

Aisling
centre

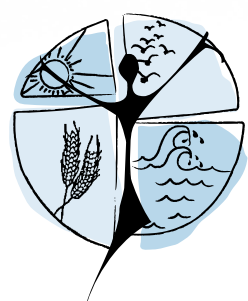
Hope Healing Growth



Celebrating 35 Years

Annual Report
2024 – 2025

www.theaislingcentre.com



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***“Aisling Centre
provides an
invaluable service,
and I am so
thankful for it.”***



Chairperson's Foreword

As I sit down to write my final annual report as Chairperson and Director of Aisling Centre, I do so with feelings of pride and nostalgia. I have been a Director/Trustee of the Board for 25 years and regretfully it is past time for me to step down and make way for new energy. Aisling Centre is a wonderful charity, that has transformed countless lives and I am both proud and humbled that I have played a small part in that journey.

As the many people who work in and attend Aisling Centre will know endings are not always easy and I will miss the many wonderful people I have worked with over the years; both in the Centre and out in the community, together we have faced sad times and hard times as well as good times and some laughs along the way. Thank you all.

Aisling Centre has changed in many ways over the past 25 years, both the building and the service and has grown and developed but always at pace and with care to ensure that the founding ethos endures. I have huge respect for the founding members of Aisling Centre and applaud their vision, wisdom and courage and their commitment to serve the whole community regardless of, or perhaps because of, the on-going 'troubles' that were a constant part of our daily lives 35 years ago.

Aisling Centre has embodied resilience and adaptability in the face of unprecedented change over the last 25 years. The Covid-19 pandemic immediately comes to mind where challenges were met by adapting to remote working. It was a contrast to our normal practice, but feedback afterwards from clients was overwhelmingly positive and we were so relieved, it exceeded all our expectations. We were absolutely delighted that we were able to provide an uninterrupted service in the circumstances. The entire team (directors and staff) were amazing as they managed and adjusted to this transition while dealing with the impact of the pandemic in their own lives.

In the early years talking about mental health or counselling was a huge taboo in our community and the inspirational idea of a coffee shop attached to the Centre, (independently run) allowed people to access services incognito before making the decision to come through the adjoining door into the body of the Centre, to ask for help. For some it may have taken two or three visits before they had the courage to go through, but it offered them time and space to do it.

Over the years Aisling Centre continued to work in facilitating the dialogue around mental health through workshops, support groups, special events and complementary therapies thus breaking down this stigma and providing a path for the subject to be openly discussed. A unique example of this is exemplified in our annual HHG event (Hope, Healing and Growth) which I, like many look forward to every year. It provides a unique platform for keynote speakers to share their personal journeys, connecting people and giving them courage to speak about their own issues, further inspiring them to lead fuller lives. Also, our annual Cuilcagh trek to mark World Suicide Prevention Day, it has been humbling and inspirational to be present and walk alongside people.

As a small but significant rural mental health charity Aisling Centre has experienced the highs and lows of the sector brought about by difficult economic climates and policy change. Demand for our services has steadily increased and the current environment is particularly challenging.

Despite all of the many challenges and changes the one thing that remains steadfast since its inception is the core values and ethos of the Aisling Centre with "Hope Healing and

Growth" the precious thread that brings it all together.

Volunteers remain at the heart of our work and it was my great honour to accept the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in November 2022, on behalf of all our volunteers, from Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, the Viscount Brookeborough KG. I also had the pleasure of attending the Queen's Garden party at Buckingham



Palace the following year when restrictions were eased. Sadly, attendance at the presentation was very limited in numbers due to Covid restrictions.

We are deeply indebted to our funders, many who have supported our work over decades. These funds are supplemented by our own vibrant fund-raising committee's activities. I have always been amazed by the generosity of the local community in raising funds for us and supporting us in any way they can. You contribute immeasurably to the work of Aisling Centre. The staff remain the backbone of the organisation, their loyalty, dedication and professionalism over the years embody the standards of Aisling Centre. My sincere thanks our current management team, John Bennett, Clinical Lead and Patricia Kelly Admin and Facilities Manager for their sterling work and in particular, Bridie Sweeney, Service Director who has been my go-to person at times of challenges at the Centre and who has helped me navigate through these. I am deeply indebted to her.

One of the biggest highlights of my 25 years was the gifting of the Aisling Centre building to the charity in November 2022, by the Centre's original founders, the Sisters of Mercy. We were absolutely stunned by their generosity and humbled by the trust they placed in us. It was also a testament to the years of hard work and dedication by staff and volunteers. A lovely afternoon tea party with the Sisters in the coffee shop at Aisling Centre sealed the deal!

The memories of my work in Aisling Centre that I will always treasure happened when I was fundraising for the Centre. So many people stopped to say thank you and talk about how the Aisling Centre has transformed their lives or the life of someone they love. Hearing these stories is very moving and inspires us all to work harder to ensure the services continue.

It has been my privilege to volunteer at Aisling Centre along with a very diligent board of directors. Working through strategic plans, introducing succession planning and ensuring good governance have been just some of the many important responsibilities of the board. There has always been a great willingness and desire to help at both practical and governance levels. As new directors join the board, I wish them all continued progress and success.

I have always been very proud to be associated with Aisling Centre and its work in the community and it is with that same pride that I now relinquish my role as director knowing I am leaving this organisation in a stronger position with a very loyal, professional and dedicated team. I am looking forward to having a little extra time to enjoy my family and hobbies but I also hope this is not the end for me and Aisling Centre and look forward to continuing to support the work as a volunteer.

Alison

Service Director's Report



It is an absolute honour to prepare Aisling Centre's annual report in this, its 35th anniversary year. From humble beginnings the dream of Aisling Centre has grown into a respected and trusted local service. (A sample of the work we do is demonstrated in this report).

To mark this milestone year Aisling Centre held a coffee morning to pay tribute to the many volunteers, friends and the wider community who have supported the Centre over the last 35 years. So many great people who gave and continue to give so much of their time. Thank you, you are an essential part of the foundation on which Aisling Centre stands.

Establishing a Centre like 'Aisling' was a bold and innovative move back in 1990; who could have imagined how many people's lives it would help transform and, in some cases, even save. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the founding sisters Sr Mary, Sr Edel and the late Sr Helena.

Counselling may be a more familiar concept today that it was in 1990, but it is still not an easy option or a quick fix. Stepping through our door to attend counselling is not easy. We are always mindful of the courage it takes and the trust you place in us.

Sustaining a small, local mental health charity is not without its challenges. We live in difficult times; resources are ever stretched and sadly our services are needed now more than ever. I would like to thank our funders, local GPs and last but by no means least the local community. We could not do the work we do without your support.

Thanks also to our outstanding Board of Directors/ Trustees who show up with a smile and do whatever needs to be done. Thank you for your commitment and support. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead and welcome our newly appointed Trustees Denzil McDaniel and Enda Quinn who will be joining the Board in the autumn.

On a personal note, I am sorry to be saying goodbye to our chairperson Alison Annan who steps down from the Board this year. She is the last member of the initial Board I started working with in 2011. Over the years we have had a wonderful working relationship based on mutual respect, trust, genuine friendship and perhaps more importantly a shared appreciation of the founding ethos and vision of Aisling Centre. Thank you, Alison, for all you have done for Aisling Centre and for all your support, both professional and personal. You will be greatly missed.

As ever, I want to say thank you to all the hardworking team at Aisling Centre; our dedicated therapists who are the face of Aisling Centre, the admin team who do huge work quietly behind the scenes keeping everything flowing smoothly and to John (Clinical Lead) and Patricia (Manager) for the wonderful support you give us all. We were sorry to say goodbye to Indre Burns this year and wish her luck in her new job. We also look forward to welcoming Danielle Gallagher who will be joining our admin team later in the year.

It is my genuine belief that the continued sustainability of Aisling Centre lies firmly in its founding ethos of welcome and hospitality and its community development ethos which is reflected in the building blocks of hope, healing and growth. Aisling Centre was founded to support the people of Co Fermanagh and its surrounds who needed a safe space where they could speak and be heard. This mission lies at the heart of everything we do at Aisling Centre.

Bridie

Clinical Lead's Report

Some days, the world feels like it's shouting at us.

Turn on the radio in the morning and the first voice you hear is talking about another armed conflict, a political row, a humanitarian crisis. You hear about acts of violence, intolerance, abuse and prejudice, and an ever-growing polarisation of views.

Scroll your phone over a cup of coffee and there it is again — the same news, but with pictures. The faces change, but the tone rarely does.

You can ignore it for a while. You can turn the page, change the station, mute the phone. But after a time, it seeps in. It's like a slow leak — you don't notice it at first, and then one day you realise the floor is damp.

For some people, that damp patch meets other cracks already present. Life has its own way of being hard; an unfairly cruel life, illness, bereavement, a job that's gone, a relationship that's broken, worries about children or parents or simply how to pay the next bill. It all adds up. And sooner or later, it can leave you feeling like you're standing out in the rain with no coat, a feeling that often brings people to Aisling Centre.

They come with a story that's part their own life and part the global noise of the wider world. Sometimes they can name exactly what's wrong; but sometimes they just know they're not themselves; a knot in the stomach, nights without sleep, snapping at people they care about, drinking too much or shutting the door on company altogether.

