classes are scheduled in July or August. Participants are expected to attend all sessions and to devote time to the self-directed learning and assignments associated with the programme.

While contact hours or lectures make up 30 hours per module, this course is designed relative to the NQAI and ECT systems. A guideline of 250 student hours per module to include course work preparation, self-directed learning and reading is suggested although individual students may vary in the time commitment required.

Staffing
The programme will be directed by the professional staff of the Irish Hospice Foundation with core modules and inputs from the academic, hospice, and community sectors in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Application and selection procedure
Applicants MUST APPLY ON-LINE. Applications can be accessed and completed on the RCSI website through the following link: www.rcsi.ie/bereavement. Applications will be processed through the Irish Hospice Foundation and final selection may be based on interview. Closing date for application is Friday May 6, 2011.

Participants
Participants on the course will reflect a range of disciplines from clinical and non-clinical backgrounds – e.g. nurses, social workers, teachers and community, voluntary and statutory personnel.

Fees

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<th>Year 1 Fees:</th>
<th>Year 2 Fees:</th>
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<tr>
<td>€3,300</td>
<td>€4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>+€200 Booking fee</td>
<td>+€200 Booking fee</td>
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Annual fees may be paid in two installments. A non-refundable booking fee of €200 must accompany your acceptance of the place on each year of the programme. The first installment of fees must be paid prior to Registration. Cheques should be made payable to The Irish Hospice Foundation. Fees are eligible for tax relief.
Location

All classes, tutorials and seminars will be held at the training rooms of the Irish Hospice Foundation, 4th Floor, Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2.

The Irish Hospice Foundation also houses the Thérèse Brady library, a specialist Library for a niche collection of bereavement books, journals and resources.

Application Information

ONLY ON-LINE APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED: www.rcsi.ie/bereavement

For general enquiries contact:

Maura Dunne
Education Administrator
Irish Hospice Foundation, 4th Floor, Morrison Chambers,
32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 6793188 Fax: (01) 6730040
e-mail: maura.dunne@hospice-foundation.ie
website: www.hospice-foundation.ie

Course content enquiries:

Enquiries on course content to

Orla Keegan
Course Director,
Irish Hospice Foundation,
32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2.

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www.rcsi.ie/bereavement