

Dr Declan Aherne

Personal Information

Marital status: Married
Nationality: Irish
Date of birth: 22.1.1959
Place of Birth: Cork, Ireland.

Summary of academic and professional qualifications

1. **B.A.** - Double honours Psychology, U.C.C., 1980.
2. **M.A.** - Honours Psychology, U.C.C., 1982.
(Thesis: 'Vocational Evaluation and Training of the Severely Retarded Adolescent').
3. **M. Psych. Sc. (Clinical Specialisation)** – 2.1 honours, U.C.D., 1985.
(Thesis: 'Sex Roles and Marital Adjustment').
4. **Dip. Gestalt Therapy** – Irish Gestalt Centre, 1987-1992.
Eligible for accreditation by relevant professional bodies.
5. **Ph.D.** - Thesis: 'A Qualitative Understanding of the Stress Experienced by third level Students', U.C.C., 1998.

Supplementary training:

6. Group facilitation skills – Social and Health Education Programme, Mid-Western Health Board, 1986-87.

Occupational history

1. **Clinical psychologist**,
Brothers of Charity, Bawnmore, 1985-86.
2. **Head of Counselling**,
University of Limerick, 1986 –present.
3. **Consultant Clinical Psychologist**,
N. 2 St. Johns Square/Medical Centre, Castletroy, 1986 – 2004.
4. **Director, Oakwood**
Private Psychological Services, Castletroy, Limerick. 2004 – present.
5. **Sports psychologist**, Munster Rugby Team, 2006 – 2008.
6. **Sports Psychologist** High Performance Swim Team Limerick, 2009 – 2012.

Further management experience

Chairperson, Board of Management, Castleconnell N.S., 1997 – 2003. Staffing levels: 10 teacher school with 170 pupils and a further nine ancillary staff.

Description of clinical work

Declan has worked as Head of Counselling at U.L. since 1986. This is a primary care service with the clientele self-referring in the main with the full range of clinical disorders afflicting the late adolescent / young adult age group. With an increasing heterogeneity in the profile of students attending third level, there has been a noticeable increase in the latter years of more mature

students and students presenting with more severe psychiatric disorders. In this service Declan works in a multidisciplinary team approach including medical doctor, psychiatrist, nursing staff and chaplaincy. He currently manages five sessional counsellors in the service and provides clinical supervision for these staff as well as carrying out screening assessment of all clients attending the service. A significant amount of assessment is carried out in relation to students being psychological 'well enough' to sit their exams. More than 900 students attend the student counselling service annually.

Declan has developed particular expertise in assisting young adults in negotiating the difficult developmental transitions they face and in working therapeutically within this developmental framework when dealing with some of the more serious pathologies than can emerge at this time.

Oakwood, founded by Declan in 2004, is a private mental health service consisting of clinical psychologists and psychotherapists from a variety of different training backgrounds. The service sees approx 500 clients per annum. A total of 24 staff, including psychotherapists and clinical psychologists are based at Oakwood, working on a part-time basis. It operates a unique internship programme providing clients and on-site supervision for psychotherapists needing to work up hours toward their accreditation.

Supervision work

Declan has been supervising trainees on placement from a range of training programmes in clinical psychology, and psychotherapy for the past 25 years. He also provides supervision for a number of community projects dealing with vulnerable and difficult clients.

Teaching / Training

1. Module Co-ordinator / Director, Human Doctor, Graduate Entry Medical School, UL, 2009 to present
2. Tutor, Mid-Western Health Board, G.P. Vocational Training Scheme, 1991 – present.
2. Joint Course Leader/ Course Organiser, Introduction to Counselling, U.L., 1990 – 1995.
3. Course design team, course board member and core trainer, Master in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy, U.L., 1998 to 2002.
7. Course design team member, lecturer, supervisor, D. Clinical Psychology, U.L.
- 8.. Lecturer, Masters in Sports Medicine, U.C.C., 1996- present.