And then, here, in a small room, they begin to talk. There's no magic in the room itself — it's a room much like any other — but it is a place where the phone is off, nobody interrupts, and what's said is respected and honoured with confidentiality and without shame or guilt. Slowly, a shape begins to form. You hear yourself say things you didn't realise you were carrying. You find a little space to breathe.

There is no single way through it. What helps one person might not help another, healing isn't a checklist of actions; it can be slow and painful. But having someone alongside you as you begin to make sense of what's been too much to carry alone, someone who helps you feel safe enough to be honest, without judgment or criticism, makes it possible and worthwhile.

The demand for that precious kind of time and space is as constant as the news, and in truth it has been for years. We can't see everyone as quickly as we'd like or as they would like us to see them, but we do our very best. And we couldn't do that without the people who make the Aisling Centre. Our admin team and volunteers, the first point of contact who make the initial call or visit a little less daunting. Our therapists, whose skill and care are matched only by their humanity. Our management and Board, who quietly and unseen keep the ship afloat.

But above all, our clients and the Fermanagh community, the people who trust us with their stories. Walking through the door and sitting down to speak takes more courage than most will ever know.

The truth is, we can't do much about the noise of the world. The headlines will keep coming. But here, we can offer a place where the volume is turned down, where the focus is on you, and where there is time to take a breath before you take the next step.

And that's what we will keep doing in the year ahead, whatever the news brings. Hope, healing, and growth — in that order, and at your pace.

John



Services

Counselling, Psychotherapy & Play Therapy

“The service I received from my therapist was amazing. I was hesitant to attend counselling at first and he managed to change my opinion completely. I was supported and heard”.

695 people attended counselling, with a total of 5314 sessions of counselling offered.

Adult Counselling Service

“This service is amazing. It feels very safe and not clinical at all. The building is beautiful and is so calm and serene. Very welcoming staff. No judgement, which is so important and is done so well at the Aisling Centre. Feels like people really care”

SOURCE OF REFERRALS	
Self	34%
GP	38%
Other Health Professionals	15%
Other Statutory Services	10%
Misc. other	3%

“Aisling Centre is a wonderful service/life-line for the many levels of distress/trauma people are experiencing”

“Sceptical that attending therapy could help”

James was referred for counselling, by his GP. This was suggested by his doctor, as he had found the last two months particularly difficult due to low mood and panic attacks. While this had been something which had affected him throughout his adult life, it had recently developed into him isolating himself from family and friends.

When James attended for the initial assessment, he was sceptical that attending therapy could help him. He felt that talking about feelings was not the “man thing to do” However even in that first session, where he shared a little of how he was feeling, he found a sense of what he termed “release”, just by being heard without judgement.

James had experienced a family bereavement. The breakup of his marriage, which caused him to be apart from his children, had greatly impacted him. There had also been suicidal loss within his family circle, and he struggled to make sense of this.

Life had become a real struggle he told me; he had become isolated within himself. He had once been sociable and enjoyed the social scene and the fun with others. He admitted to having experienced a panic attack when out and this now caused him great anxiety.

Sessions were difficult, James admitted. Exploring his relationship with his mother was a central focus. He found remembering the early years of his life traumatic. Anger was something with which he struggled, and as we explored this further, he began to see that a lot of this was related to his early childhood, where physical abuse had been the norm for him. He spoke also about sibling rivalry, school bullying and his sadness at the loss of his mother. He was able to recognise, though, that they had developed a very special relationship in later years: something which he was grateful for. This realisation thus helped him to heal past hurts and reach a level of acceptance.

James also explored the breakdown of his marriage and his relationships with his children. He admitted to behaviour which had impacted his family. He carried a sense of shame and guilt, he said: his children were so important to him and he had protected them and had been available to them as best he could. He was able to understand how much he was affected by the fear he felt regarding the hurt he had caused. Opening up, though painful, helped him foster a sense of healing and forgiveness for himself. It also enabled him to engage in conversations with his children, which had been cathartic for all of them, he told me.

James attended ten sessions. Though somewhat reluctant when engaging initially, he expressed a gratefulness for finding a new level of peace. For him a burden had lifted and though he still had episodes of anxiety he noticed an improvement in his confidence and a newfound purpose in life. He had learned techniques to aid relaxation, including breathing and mindfulness which had helped him to a calmer place, along with an acceptance of what he could and couldn't change.

Feedback

OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF THE SERVICE	
Excellent	95%
Good	4%
No Ans	1%

SUPPORT/SERVICE RECEIVED	
Excellent	95%
Good	4%
Fair	1%

LEVELS OF DISTRESS		
	Before	After
None	1%	19.5%
Mild	3%	55.5%
Moderate	25%	20.5%
High	70%	2.5%

OUTCOMES	
Feeling more positive about the future	96.5%
Identified improvement	94.5%

The Hidden Legacy of The Troubles

Jim (not his real name), in his mid-60s, was referred for counselling at Aisling Centre by his GP. He spoke to his doctor by telephone appointment, desperate for some help for his ongoing insomnia. His doctor wanted to prescribe him sleeping tablets, along with anti-depressants, but Jim refused. He told his doctor he was not depressed, as he'd suffered depression many years previously and this was not depression. He expressed his need to try something other than medication, so he was put on our waiting list for counselling.

Jim was a fit and healthy man, with a stable family life, a loving wife and had grown up children. He worked hard, was tired when it came to bedtime, but he just couldn't sleep. We explored his sleeping routine and patterns, we looked at his diet and lifestyle; in short, we left no stone unturned. Initially, the insomnia was a bit of a mystery; as the client had done lots of his own research, and had availed of holistic therapies privately. Jim didn't need psychoeducation; he was very self-aware. The approach I took was person-centred, focusing on the 'here and now', listening for clues in his words, looking for clues in his body language.

His life story was full of interesting events, some tragic, some painful, but mostly they were happy. Then he shared that one of his children had tried to take their own life within the last year. He got very emotional as he explained what had happened; how they were rescued and how they were doing now. Although it appears they got the right help at the time, he remained very worried about them, a parent's worst fear. While fully exploring this incident with Jim, he realised that he was afraid to go to sleep, that he was telling himself, “My child isn't safe, therefore it's not safe for me to go to sleep - I need to stay awake to keep them alive”. Until this moment in therapy, Jim hadn't realised that this event had impacted his insomnia so greatly.

The word 'safety' reappeared often in his words and feelings over the following weeks, with it being the main theme that was directly connected to his insomnia. The more he thought about it, the more memories surfaced from his past. He recalled an incident in childhood, where he had to leave home in his pyjamas, in the middle of the night, not knowing what was going on and being very afraid. This was during 'The Troubles': “there were soldiers with guns outside” he said, “Mum took me away to a neighbours' house”. He remembered being too scared to sleep in his own bed as a child after this incident. Night-time didn't feel safe after that, even now, in his mid-60s.

This is what counselling aims to achieve, opening up a feeling, opening up a thought, shining some light on it, exploring it in a safe way, in a safe place. Jim hadn't even remembered the childhood event until he investigated his insomnia. His child's attempt on their life brought up these childhood feelings of not feeling safe at night. The more Jim acknowledged his past, while making peace with his fears, he started to feel safer and was sleeping much better. The best way to deal with fear is, of course, to face it head on: as Carl Jung said, “what we resist, persists”. Jim also had a conversation with his child about his feelings, which helped them both feel safer. Jim used affirmations throughout his counselling, to re-establish his conscious thoughts and feelings.

Evaluation Feedback

What worked well?

Client feedback was overwhelmingly positive about the service they received. They focused on the welcome and feeling of being safe, heard and supported.

"I cannot say enough positive things around the service and help I have received. It provided support when I was at the lowest point in my life AND helped me work through anxiety, stress and despair. I have been so thankful for this amazing service"

"My therapist is one in a million in her approach and help. Is something I will appreciate always. Cannot recommend the service enough"

The Welcome Received

"Very positive experience, very friendly staff making you very welcome. Very positive atmosphere"

"The location, staff all very helpful"

"Facilities are good, comfortable and easy to access"

"Everything here. Everyone was welcoming and easy to talk to."

"Welcoming atmosphere. Felt very welcomed and at ease with my therapist"

"It was quiet and no waiting"

"Brilliantly accommodating staff, such an open and safe space"

The Safe Space

"You have created a safe, calm environment with professional staff to help heal"

"A safe and calm environment in a good location"

"Consistent service with weekly appointments"

"Felt accepted I could be myself"

"I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Aisling Centre for providing me with this safe space to explore my feelings and emotions. I have benefitted greatly from the service and can happily report I am in a much better place psychologically and emotionally. I will be forever indebted to the service. Thank you"

So much change in her life

Claire was struggling with the shift of being at home with her first baby, and after a few weeks was finding that the gnawing anxiety was building, rather than going away when she tried to ignore it. Her health visitor had noticed she was often a bit shaky and nervous, and asked about whether she was feeling anxious or depressed. She

suggested Claire try counselling and helped her put a referral in for the Aisling Centre, passing on some resources for her to use while she waited, and suggesting that she also see her GP.

When she got her first appointment, she'd adjusted a bit better to the shock of so much change in her life, which now felt pretty unrecognisable compared to before she had her baby. It was tricky to get a babysitter to come to the appointment, and part of her really didn't want to go.

