

SILENT VOICES

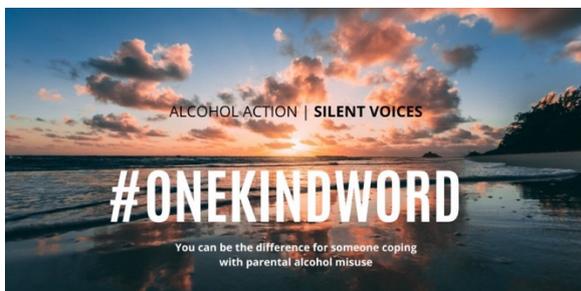
An Occasional Newsletter: April 2020

Many thanks for your interest in Silent Voices – an Alcohol Action Ireland initiative to end the silence of the impact of parental alcohol misuse in Ireland. Welcome to our latest occasional newsletter.

COVID-19 Issues

We are acutely aware of the issues around alcohol and the Covid-19 emergency. We know that there are children affected by parental alcohol misuse who are now suddenly cut off from sources of support such as school, sport, clubs, friends etc and find themselves in homes with parents/guardians who may also be under stress and using alcohol as a coping mechanism. We are pointing to online resources in our social media posts and hope these may be of interest to you. For more information see:

<https://alcoholireland.ie/silent-voices/resources/>



We have been using the stories from our [Shared Voices](#) to highlight the value of *One Kind Voice* in a social media campaign to encourage people to reach out to children and parents who might be under particular stress at this time. We have also been working with other children's organisations to spread the word.

Children's Rights Alliance meeting

We participated in a meeting with members of the Children's Rights Alliance to raise issues around the needs of children affected by parental alcohol misuse during the Covid-19 crisis. These points were fed through to the National Advisory Council for Children and Young People and in a letter to An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar.

Teachers

Alcohol Action Ireland (AAI) recently met with the Irish National Teachers Organisation, INTO, about a training programme for primary school teachers on Parental Alcohol Misuse. They are seeking approval from the Department of Education for a programme on Adverse Childhood Experiences using parental alcohol misuse as an example. AAI will provide input to the content. This is planned for July 2020 to be delivered online.

Therapists

Following meetings with Irish Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists and Addiction Counsellors of Ireland there was agreement to provide CPD for therapists on



issues around parental alcohol misuse. This was originally proposed for a date in June but is now postponed because of Covid19.

We made contact with a new HSE service which is being developed – [Crisis Text Line](#) to highlight the need for supervisors to have training/experience around parental alcohol misuse issues.

www.crisistextline.ie

Schools and police partnership project: *Operation Encompass*

Operation Encompass is a UK based initiative which directly connects the police with schools to ensure better outcomes for children who are subject or witness to police-attended incidents of domestic abuse. Rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short-, medium- and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

The Chair of Alcohol Action Ireland and a Founding Voice of Silent Voices, Carol Fawsitt, met with the founders of Operation Encompass, David and Elisabeth Carney-Haworth, in Bristol, to explore viable options for this project in Ireland.

Carol also met with Detective Chief Superintendent Declan Daly, head of the Garda National Protective Services Bureau who had previously commissioned the audit report by Geoffrey Shannon of cases where the Gardai removed children from their homes in emergency cases. He expressed interest in Operation Encompass and asked for further updates.

A meeting with Bernard Gloster, CEO Tusla is planned in May and we will raise Operation Encompass and other issues with him.

Remembering Norah Gibbons

All of us at Alcohol Action Ireland are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our former colleague and friend, Norah Gibbons. Norah made a vital contribution to the development of our organisation over the course of many years serving as a director and chairperson. She had welcomed and supported the emergence of the Silent Voices initiative.

Easter

Finally, we are very aware that for many people the approach of a holiday period can bring to the fore anxieties and memories from difficult times. You might like to listen in to a talk on our [Pathways to Recovery](#) section from one of our Founding Voices – Barbara Whelan and therapist Dr Katie Baird discussing how psychotherapy, mindfulness and compassion focused therapy can be helpful for those who have grown up with parental alcohol misuse.

Very best wishes

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