



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

Project Title:

Exploring practitioner experiences of a trauma-informed practice approach within a community-based family support service: A Case Study of Clarecare

Short Project Description:

For more than five decades, Clarecare has delivered a range of evidence-informed family support services across County Clare. Funding provided by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, supports the delivery of individual and group-based family support interventions, a Life Story Project for children in care, and advocacy services for parents of children in care. This Masters by Research study utilises a process evaluation study of the impacts of a trauma-informed practice approach which the service has been operating since 2023, to strengthen engagement and improve outcomes for children and families. This marked orientation towards trauma-informed working simultaneously informed the development of a *Trauma-Informed Practice Plan* for Clarecare, identifying key priorities for service development, staff capacity building, and stakeholder consultation. This evaluation seeks to investigate the extent that the *Trauma-Informed Practice Plan* is realised in practice from the perspectives of practitioners in Clarecare itself.

Some of the central questions informing this research include the effects of trauma-informed approaches in ways of working together and with service users, including the impacts on staff self-efficacy and confidence in carrying out their roles, their engagement with families, ability to navigate complex casework, exercise professional judgement, and sustain meaningful support. The research aims to elicit practitioners' perspectives on the effects of these approaches on their overall self-confidence in managing uncertainty, ability to address challenging situations, whilst achieving positive outcomes for Clare and its peoples through sustained engagement, improved communication and participation with families. Also, the extent that the adoption of trauma-informed approaches informed the development of a cohesive and collaborative team culture characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual support, and commitment to relationship-based practice.

This project utilises qualitative research methods including semi-structured interviews, narrative interviewing and secondary analysis of documents framed within a process evaluation, case study design.

Type of Degree Offered: Master's by Research (MRes) with fee scholarship funded by Clarecare for two years FT or three years part-time

Duration of Project: Two years full-time (three years part-time)

Funding Agency: Clarecare Fee waiver. For more information, please see clarecare.ie/family-support-service)

Minimum Qualifications/Experience Necessary/Any Other Requirements:



The candidates must have a primary honours degree in any of the following cognate areas (minimum): social work, social care, sociology, anthropology, social sciences, psychology, social policy, law and/or family support.

The successful candidate will have attained a classification of 2.1 honours or equivalent in an undergraduate honours degree programme per above. They should also have a demonstrative understanding and knowledge of trauma-informed practice and theoretical approaches underpinning relationship-based practice. Knowledge and experience of qualitative methods including evaluation would also be beneficial.

IELTS [International English Language Testing System] Applicants must have a minimum score of 6.5 on IELTS or equivalent (e.g. Duolingo).

Project Supervisors: Dr Lisa Moran (TUS), Dr Zeta Dooly (SETU), Dr Leigh Ann Sweeney (TCD) and Ms Jacinta Swann (Clarecare).

For further information, please contact: Dr Lisa Moran, Dean of Graduate Studies, lisa.moran@tus.ie

Closing date for receipt of completed application form is Friday October 2nd 2026, at 5pm. Interviews are scheduled to take place within one month of the closing date.

Download TUS Scholarship application form below, put project title in the subject line and email pro@tus.ie:

<https://tus.ie/rdi/research/office/funded-research/>