But the first session was gentler and more reassuring than she thought it would be. It felt a huge relief to be able to tell someone how much she was struggling with the exhaustion and constant worries. She felt overwhelmed by her thoughts and unable to switch off, even when she had some help or the chance to sleep.

The counselling didn't change the day-to-day of what it was like to look after a young baby, but Claire felt so relieved that she wasn't judged for not loving every moment of it. She worried she was a bad mother for not liking it and had experienced family members questioning her choices anytime she described things as hard. Her counsellor allowed her to say that things were tough. She helped Claire to recognise how to interrupt and reframe the thoughts that piled on extra worries, borrowed worries from the future, or were overly critical of her.

She gradually learned to speak to herself more gently, to be good company for herself in those lonelier moments late at night, and with her counsellor's support, she practised how to ask for help from the more supportive people around her.

The Professional Service

"Excellent service with a skilled counsellor with great empathy. We are so lucky to have this service in our area"

"Good environment, friendly yet professional staff, really felt listened to"

"I felt I was listened to, I felt what I was saying and feeling were not dismissed and it allowed me to hold space for those feelings"

"My therapist was approachable, professional and it was evident she is passionate about her field of work. Support given was consistent and effective. Thank you"

"Being face to face. Regular, weekly appointments – the routine of that"

"Having another perspective on my internal thoughts,

someone to rationalise how my brain works, learning how to control anxious thought, the tools to help me remain present and calm my mind during negative experiences"

"The atmosphere and the professionalism of the counsellor"

"Being listened to without judgement"

"Consistency, feeling safe, not judged, easy to talk about dark times"

"I felt like I was in a place whereby I could be open and honest about my situation without feeling judged. I was provided with strategies and resources to deal with my emotions which I find most helpful"

"One to one, no judgement, welcoming atmosphere. Asking questions and helping to understand"

"Was easy to be open and share thoughts and feelings"

"A very safe space to say anything and not feel judged"

"I could just be myself and feel no judgement. Offered confidentiality"

"Lovely place – tranquil surroundings. Excellent counsellor. Felt very relaxed from first visit"

Help When Needed

"I'm just glad there was help when I needed it during the most troubled time I was going through"

"I was really struggling before I came to Aisling Centre. Having the counselling available to me has not only been beneficial for the short term but also [provided] tools for the long term which I will use. It's a wonderful service and would recommend the Aisling Centre"

"I came for help with depression, flashbacks and general negative thinking. With gentle and clear explanations, my counsellor brought me through a very difficult time"

"I had a difficult spell, but with my therapists support I was able to remain positive and work through everything"

"I had my counselling sessions at a particularly difficult time and without the sessions I really don't know how I would have managed. Thank you"

The benefits of having attending counselling

"It has made such a difference to my life. I feel I have grown, and my confidence has increased so much. I feel happy and positive"

"I am grateful that the service is here, and it helped me a lot. By coming here every week has taken me out from a dark place. I really thank for that. I find a hope to live now"

"Have done counselling many times but have to say this is the biggest breakthrough, going forward feeling more positive and more accepting of the past. Thank you"

"My therapist has given me coping mechanisms that I will carry for life. Can't thank her enough"

"It encouraged me to try new things. Learned positive ways of coping"

"I found this most helpful – it gave me another perspective on life and what has happened in the past. I know I cannot change the past but instead accept it and learn from my experience to rebuild my future"

"Thank you for providing this life-changing service. It means so much and brings so much healing"

Jane - Empowered and Confident

Jane, a middled aged woman, came to therapy due to experiencing much stress and anxiety in her life. She was also having issues in her marriage which had been continuing for some time, and she was eager to learn new ways of dealing with these difficulties in her life. She wanted to be free from the physical symptoms the anxiety was causing her, such as the rapid breathing, sweating, nausea/stomach upset, feeling dizzy/ lightheaded at times, and experiencing a tightness or pain in her chest. All this was causing her significant concern and worry.

In the first few weeks she discussed the difficulties she had living with her husband, who has an addiction problem. She spoke about the resentment and bitterness she felt towards him because of these issues. She spoke of the fear and anxiety she had around his threats of no longer wanting to live at times, especially after some of his drinking binges, and how she felt helpless within the situation.

We looked at Jane's situation and her way of thinking. She had lot of self-deprecating judgements about herself. These thoughts were having a damaging impact on her frame of mind and self-confidence. We worked on her self-critical thinking and on increasing self-compassion. This work focused on learning to identify negative and self-critical thoughts; assessing the honesty of these thoughts; and developing more sensible and helpful ways of thinking. Jane soon realised that she had been constantly criticising herself, even for things that had nothing to do with her, and that talking to herself in this way was not very compassionate or caring. We looked at her daily routine and

how/what she could do to improve her quality of life as she lives in this atmosphere. She learned how anxiety can have disturbing effects on how we think and feel. She also learned how anxious thoughts typically involve a fear of something bad happening, and how, when we are anxious, we tend to see the world as a frightening and unsafe place. Understanding that the issue with thinking and acting as if there is danger, when in fact there is no real danger, helped Jane to recognise why she was experiencing these feelings of anxiety and stress.

During these discussions Jane allowed herself to be vulnerable and authentic about her true feelings. At times this was very painful and difficult, as she had never been able to do this before or even thought that she could do it, as she had been raised in a very strict environment where she and her siblings were not encouraged to talk about their feelings; the approach in their home was to 'put up and shut up'. In being able to have the safe space to be herself, Jane found this to be a very powerful and awakening experience.

So, in creating a more balanced and kinder way of thinking and doing more for herself, she began to focus on what she could do, rather than trying to control what her husband was doing, and her mind-set improved greatly. In learning new ways of managing stressful situations like paying attention to how she spoke to herself, identifying thoughts that lead to the anxiety, and assessing and challenging her way of thinking along with mindfulness, deep breathing techniques, and some energy healing etc. Finally Jane felt more empowered and confident in herself that she had the skills and information to manage the anxiety and stress and therefore was very pleased with her experience of therapy.

Areas for Improvement

While for some clients their counselling appointments were timely others felt the wait for an appointment was lengthy. Unfortunately, this is very much impacted by resources available.

Some clients suggested that it would have been nice to have a cup of tea or a glass of water in the waiting area.

General Feedback

"I am very grateful for the service provided for me by the Aisling Centre. These services without any doubt in my mind saves lives especially in a region that is desperately neglected and underfunded in terms of mental health services. I'd like to thank the Aisling Centre and my therapist for the help I was provided with."

"We are extremely privileged to have this service in our area – it is a fantastic facility"

"My therapist has been extremely helpful in my journey with grief and life, I have learned so many techniques from her and ways to cope and keep my mind still and present during challenging times"

"My counsellor was just brilliant. She was able to really understand me and support me through some very painful memories. The tone of her voice was so warm and kind. This is the first time I have ever really understood the impact of trauma and how to take care of myself"

"I had an excellent counsellor. For the first time in my life, I opened up about myself and my experience. His approach and kindness, his caring nature helped me immensely. I left each session feeling better than I went in"

"This has been a great service to me personally. My counsellor was extremely professional and very understanding"

Play Therapy Service

"Since going to play therapy in the Aisling Centre, I feel more happy and I worry less"

55 children attended counselling through play therapy, 27 girls and 28 boys.

Play Therapy Referrals

Source of referral	
Parent	42%
GP/NHS	11%
School	20%
C&V Sector	20%
Other	7%
Main Presentations	
Bereavement	40%
Family Separation	42%
Multiple Loss	18%

Child Feedback

"The situation is pretty good with mum and dad now and I am getting to see mum"

"I feel good about my family now and have been able to share things better"

"I feel more confident, relaxed and happy. I will never forget how good the Aisling Centre and play therapy were to me :)"

"My anxiety has gone down. Don't feel sad or angry now"

"Coming to play therapy has helped me with my sad and anxious feelings, as I've been able to talk to someone"

Parent Feedback

"I feel that my child benefitted the most having the calming atmosphere and enjoyed the thoughts of coming in to see her therapist to chat and play games. Therapist has been excellent throughout"

"It allowed us and our child to talk freely of our grief in a confidential and non-discriminating setting. There is nothing I would change - everything was perfect for us"

"First and foremost, the play therapy my daughter was fortunate enough to avail of via the Aisling Centre, provided her with a safe place to openly talk about her trauma, grief and anxieties. For the first time in almost 3 years, she was able to cry - it was not only a huge relief and release for her, but also myself as her parent"

"Fantastic support, very accommodating with dates, time etc. Everyone very welcoming and friendly, especially for children"

Aaron - You Listened to Me

Aaron is a nine-year-old boy who lives with his mum and step-family. Aaron was referred to the service because his parents are separated and he has no contact with his dad. He has been finding this hard to deal with, often displaying very angry behaviours when talking about it. Prior to the beginning of therapy, Aaron's mum had explained that substance abuse and law breaking behaviours, amongst other things, had led to Aaron's dad's absence.

At the initial session with his mummy present, Aaron entered the playroom in a very angry and defensive manner, stating that he didn't think he needed to be there and that I was only going to tell him 'lies like everyone else'. After explaining my role to Aaron, how I was here to support him in whatever way is best for him, which I would know from truly listening to him, his behaviour changed, responding to me in a softer manner

and talking about what he was experiencing. There were a few times when he would appear angry again and voice his suspicions that I was going to 'be like everyone', but as I validated his feelings, allowing him the space to appropriately release his anger, he began to react positively to what he referred to as 'someone actually listening' to him.