Publications

1. **Aherne, D. (2002)** Understanding student stress: a Qualitative approach. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 22,3/4,176-187.
2. **Aherne, D. (2002)**. Student suicide in Ireland. *Eisteach*, Spring, 17-22.
1. **Aherne, D. Figge, P. and Rott, G. , Editors (2002)**. *Attachment and separation in higher education*, Electronic publication, Wuppertal.

3. **Griffin, M. and Aherne, D. (1992).** Clinical psychology and general practice, *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 8,75-78.
4. **Kalantzi-Azizi, A., Rott, G. and Aherne, D. , Editors. (1997),** *Psychological counselling in higher education*. Athens: Hellenic Gramatica.
5. **O'Connor, C. and Aherne, D. (1992).** Psycho-legal and Medico-legal Responsibility – the challenge of modern professionalism. *Inside Out*, Spring, 20-26.
6. General Practice (G.P.) Training: Module ‘ Human Doctor’ research and development, Medical and Dental Council funded.(2003).
7. **Aherne, D. (2012)** Psychotherapy or medication for treatment of depression and anxiety. IPU Review.
8. **Aherne, D. and Griffin, M. (2011).** Human doctor series, Medical Independent, 2010, 12 installments.

Book Reviews

1. **Aherne, D. (2001).** Book Review: ‘Clinical psychology in Ireland’ by Alan Carr. *Irish psychologist*, July, 148 -149.

Selection of Conference Papers

1. **Aherne, D. (1996).** ‘Student Stress: A Developmental Framework’, Higher Education Authority (H.E.A.) National Seminar, Dublin.
2. **Aherne,D. (1997)**‘Student Stress and Student Development’, British Association of University and College Counsellors Conference, Brighton.
3. **Aherne,D. (1997)**‘Student Stress’, European Congress of Psychology, Athens.
4. **Organiser / presenter:** Action Research, National Seminar for Third Level Institutions, U.L., Limerick, 1998.
5. **Conference organiser / presenter:** ‘Separation and Attachment in Higher Education’, Fedora Psyche conference, Copenhagen, 1999.
6. **Convenor/ Editor of proceedings:** Fedora Psyche Symposium, European Congress in Psychology, Dublin,1999.
7. **Aherne,D. and Griffin,M. (1999)** Human Doctor’ Workshop, World G.P. Conference (WONCA), Dublin.
8. **Aherne,D. (1999)** ‘Lifeskills Module: an evaluation’, Conference of Irish University Administrators, U.L., Limerick, 1999.
9. **Conference organiser / Editor conference proceedings:**Confederation of Student Services in Ireland Biannual (C.S.S.I.), Queens University, Belfast, 2000.
10. **Aherne,D. (2001)** ‘Lifeskills – an evaluation’, 12th International First Year Student Experience, Hawaii.
11. **Aherne,D. (2001)**‘Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy’, results of national survey presented at Psychological Society of Ireland annual conference, Westport.
12. **Aherne,D., Aherne, C. and Fitzgerald,N. (2010).**Student counselling database analysis, PSI conference, Athlone.
13. **Aherne,D. (2012)** Psychotherapy or medication for treatment of depression and anxiety. Paper presented at NPE conference, European parliament, Brussels.

14. **Aherne, D. (2103).** A psychology based model for primary mental Health Care. Presented at conference on 'The de-medicalisation of primary mental health care ', University of Limerick.

Productions

1. 'Body-Mind Relaxation' - Progressive Muscular Relaxation and Visualisation CD download.
3. 'Self-hypnosis series – CD download.
4. HSE guidelines on talking therapies, 2007.

Professional memberships

1. Registered Psychologist, Associate Fellow, Full member Clinical Division, Counselling Division Psychological Society of Ireland (P.S.I.),
2. Irish Association of University and College Counsellors (I.A.U.C.C.) – founding executive member.
3. British Association of Counselling and Therapy (A.U.C.C. Div.).
4. Fedora Psyche – European Association of Psychological Counselling in Higher Education.
5. Accredited Sports Psychologists, Irish Sports Council.

Declan has been a longstanding member of the European Federation of Psychological Associations(EFPA) task force on psychologists specialising in psychotherapy. He is currently Chairperson, Irish working group for psychologists specialising in psychotherapy.