



UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY

**MENTAL HEALTH SOCIAL
WORKERS DELIVERY OF
FAMILY FOCUSED
PRACTICE**

ONLINE EVENT

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

16 June 2025

OUR SPONSOR



The Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at the University of Surrey sponsors workshops and Fellowships at the 'cutting edge' of science, engineering, social science and the humanities. Through this scheme the Institute fosters interdisciplinary collaborations and encourages a flow of international scholars to visit, enjoy their stay at Surrey and leave behind excellent ideas and innovations.

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INTRODUCTION

Family-focused practice in mental health services is known to improve outcomes for patients and their families. However, we also know it is not currently embedded in services. The confidence and competence of clinical staff is one recognised barrier to family focused practice. Mental health social workers (MHSWs) identify that their values and training make them particularly suitable to deliver and promote family focused practice in these services. To bridge the gap between MHSWs stated desire to engage in family focused practice, and their current delivery of it, there is a need for clear practice guidelines, developed in partnership with clinical, academic, managerial and commissioning stakeholders. The objective of this workshop is to develop these guidelines.

The workshop will run over one afternoon and be organized into two sections:

Section 1: Knowledge exchange

Learning from Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland where MHSW's are instrumental in delivery of family focused practice as well as new data on MHSW practice from the University of Surrey and presentations from practitioners and social work researchers on the role, responsibility and clinical context.

Section 2: Guideline development

We will then utilize a consensus building technique in which an interactive round of discussion and feedback will seek to develop guidelines for the delivery of family-focused practice by MHSWs. Following the seminar, the next step will be to use the generated outputs to develop a funding application to pilot the guidelines.

Workshop Chair:

Dr Abby Dunn, School of Psychology

Grant Co-Applicant:

Bryan Lynch, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Administrative support:

Louise Jones, Institute of Advanced Studies

PROGRAMME

MONDAY 16 JUNE

Online

(BST)	
13.00 – 13.05	Introduction and Welcome
13.05 – 13.20	Mental Health Social Workers' Family Focused Practice: Findings from a Service Evaluation in an English Mental Health Trust – Dr Abby Dunn, University of Surrey
13.20 – 13.40	Involved but not Included: Young People's Experiences of Professionals Support While Growing up with a Parent with Mental Ill Health – Dr Kate Blake-Holmes, University of East Anglia
13.40 – 14.00	Improving Family Focused Practice Using the Family Model in Adult Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland – Hannah Brown, Belfast Trust
14.00 – 14.30	Family Focused Practice in Republic of Ireland – Mary G Killion, Galway/Roscommon Mental Health Services and Paula Street, Loughrea Day Hospital
14.30 – 14.45	Break
14.45 – 16.15	Group Session: Collaborative Development of Working Definition of Family Focused Practice in Mental Health Social Work in England.

SPEAKERS

Dr Abby Dunn

University of Surrey

Dr Abby Dunn is a Senior Lecturer and mental health researcher at the University of Surrey where her work is focused on the intersection of mental health and parenting for which she has been awarded funding in excess of £1m from the NIHR. She has designed, delivered and evaluated interventions for parents with chronic anxiety, EUPD and for delivery within acute inpatient care. She established and chairs the UK Parental Mental Health Network and is a member of Prato International, an international research collaborative for change in parent and child mental health.

Dr Kate Blake-Holmes

University of East Anglia

Dr Kate Blake-Holmes is a lecturer in the School of Social Work and Sociology at the University of East Anglia and an Approved Mental Health Professional she currently serves as the chair of Prato international, a research collaborative committed to advancing change in parent and child mental health. Dr Blake-Holmes's research centres on the lived experiences and outcomes of families facing adversity. Her work is particularly focused on improving the ways in which services support families and ensuring that the voices of children and young

people are meaningfully heard and integrated into policy and practice.

Hannah Brown

Belfast Trust

Hannah Brown is the Think Family Senior Social Work Practitioner for Adult Mental Health & CAMHS in Belfast Trust, Northern Ireland. Her role is to support teams to embed Family Focused Practice within their day to day working, primarily using The Family Model (Falkov 2012) as a conversation tool.

Mary G Killion

Galway/Roscommon Adult Mental Health Services

Mary G Killion is a Principal Social Worker in Galway/Roscommon Adult Mental Health Services. She has been promoting Family-Focused Practice in mental health services since 2005, when she co-ordinated an interagency service initiative known as Crosslinx, to address the impact of parental mental illness on families. Since 2018, she has led out on the embedding of Family Talk as an evidence-based intervention in Galway/Roscommon mental health services –and establishing Crosslinx initiatives in the West. In 2021 co-authored a document on the lead role of Mental Health Social Workers in promoting family-focused practice in

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adult mental health care – endorsed by the Head of Service for Galway, Roscommon and Mayo Mental Health Service.

Paula Street

Loughrea Day Hospital

Paula Street is a Senior Mental Health Social Worker working in community mental health in Ireland for 20 years. She has a particular interest in family focused practice, the impact of mental illness on family and offering support and interventions to family members.



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