During Aaron's time in therapy, his lack of understanding about his daddy's absence was very apparent, creating a lack of trust in people around him, feeling let down and betrayed, and using anger as a means of defence and attack. After a few times of complaining about people not answering his questions and not telling him the truth, I invited him to make a list of what he wanted to know and offered to bring the list to his mother's attention. This resulted in his mum and stepdad attending a session where Aaron got his questions answered at an age-appropriate level, truthful reasons for his dad's absence.

Prior to this Aaron had been blaming his mum and stepdad for his dad's absence, believing there was a conspiracy to keep his daddy away. His actions towards them were very hostile, especially the stepdad. As his therapy continued both Aaron and his mum were reporting that his behaviours at home had changed significantly for the better. Aaron naturally has a lot of information and emotions to process in relation to his dad, which is going to take time, but this knowledge has improved family relationships as he now feels listened to and has been provided with the answers he longed for. His mum reported that Aaron and his stepdad have spent more time together and it has been very positive. She believed this to be because Aaron had stopped blaming them for his father's disappearance.

At the end of therapy, Aaron agreed that family life was better because he thought 'they' were trying to keep him away from his dad but now knows they were just trying to stop him from getting hurt. When I asked him if and how did therapy help, he said, *"if I hadn't come here, I wouldn't know about my daddy. I kept asking the same questions and no one answered them and then, finally, you listened to me."*

Well-Being & Life Learning Services

This was a busy year with everything from structured programmes to on-line videos and outdoor activities and group sessions with over 1100 people benefitting from the range of well-being programmes on offer from Aisling Centre.

Complementary Therapy

77 people (mostly victims/survivors of the NI Troubles) benefitted from 360 CT sessions with our therapist Sheila.

"Treatments helped me get out of the house. I am a carer so find it difficult to leave, this gave me an hour to relax. Uplift my mood"

"Absolutely delightful. Peaceful and quite world outside the door. Felt safe in the calm environment. Time out for me"

"Very relaxing and informative, slept better after a treatment and had more energy"

"I feel more quiet in myself mentally, I am more at peace"

"Absolutely amazing, sleeping better, feel uplifted"

"Great Job, felt really good after treatments, the relaxation helps my on-going condition"

"The treatments were wonderful, I feel alive again, they give me a great lift, very thankful"

"Very relaxing, got a good sleep after treatment. Feel less stressed and more positive"

Mindfulness Meditation Drop-In

Siobhan continued the monthly mindfulness drop-in sessions. These are open to everyone aged 17+ and can be a taster session for people new to mindfulness or an opportunity to come together with others and develop your mindfulness meditation practice.

"Another wonderful mindfulness session. Thank you, Siobhan, and Aisling Centre"

"Absolutely wonderful and serene! Thank you"

Self-Care Sessions

Self-care sessions with a focus on managing anxiety continued. The programme designed by Holly offers care for tired bodies and busy minds, with practical techniques, and guided relaxation sessions.

100% of attendees described the programme as excellent, giving them skills and techniques that they could incorporate into their daily lives to help improve their own mental health and wellbeing.

"Found the session very relaxing and the handouts very helpful"

"Holly is an excellent facilitator and creates such a relaxed environment. This is a practical course which allows you to incorporate tools into your daily life going forward. Thank you"

"Thank you for providing such an excellent, worthwhile programme"

"The tips given have left me feeling more able to cope"

"Understood better how to look after myself/ physically and emotionally, exercises, techniques, activities together. Able to enjoy life better and manage my conditions better"

Well-Being Wednesdays

This was the second year for Aisling Centre to run an outdoor summer well-being programme. We were delighted to once again work with National Trust Fermanagh as well as add an extra dimension by working with Row the Erne. A weekly programme of activities was put in place which was fully embraced by participants outdoors and feedback was wholly positive.

"Beautiful experience, lovely meeting new like-minded people. Beautiful views which we don't appreciate enough. Thank you"

"Brilliant class. Really enjoyed it in beautiful surroundings"

"Lovely, energising afternoon. Fully recommend it"

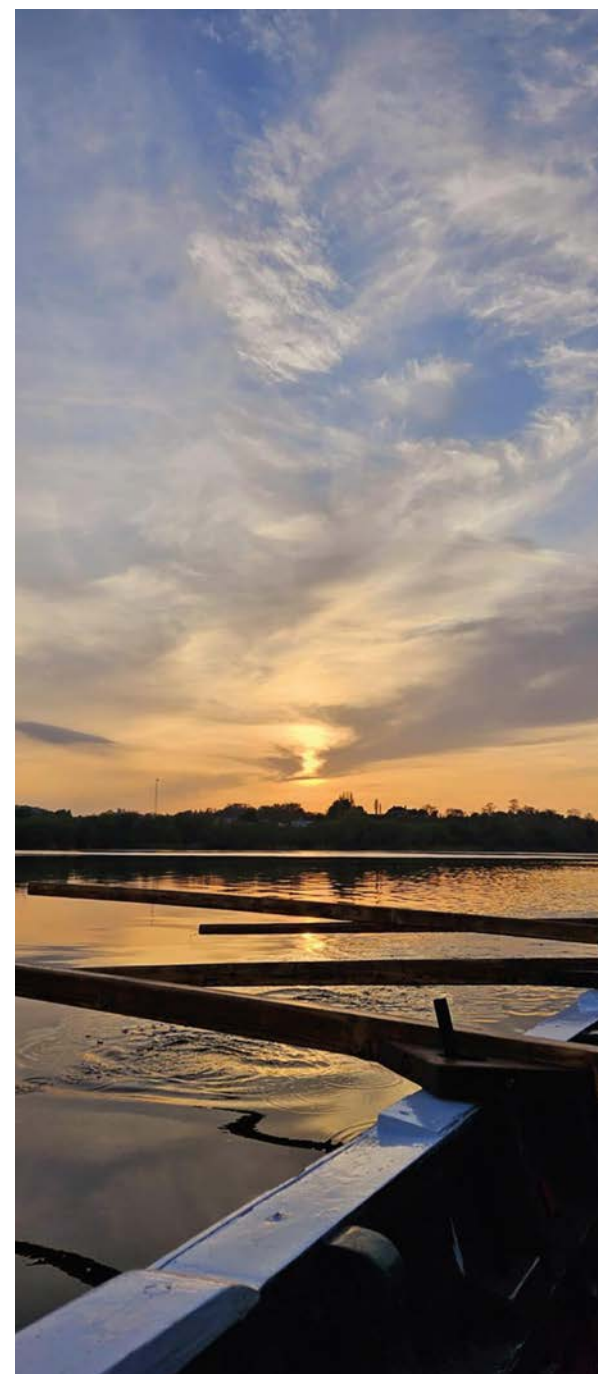
"Really enjoyed the class. So lovely to switch off. A wonderfully pleasant teacher also. A+, thank you"

Row The Erne

"Great morning. Great craic. Very well organised. Definitely recommend anyone to try this"

"Such a lovely way to spend a Sunday morning out on the lough with great friends. Well worth doing, will be back again for another trip"

"Great morning out. Would highly recommend it"



Mindfulness Meditation

"Wonderful morning spent in lovely company. Led by Siobhan who was fantastic – so want to do this again".

"Lovely experience. Time apart from a busy life".

"Eye opening experience to appreciate nature. Moving meditation to enjoy stillness. Would highly recommend it".

"A beautiful way to reset".

"Thank you, Siobhan, for the beautiful mindfulness. Truly relaxing and calming".

"To breathe and recognise the breath is living in the moment".

Mindful Nature Walks

"A lovely walk even on a soggy day! Relaxing and informative"

"Loved it. Learned a lot of new things in beautiful surroundings. Rain didn't dampen our spirits"

"Very interesting and informative walk. Relaxing"

Yoga

"Thank you kindly, Holly, that was so beautiful. I loved the tree connection"

"Such a lovely session. So relaxing and energising with stunning views. Genny, our instructor, is brilliant. Thank you"

"Swooping swallows. Lovely sunshine. Relaxing yoga. Perfect"

"The yoga at Florencecourt was just lovely. Very relaxing in a beautiful setting. Thank you"



Forget Me Not

Bereaved by Suicide Support Group

'Forget Me Not' Bereaved By Suicide Support Group is facilitated by two Aisling Centre therapists. The support group meets monthly on the first Monday of the month for 1½ to 2 hours.

This is an open group with notice of the meetings being posted on Aisling Centre social media however, information about the group is mostly shared by word of mouth on a personal basis or by recommendation with those who might benefit from attending.

The format is semi-formal. Each evening begins with a 'check-in' that helps everyone get a sense how each other is as they arrive and allows both new and past attendees to introduce themselves. A gentle reminder is always given of the group guidelines in place, which helps keep the group a space where everyone can feel comfortable and safe.

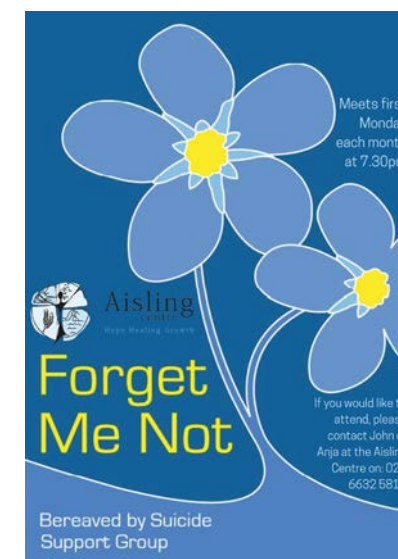
While the conversation is not limited to a particular topic, the facilitators will, normally introduce a theme at the start of the evening by way of a psycho educational input and following that and, within the agreed boundaries, each person is free to participate to the extent, and in a way that they feel they want to, on that particular evening.

The group does not meet over the summer months but, we try to provide an opportunity for anyone who is free to meet in an outdoor setting where we can have a different experience of being together and sharing experiences.

On the last Sunday in November, we hold a Tree of Lights ceremony. The content of the ceremony, in terms of readings and reflections, is selected by the group. This is a very important event in Aisling Centre's calendar, creating a space and a time to remember loved ones who have died.

After the event, the "tree of lights" itself is put in a widow overlooking the street and remains lit up during opening hours over the Christmas season.

2026 Dates: 2nd Feb, 2nd March, 6th April, 4th May, 1st June, 7th Sept, 5th Oct, 2nd Nov.



Tree Of Lights

3pm, Sunday 30th November 2025

A quiet space to remember a loved one lost to suicide. A space of welcome where your loss whether recent or long past is acknowledged

Never Lose Hope

Hope Healing Growth 2025



"The overarching theme of the day was "never lose hope" even in the face of the most difficult challenges. The speakers shared their experiences with courage and generosity and common themes emerged of support pillars of love, hope and faith that continue to help them on their journeys. They also spoke of the importance of community and connection and being open to receiving the help which is out there" reflected Aideen McGinley.

Joining the meeting virtually, Aisling Centre Patron Adrian Dunbar, noted that the turn of the year can be a difficult time for many. He spoke about the importance of coming together in community with hope and his hope that the event would help people through challenging times.

Geoff Hill, author of "How to be Happy, A Self-Help Guide for Baffled Gentle Folk", spoke of the love and support of family and friends and how that had helped him through some of his darkest days. He also noted the importance of recognising that his depression was an illness and understanding how that manifests. Geoff had some tips for well-being including a reminder that we have the power to choose how we react to situations, and he encouraged practising gratitude and choosing happiness.



Founder of the charity Angel Eyes, Sara McCracken, spoke about her quest to become well informed about the vision impairment her premature twins were born with; and how she had actively sought professional help and the support of other parents in a similar situation. Through her tenacity and the hard work of Angel Eyes, the charity has developed numerous initiatives to improve outcomes and offer hope for visually impaired children and their families.

Alan Currans spoke about his voyage around Ireland and Scotland to raise funds for Aisling Centre in memory of dear departed friends. He spoke about the importance of being heard and encouraged anyone who might be struggling with their mental health to 'ask for help'.



"Everyone has the right to grieve and to grieve in their own way," said Geraldine Mullan whose life changed forever in a split second in August 2020 following a car accident which took the life of her husband John and her two children, Tomás (14) and Amelia (6). She talked about how she had reached out for physical, psychological and spiritual support and, how hope, love and her faith helped in getting her through. She spoke of family and friends who had 'held her hand' and helped her through some of her most difficult days and stressed the importance of love advising: "tell the people you love that you love them". Geraldine also talked about the support she had received from the community and how she was fundraising in memory of her family and donating that money to local charities as a way of saying thanks and giving back.

Local woman Shelly Cowan, talked about her experience of ME and how it continues to impact on her life. She spoke of dark days and lost youth and how she turned that into something positive by using her lived experience to help improve the lives of people with disabilities. Shelly talked about her groundbreaking work with access for all and the fantastic work of Inclusive Futures, a not-for-profit organisation which delivers a programme of social

and cultural activities and events in safe, inclusive and accessible environments.

Danny Quigley spoke of the death, by suicide, of his much-loved dad. His father's death has taught Danny "not to rush through life" that it is important to go at his own pace, and that sometimes it is ok to put himself first. He also learned that people are there for you when you are not able to be there for yourself as well as the importance of gratitude and remaining hopeful. He spoke about his phenomenal fundraising endeavors and reminded us that "what you are seeing on the outside might not be what's happening on the inside". Danny's tips for self-care if you feel your mood dipping include getting out in nature, along with remembering the importance of good nutrition and hydration.

CJ's Rainbow Charity was set up by CJ's family to celebrate his short life and support the many groups that had supported him in life. Niamh McCann, CJ's mum, spoke of her precious boy and the joy he brought into their lives. CJ's passing at 21 months

from an aggressive form of childhood brain cancer left his family devastated. For Niamh faith, hope and love helped and continued to help her through difficult times. Niamh emphasised that "time is the greatest gift we have and too precious to waste." She encouraged everyone to 'choose joy' even in difficult situations, and shared precious videos of CJ's life showing the joy his short time with them brought to his family. She stressed the importance of finding the light in the dark, celebrating the "little wins" and prioritising self-care.

The day ended with some drumming led by Aidan Dunphy who talked about wellness in rhythm and meditative benefits of drumming. This was so enjoyed, by both speakers and audiences, that an impromptu drumming session took place after the event finished for the day.



THANK YOU to our event sponsors

- ▶ Encirc Local glass manufacturers
- ▶ Belmore Court Motel
- ▶ SW College Crest Centre

Thanks also to

June Clarke Reflexology, Loaf Pottery and Belleek Living who donated raffle prizes.

Aisling Centre volunteers who as always went above and beyond to ensure everything went smoothly.

Save the Date!

Hope is Here

Saturday 10th January 2026

Michael Harding – Midwinter, a journey through a season

Margaret Gallagher – Off the grid but still plugged in

William Sayers – In A Split Second

Claire Bowes – One Chance in Life

Fiacre O'Donnell – Putting People First

Cathy Magowan – The Importance of Caregiving

Ciara and John Murray – Strength Through Support

Emer Maguire - Hope is Here - Autism and Me

4th Annual Cuilcagh Dawn Trek

World Suicide Prevention Day 2024



Aisling Centre's 4th Annual Cuilcagh Mountain Dawn Trek to mark World Suicide Prevention Day took place on Saturday 7th September 2024 at 7am.

This annual trek has become a very important event in the Aisling Centre calendar. Sadly, suicide has touched many and coming together as a community to promote World Suicide Prevention Day is important. The trek gives people a chance to come together with family, friends and other like-minded people in a supportive and awe-inspiring space. The post-walk breakfast and banter adding to the sense of a supportive community.

"Thank you all for a fantastic morning, competently and sensitively delivered to mark this important day for so many touched by suicide"

People have travelled from all parts of the island of Ireland to take part in this annual trek. They have reported finding the scenic wilderness of the mountain and the breath-taking views of the surrounding lowlands soothing to experience.

"Had a wonderful morning and thought the whole event very well organised and a lovely chance for people to come together"

People choose to do the trek for many different reasons. Some may come to remember a loved one, others as part of their own journey of healing, some may enjoy the challenge, while yet others will attend to show solidarity and support for people who are struggling with their mental health. For everyone it is an act of self-care, an opportunity to connect and ground themselves, all while enjoying the many physical and mental health benefits of being out in nature.



"The trek was a great experience for me as it was my first year doing it. I would love to make it an annual event. I thought the trek was really well organised"

World Suicide Prevention Day, which first started in 2003, is observed across the globe on 10th September annually. It aims to start a conversation about suicide and promote a worldwide message of Hope. The theme identified for 2024 – 2026 is 'Changing the Narrative on Suicide; Start the Conversation'. This calls for us to bring empathy, understanding and compassion to our conversations to help challenge the lingering stigma around suicide and to support individuals to find the help they need.

Aisling Centre hope that organising this event will encourage people who may be considering ending their lives to talk to someone and to remind them that there is help available. Helplines Lifeline (0808 808 8000) and Samaritans (116 123) are available 24/7. You can also talk to your GP and Aisling Centre (028 66 325811) is open Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.



Treasurer's Report 2024-2025



This is my second year as Treasurer and I continue to be impressed by the ongoing support for Aisling Centre which will allow our free service to continue. A recent client comment stated, "Not having to worry about affording private therapy was lifesaving for me". Feedback like this reinforces the reason why finance is always a key area of focus for the Board; it also encourages everyone involved in the running and upkeep of the Centre to continue to thrive as we focus on scrutiny of costs. We have also established a working group to review the sustainability of Aisling Centre over the next 10 years.

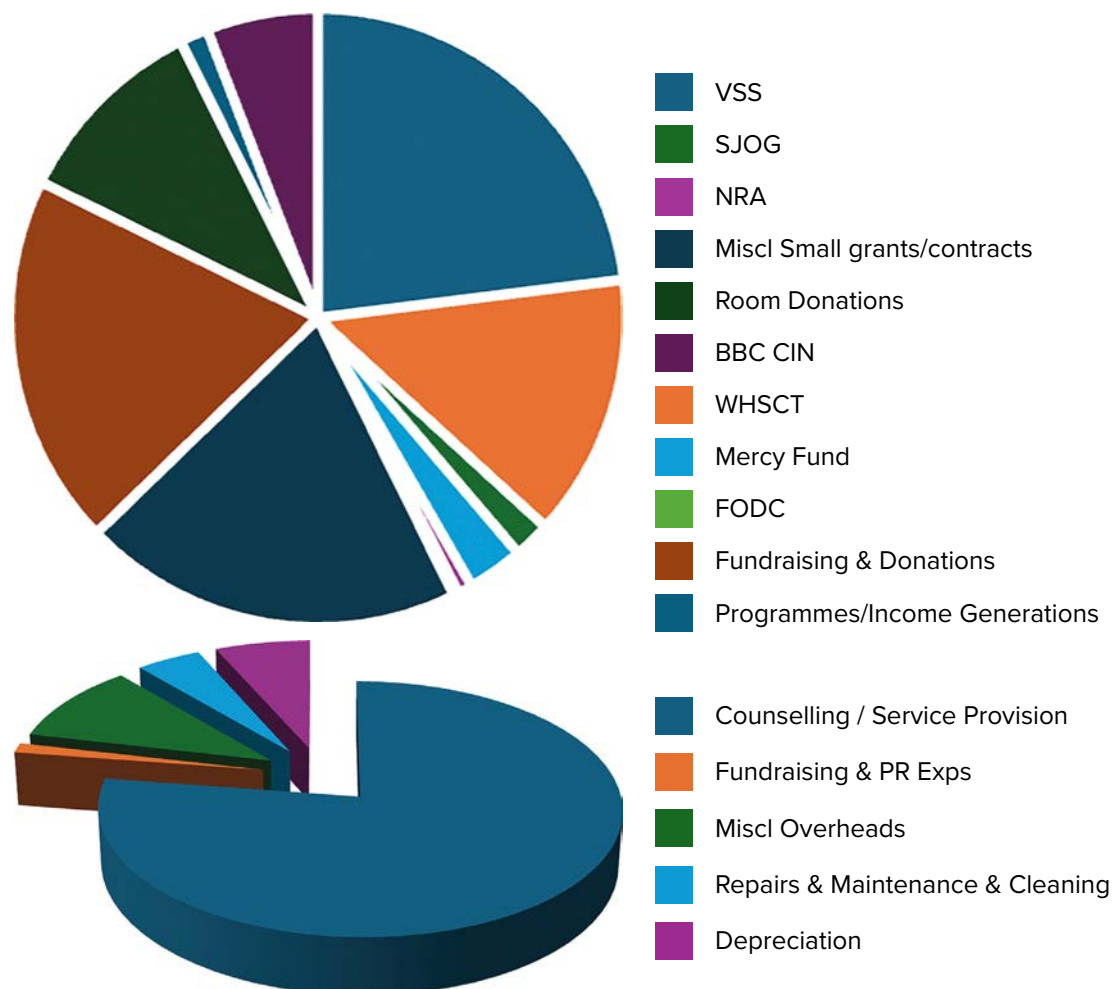
The chart demonstrates the financial income we have received this financial year from a range of funders, fundraising and personal and public donations. I would like to highlight the significant fundraising which has helped to bridge the deficit in funding income received this financial year. Fundraising activity is essential to continue to provide our services and this year we received valuable funds from a wide range of events hosted across the County which also contribute to raising awareness of the services available at Aisling Centre.

In summary, the financial year 2024 was a period of ongoing growth which allowed Aisling Centre to continue to support the Fermanagh community and neighbouring surrounding areas through our counselling, psychotherapy and wellbeing services.

Monica

"Aisling Centre brought so much hope and light to my life. I am so grateful for the service of all involved in its running and upkeep"

Income / Expenditure Breakdown



Funder Acknowledgements

Thank you to all our funders. Your on-going commitment to the work of Aisling Centre is vital in enabling us to do the work we do.

"Fermanagh is so fortunate to have this service and facility available to all! Thank you."



Give the Gift of Hope

Charity Gift Cards

A Gift of Hope

_____ has gifted _____
to Aisling Centre on behalf of _____

This gift will be used to support a local person, who may be in distress or despair, through our free, confidential and professional counselling service

When you purchase an Aisling Centre Gift Card you are Giving the Gift of Hope. Your gift will be used to provide counselling to a local person who is dealing with difficult times in their life and may be in great distress or despair. In purchasing an Aisling Centre Gift Card, you are buying an ethical and sustainable gift.

You can select from our range of greeting cards, all of which are printed on sustainably sourced paper and depict a beautiful original piece of artwork by a local artist, and if framed, would make a lovely print for any wall.

Some of the ways your gift can help: £10 will provide art supplies for a child coping with loss to use in Play Therapy, £30 will provide crisis support for one person, £100 will help one person receive much needed counselling.

The beauty of this gift is that any amount, no matter how small or large your gift, combined with other donations, will contribute to helping someone in need of support.

Aisling Centre Gift of Hope Cards make a wonderful alternative and sustainable gift idea which will be received with delight while also helping local people find hope and healing. Aisling Centre gift cards are suitable for any occasion and are available to buy all year round. To purchase your gift card email info@theaislingcentre.com or contact the Centre by telephone (028 66 325811) or in person.

100% of your donations is used to support our free, professional and confidential counselling and well-being service.



Community Support



Fundraising





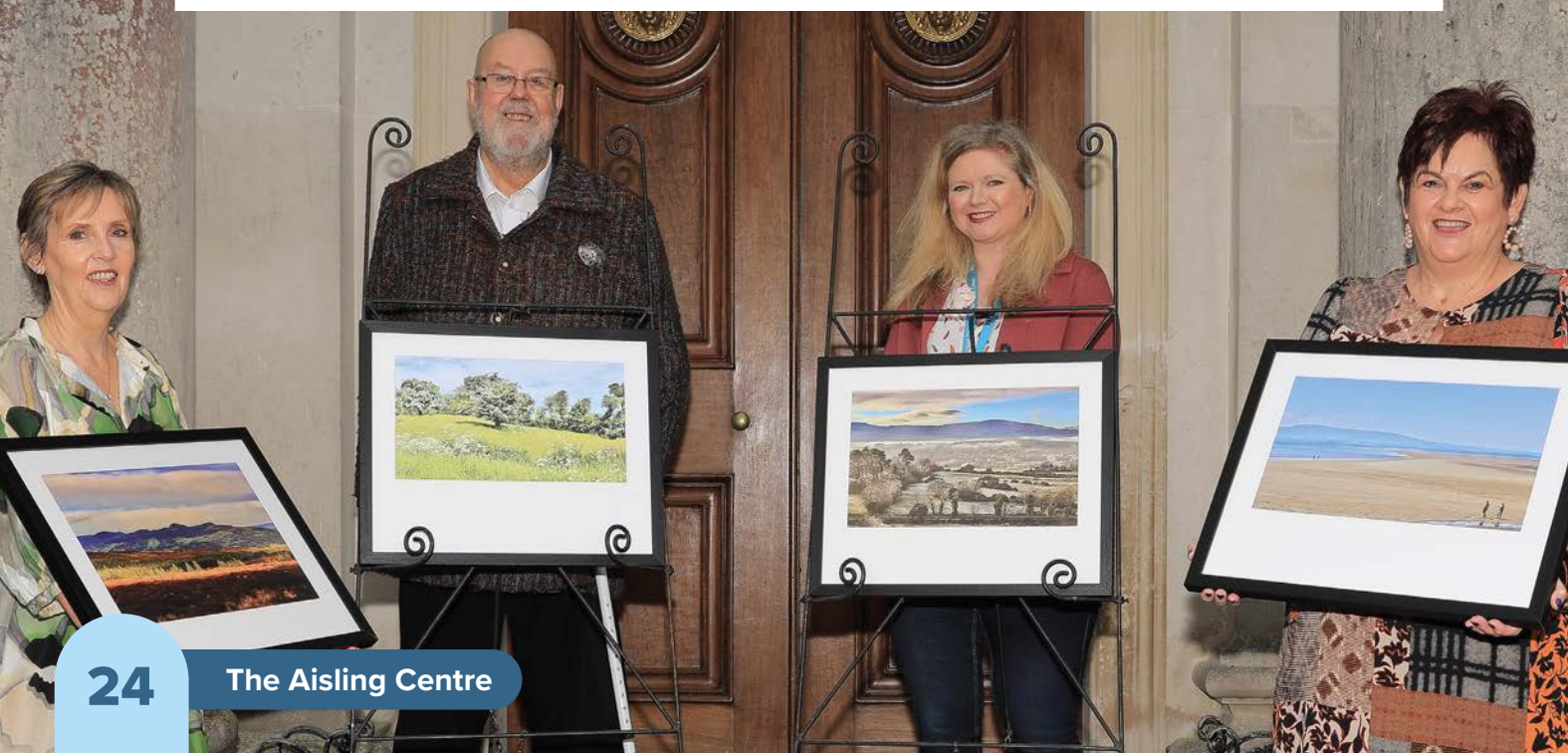
The Four Seasons

A Unique opportunity to purchase limited edition, signed photographic prints by Richard Pierce. This would be the perfect gift and 100% of the proceeds go to support counselling services in Aisling Centre.

ON SALE AT AISLING CENTRE

Large mounted prints (A3) - £60 / Set of 4 £200.

Small mounted prints (A4) - £40 / Set of 4 £150.



Celebrating 35 years of Aisling Centre

Alison Annan, Our Charity Champion

Congratulations to our fantastic Chairperson Alison Annan
Who has been shorted listed for the Charity Champion of the Year 2025
Well-deserved recognition for her commitment to the work of Aisling Centre

Alison joined the Aisling Centre Board as a young mother with a teenage daughter and a full-time job, yet from the outset, she was a diligent worker who has given 25 years of dedicated voluntary service to the charity; something truly extraordinary in today's world.

Charity Champions are there through good times and bad times; they are people who do what needs to be done; work that is rarely glamorous and often goes unnoticed. Alison is that person. Always there when needed, always willing to do whatever needs to be done from cleaning windows to hosting the dignitaries who occasionally visit the Centre.

But more than that, Alison is committed to the vision, ethos and mission of Aisling Centre. She is a true mental health ambassador working tirelessly to raise awareness and reduce the enduring stigma around mental health while helping people receive the support they needed when they needed it.

Sustaining a small local charity like Aisling Centre for 35 years is an on-going challenge. Alison has often been the person who put her shoulder to the wheel motivating others to ensure that Aisling Centre was able to continue its essential and life-saving work through difficult financial times.

Her commitment was never more obvious than during the covid pandemic where Alison came in and

worked alongside staff to ensure that Aisling Centre was able to continue its work during lockdown, helping to provide some consistency and stability for the local community in a time of great fear and uncertainty. With social distancing and no desk space available she literally sat on the floor for hours doing what needed to be done to ensure that Aisling Centre's vital and lifesaving work could continue through lockdown and beyond.

Alison has a deep respect for the religious sisters who founded Aisling Centre, and they hold her in equally high regard, each finding the other committed to the founding ethos of cross-community working.

No matter how busy Alison always makes herself available to support the staff team, willing to listen and help solve problems. She also gives her support and friendship to her colleagues on the Board encouraging everyone to achieve their potential in the role.

We are delighted that Alison has been recognised in the local community for the work she has done especially in this year as she steps down from her position on the Board of Directors.

"Alison will always be a winner in our eyes she is the absolute heart and soul of the Aisling Centre."

Thank you, Alison, you will be greatly missed by both your fellow directors and the staff team.



35 Years of Volunteering



Aisling Centre celebrates its 35th birthday this year (2025), a kind of miracle in itself. Remember, it started with a dream, no financial plan, no business plan. The dream was simple, to keep an open door and to help people, all people, who needed a listening ear.

So, when I look around at you, the volunteers of today, I see you joining a long line of men and women stretching all the way back to 1990. Volunteers have been at the heart of Aisling Centre from the very first day and there is no way Aisling could have survived the last 35 years without that help, your help.

Today gives us the opportunity to say a heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for sharing your time and talents with Aisling Centre. Today, Aisling Centre is a highly respected and professional organisation of which we are all immensely proud. But it the quiet unseen work of so many of you that makes the wheels go round.

Whether your contribution is big or small, it is essential and it is highly valued by us all. Maybe you are called upon to answer phones, to stand with a collection tin, to help out on coffee mornings, to attend board or fund raising meetings, to represent the Centre at health fairs, to organise raffles, or maybe even the plum job of collecting cheques at fund raising events along with so so much more. Just think of all that work. Think of what it would cost to pay you. If you, our faithful volunteers, decided to down tools for a year, I'm afraid Aisling Centre would have to close its doors.

Celebrating 35 Years

Friends of Aisling Centre are invited to a special **Coffee Morning**

To celebrate the contribution of volunteers to Aisling Centre

Friday 6th June at 10.30am

Please register for catering purposes by contacting:
info@theaislingcentre.com /
028 66 325811

But I don't see any chance of you downing tools because you, our Aisling Centre volunteers, are the most amazing people, you believe in Aisling Centre, you believe in the Aisling dream; you believe that the need for the services of Aisling are greater now than they were in 1990; you believe in the wonderful work that takes place within these walls; you believe in our magnificent manager; Bridie, our superb lead counsellor John and all the marvellous staff that work in this building.

Aisling Centre has a bright future because of you, our volunteers. Your enthusiasm, commitment and dedication will inspire others to join you in this adventure of being an Aisling volunteer.

I can see a long line of volunteers stretching out behind you, ensuring that the Aisling mission of bringing hope and healing to all who cross its doors, keeps going for the next 35 years. Thank you.

Founding Member



Friends Remembered

Angela



Angela Knight started her life at Aisling Centre as a volunteer, designing and printing a magazine which she personally delivered to various access points across Fermanagh.

With changes in her personal circumstance and always having had a vocation to care for others Angela started to look at potential career paths that she could follow.

As someone who loved dancing Angela initially trained in dance movement therapy and then later as a counsellor and psychotherapist. She spent 3-years travelling back and forth to England as she completed her counsellor training, something she found very demanding but worthwhile, as she really enjoyed the experiential nature of the training.

Angela was always very grateful to Sr Edel for her encouragement in her early years at Aisling Centre and felt fortunate in later securing work at the Centre as a therapist. *"What I do know is that the Aisling Centre has been very good to me. It gave me a bit of ground under my feet and helped me to earn a living. I can never forget that".* (Angela 2016)

Angela cared deeply about her work and the people she met through it. She was a quiet, thoughtful and gentle person, a wonderful friend and colleague who was always willing to be flexible and help others.

Retirement in 2016 opened new doors for Angela, it gave her much needed time for herself. Most especially it meant more time to spend with her precious family her sister Marina and nieces, Natina, Joanne, Angela and Rachel as well as time to indulge in her love of movement and dance and the new social circles that opened up for her.

Sadly, her retirement was cut short by illness and, surrounded by her loving family, Angela slipped away peacefully on 21st October 2024.

Rest in peace Angela

Always remembered by your friends
in Aisling Centre xx

Siobhan

With the passing of Siobhan Allister on 20th October 2024 her family, friends, community and Aisling Centre lost a very dear friend.

Known far and wide Siobhan is remembered with deep affection and gratitude for her tireless commitment to her community in so many ways. Always a great friend to Aisling Centre, in later years she became more involved in raising funds for counselling services at the Centre. An MS sufferer she was a dedicated fundraiser for MS in Co Fermanagh raising over £100,000 for various MS causes. She was for many the face of MS locally. A champion of her local Lady of the Lake Festival Siobhan loved and, was loved by her own community of Irvinestown who supported her in all her endeavors.

Siobhan devoted her time and energy, to the causes which were close to her heart. Her determination, generosity, passion and sense of fun was infectious and touched the lives of many through practical support, encouragement and the importance of caring for one and other.

Fundraising alongside Siobhan was always good fun, once you met her you could never forget her, she was never afraid to speak her mind! No one escaped her collection box, as she chatted non-stop, uplifting people and making them feel valued. Siobhan didn't just raise money-she raised spirits! She made things happen and had a gift for bringing people together and making them feel valued. Her gifted nature was always inspiring.

Those who knew Siobhan well, will remember her not only for her dedication to the community but also her deep love for her beloved family. Family was everything to Siobhan, she talked constantly about Stephen and their boys Daniel and Ben. She was at the heart of everything they did.

Her loss is felt by many but her legacy of fun, generosity and determination will always be remembered.

Siobhan was my friend. We talked weekly, if not daily on the phone. Sometimes we had nothing to say other than "how are you?" but I always had a laugh with Siobhan and always came away feeling better. I will always hear her hearty laugh and her usual greeting, "what's the craic?"

I miss her dearly.

Rest in peace Siobhan

Alison xx



Civic Honour Award for Iain

Congratulations to Fermanagh Trust who are celebrating their 30th anniversary and in doing so are honouring 30 remarkable individuals whose commitment to their communities has made a lasting difference.

We are absolutely delighted that Aisling Centre Trustee Iain Kennedy BEM has received a well-deserved award for his unwavering dedication to Enniskillen's young people through rowing and mental wellbeing.

An Olympian, lifelong rowing coach, and tireless

advocate for the wellbeing of young people, Iain's more than 30 years of volunteer service in Enniskillen have left an indelible mark on his community. From fostering cross-community connections through sport, to mentoring future Olympians and supporting the vital work of Aisling Centre, his dedication continues to inspire.

As part of this recognition, Iain will receive a £1,000 bursary to support both Enniskillen Royal Boat Club and Aisling Centre. A fitting tribute to a man whose passion and service ripple far beyond the water.

Read Iain's full story - www.fermanaghtrust.org/iain-kennedy-rowing-coach



Mentorship Programme



In September 2023 I was one of 4 counsellors who began a 1-year Mentorship programme with Aisling Centre. Having just graduated I felt this was the ideal setting for a "newbie" to enter the world of a real-life counselling.

This programme provided me with a dedicated mentor. Sharon is an experienced counsellor who was located in a room close by me. She was there to answer, help, support and advise me when needed. This involved not only clinical advice but also guidance on the administration processes and the general workings of the Aisling Centre.

I can honestly say I could not have asked for a better mentor but also, everyone in the Aisling Centre was so welcoming and helpful at every turn. It gave me confidence and support to ensure I provided the best therapeutic service to the client.

This programme is unique and full credit to those in Aisling Centre who developed it. It is an amazing enhancement to their repertoire. At the end of my year on the programme, I was very pleased to be retained as a sessional counsellor and I hope my work with clients in Aisling Centre is a reflection of its ethos of: "Hope, Healing and Growth".

Joy

Community Hub

Support Groups And Networks



AA – Alcoholics Anonymous

Three meetings per week
For further information contact Aisling Centre



Aware NI

Support group for adults affected by depression
Meets weekly – Tuesdays 7–9pm
For further information email sarah@aware-ni.org



Escapists

Support group for carers
Wednesdays 10.30am–1pm
For further information contact Aisling Centre



Fermanagh Pride

Open group aiming to provide a safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community
Meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 7pm
For further information contact 0736 8503 661 or fermanaghpride@gmail.com

Workshops And Classes



Island Artists

Wednesdays 2–4pm
For further information contact Maura
079 6822 5704



Little Mess Fermanagh

Messy play & learning for children 6 months to 5 years. Meets Fridays at 10.30am
For further information contact Colette on fermanagh@thelittlesensory.co

Yoga Classes

Yoga With Christine (Cornyn)

Mondays at 5.30–6.30pm
For further information contact 077 2255 0040

Elena (Kelly)

Tuesdays at 7–8pm
For further information contact 0789 4037 450

Leila (Williams)

Tuesdays at 7–8pm
For further information contact 075 9402 6531

Yoga with Alasdair (McKay)

Wednesdays at 6.30–7.30pm
For further information contact 0777 6290 903

Genny Brown (Yoga Ocean)

Thursdays 12–1.30pm
For further information contact 028 8954 1994

Teresa Cleary (TLC Yoga)

Thursdays 6–9pm (3 classes, 6–7pm men only)
For further information contact 079 2369 4523

Other Services

Cherish Sure Start

Crèche & Family Support Workshops
For further information contact Maeve Linton
028 6862 1970 / cherish@archlc.com



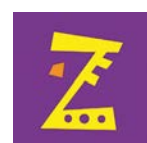
Westend Coffee Shop

Mondays–Saturdays 8am–3pm
For further information contact Barry
028 6634 0475 / 079 7997 5000



ZEST Counselling Service

Healing the Hurt of Self Harm & Suicide
For further information contact ZEST.
028 7126 6999 / www.zestni.org





**Westend
Coffee Shop**

Café & Outside Catering

Monday - Saturday 8:00am - 3:00pm

For information contact Barry
028 6634 0475 / 079 79975000



In AA, everyone is equal and it's anonymous, members are known by their first name only. There is a little slogan "Who you see here, what you hear here, let it stay here".

AA meets in the Aisling Centre three evenings per week; Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Meetings are open to anyone struggling with addiction.

For information contact the Centre on 028 66 325811.

From The Team

A Last Word

Good practice in succession planning means that that membership of the Board of Trustees of Aisling Centre is time-bound. This ensures fresh thinking and energy to help ensure the sustainability of the Centre. But it also means that good people must step down and this is particularly hard where members have been long-serving and dedicated to the mission and vision of Aisling Centre.

After many years of service **Ms Alison Annan (2001- 2025)** and **Mr Marshall Coalter (2018 – 2025)** are stepping down. They will be greatly missed. We thank them for their hard work and commitment to Aisling Centre and leave a last word to them.

Marshall



I have been privileged over the past seven years to serve on the Board of Aisling Centre and now it is time to move on and make way for someone new with different skills.

I am grateful to have been part of such a dedicated and committed team and I would like to thank the many talented people whom I worked alongside.

I send my very best wishes for the future to Aisling Centre in all the invaluable work they do for our community.

Alison



My passion for Aisling and its ethos is well known, but it's time to move aside to allow new people, new energy and fresh ideas to come on board. Over the last 25+ years it has been my absolute privilege to contribute to this vital service for the community. I have volunteered alongside great people with the same heart for Aisling.

During my time as both Vice Chair and Chairperson I have been very blessed with a solid management team under the leadership of Bridie and great staff. It has also been an honour to work alongside a very diligent Board of Directors.

I wish you all well for continued success and growth in your efforts in serving the community.

Farewell Reflections



I am leaving the Aisling family. I use the word Family because that it is truly what this amazing building represents to me. I am so grateful to have had the chance to work alongside all you wonderful people.

Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined how much care, planning, organising and love goes into every inch of this building. It gives so much not only to the community but it truly is a great place to work. Every single one of you have welcomed me and made me feel so at ease from day one.

Thank you all so much for every precious interaction and the laughs we had in the staff room or corridor. Hope to cross paths with you in the future but if that's not the case I wish you only the best life has to offer.

PS Special thanks to Bridie and Patricia. I could have never asked for better mentors and all you have taught me I will be bringing into my future with fond memories. THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart.

Warmest wishes, Indre x

Aisling Centre Welcomes New Trustees

Aisling Centre is delighted to announce two new Trustees, Denzil McDaniel and Enda Quinn, will be joining the Board in October 2025.

Both men bring with them a wealth of skills and experience in the areas of communications, IT, strategy and planning and teamwork etc. Equally important, both Denzil and Enda contribute actively to the local community, albeit in very different ways.

Denzil will be well known to many after a career spanning 40 years with local newspaper, The Impartial Reporter, where he worked as a journalist, Editor and Managing Editor. Well-known also for the standard of his journalism and his measured approach, Denzil has also contributed to a number of national newspapers as well as broadcasting 'Thought for the Day' on BBC Radio Ulster.

In addition to his work with 'Social Change Initiative' and his membership of 'Retinking Conflict' Denzil has been involved with the local community at a grassroots level, he is an active member of his church, has worked with Ballinamallard United FC, and sat on a school Board of Governors.

Speaking about his appointment with the Board Denzil said, "I have taken an interest in the work of the Aisling Centre for some years and feel their work in mental health is crucial. I fully support the Centre's mission and aims and I would like to be able to contribute to the Centre's work".

Enda is a qualified and experienced IT service professional. He has worked in IT and systems management with international and local firms for almost 25 years. He is currently Operations Manager with local firm Tracey Concrete. Enda is no stranger to Aisling Centre having set up our managed network system while working with a former employer.

Despite having a young family Enda gives his time to the community and is on the committee of Enniskillen Light Operatic (ELO) a group whose focus is on musical theatre productions. But for Enda the real value it brings is in building confidence, teamwork and giving people (especially young people) a space to grow. Enda has lots of experience in working behind the scenes and enjoys being part of something that brings people together.

Enda is also looking forward to joining Aisling Centre board "Aisling Centre does important work locally, and I have a lot of respect for how it supports people through tough times. Mental health is something affects everyone in one way or another, whether directly or through family and friends, so being able to contribute to a service like this feels worthwhile".

Both appointees are looking forward to growing their understanding of the impact of poor mental health. Also learning about and contributing to the good governance and sustainability of Aisling Centre.

Welcoming the new Directors to the Board Alison Annan said:

"The Board is delighted with our 2 new members who bring fresh thinking and working world experience to the table. Whilst both have different skill set, they are very much involved in the community and have a great empathy with its needs. They will be a great addition to our existing board and an overall excellent asset to the work at the Aisling Centre."



Meet the Team



Adrian Dunbar
Patron



Sr Edel Bannon
Honorary Life Member

"Thank you so, so much to my therapist and all who run the Aisling Centre. The work you do is lifesaving... can't thank you enough"

Adrian Dunbar – Patron
Sr Edel Bannon – Honorary Life

Board of Directors

Alison Annan - Chairperson
Deirdre Kane - Vice-Chairperson
Marshall Coalter – Secretary
Monica Corrigan - Treasurer
Aideen McGinley
Grainne Scott
Iain Kennedy
Maeve Devlin
Richard Smith
Roberta Hamilton

Staff

Bridie Sweeney, Service Director
John Bennett, Clinical Lead
Patricia Kelly, Admin/Facilitates Manager

Clinical Team

Clare Love
Edel McGuinness
Sharon Fitzpatrick

Administration Team

Fiona Beatty
Indre Burns (left March 25)
Jimmy Britton
Marie Greene
Suzanne Prout (started June 24)

Sessional CT & Well-Being

Sheila Johnston
Siobhan Conlon

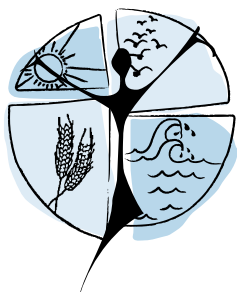
Sessional Psychotherapists

Ann Farrell
Aine Martin
Aine McCaffrey
Anja Rosler
Cahir Maguire
Edith Mathews
Fiona McCaughey
Holly Reid
Jane Labib (left June 24)
Joy Graham
Karen Whaley
Michelle Halpin
Monica McFarland (left April 24)
Nuala McGovern
Patricia McGovern
Rachel Cashel (left April 24)
Rosa Furey
Seana McKeaney

We would also like to acknowledge the role of our volunteers and friends, too many to mention individually, who play an invaluable role in supporting Aisling Centre through a range of activities including awareness raising and fund raising.



“I’m so glad I referred myself to the Aisling Centre. I have really benefitted from my counselling experience. Thank you for providing such a worthwhile and valuable service in Enniskillen.”



Aisling
centre
Hope Healing Growth

37, Darling Street, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, BT74 7DP

Telephone: 0044 28 66 325811 **Email:** info@theaislingcentre.com

www.theaislingcentre.com

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Registered Company No – NI 27011 BACP Registration No - 101666



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**