

# INTINN YOUTH FILM & MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

## STUDENTS RESOURCE PACK

### BACKGROUND

Intinn, meaning 'mind' or 'way of thinking', is Cork International Film Festival's (CIFF) youth film and mental health programme offering Transition Year students the opportunity to explore mental health, personal well-being and strategies of resilience through film and well-being workshops led by youth mental health specialists. Piloted in 2019, Intinn was developed by CIFF in collaboration with University College Cork and is supported by the HSE National Lottery Grant Scheme. This vital, free programme has supported over 7,000 young people to date.

### THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMME

Intinn offers Transition Year students the opportunity to view three short films by directors Emma Foley, Daniel John Harris and Nathan Fagan which have been specially curated to enable youth audiences to explore different aspects of mental health and wellbeing relevant to young people.

Dr. Johnny Goodwin, mental health nursing lecturer from the UCC School of Nursing and Midwifery, will then present a workshop which will address the themes of both films and will include practical tips about how to build resilience and enhance wellbeing. Topics to be covered will include sleep hygiene, the importance of authentic discussions about mental health, and appropriate support. The workshops will help you to explore different mental health experiences, to understand your own wellbeing and ways of developing personal coping and resilience skills.

## ABOUT THE TEAM



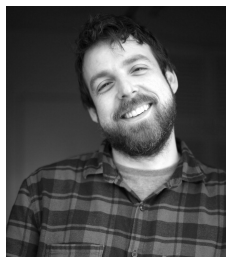
### Emma Foley

Emma Foley is a director, producer and writer, and is known for *It Is in Us All* (2022), *Redemption of a Rogue* (2020) and *I'll Wait Here* (2020). Led by producers Emma Foley and Tamryn Reinecke, Pale Rebel Productions is an award-winning Irish production company that develops and produces film and television with an emphasis on comedy and drama. *Sound and Colour* won Best Irish Narrative Short Award at Boyne Valley International Film Festival 2023, and will have its North American premiere at SXSW Film & TV Festival in 2024.



### Daniel John Harris

Daniel John Harris is a Chicago-based award-winning filmmaker and seasoned portrait photographer. Previous directing credits include the critically successful *Role Initiative: A D&D Musical* (winner of the 72 Hour Windie City Shootout), *Hey Blues Eyes* (winner of the Artemis Action Film Festival), *Wait, I'm a Racist!?* (winner of the Shortcut100 Film Festival and winner of Best Director at the Collected Voices Film Festival), *Now & Not Yet* (winner of the Chicago Feedback Film Festival), and *Subsurface*.



### Nathan Fagan

Nathan Fagan is an award-winning Irish writer and director. His short film, *Flicker*, won the Gran Prix Award at the Cork International Film Festival in 2020. It was subsequently nominated for an IFTA for Best Irish Short Film. He's one half of directing duo, *Luna*.



### Dr. Johnny Goodwin

Dr. Johnny Goodwin is a lecturer in mental health nursing in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC. He holds an M.A in Film Studies. His PhD research focused on young people's perceptions of mental health services. Johnny's interests also include the use of the arts and creativity in mental health, young people and mental health, and mental health stigma.



### Don O'Mahony

Don O'Mahony is Senior Programmer at Cork International Film Festival. He is a freelance writer for the Irish Examiner and Echo, covering arts, culture and entertainment. He also contributes to the Journal of Music. For two decades he produced and presented an arts programme on Cork Campus Radio.

## SIGNPOSTING TO LOCAL SUPPORT AND INFORMATION SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

A greater understanding and awareness of the mental health support services available locally is an important learning outcome which we want each attending student to attain. The following are a list of national resources available. We advise that you also consult with your teacher about relevant support within your school.

### MIND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



yourmentalhealth

#### Local Support and Information Services Available to You

If you are experiencing issues that are affecting your mental health, talk to someone close to you – a friend, a family member, or a teacher. Research has shown that people who talk about their problems early on feel better quicker than people who keep things bottled up.

#### GREEN LIGHT: Information

**Your Mental Health:** Freephone 1800 111 888 / [www2.hse.ie/mental-health](http://www2.hse.ie/mental-health)

The HSE's Mental Health provides information about the mental health supports available in your local area.

**spunout:** [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people. Spunout.ie provides information on a range of different topics that impact young people's lives such as health, education and employment.

#### ORANGE LIGHT: Need Support

**GP:** Your family doctor or a General Practitioner can provide you with mental health support, or refer you to relevant services where necessary.

**Jigsaw:** [www.jigsaw.ie](http://www.jigsaw.ie) / Tel: 021 245 2500 / Email: [cork@jigsaw.ie](mailto:cork@jigsaw.ie)

Jigsaw provides free mental health support for young people aged 12-25 years.

**Turn2Me:** [www.turn2me.org](http://www.turn2me.org)

Turn2me provides professional mental health support and online counselling services.

**Aware:** [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie) / Helpline: 1800 80 48 48 / Email: [wecanhelp@aware.ie](mailto:wecanhelp@aware.ie)  
Aware provides free support for people dealing with depression. Services include free support groups nationwide, a loCall Helpline open 365 days a year and email support services.

**Childline:** [www.childline.ie/](http://www.childline.ie/) Helpline: 1800 666 666

Childline is a 24-hour service for children and young people up to 18 years of age, which offers support to children and young people through its listening service over the phone.

**Belong To Youth Services:** [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

Belong To provides support and information and groups for LGBTQIA+ young people in Ireland, their parents and carers, and other professionals.

**Barnardos:** [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

Barnardos provide services for children and their families to transform the lives of children affected by adverse childhood experiences, including a Children's Bereavement Service.

### **RED LIGHT: Crisis**

**If you need immediate assistance, especially if you or someone is hurt or in danger, call the emergency services by dialling 999 or 112. Alternatively, go to or contact the Accident and Emergency Department of your nearest general hospital if you are in immediate danger.**

**Pieta House:** [www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie) / Free 24/7 Crisis Helpline: 1800 247 247 / Text HELP to 51444

Pieta House is a counselling service which provides affordable and accessible counselling and support.

**Samaritans:** [www.samaritans.org/ireland/samaritans-ireland](http://www.samaritans.org/ireland/samaritans-ireland) / Helpline: 116 123 /  
Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. They offer their service by telephone, email, letter and face to face in their Cork branch.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**ANXIETY** is a natural response to perceived stress. Anxiety can be felt as an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future. While anxiety can help us in preparing us for how we respond to perceived challenges, if it persists over time, this may become a problem.

**DEPRESSION** is a complex mental health challenge that affects one in every 10 people. It can be described as a persistent sadness, and can impact people's quality of sleep, their diet, levels of concentration, and energy levels.

**FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE** is our body's natural response to perceived threats. When we perceive danger, hormones are released which get our bodies ready to either stand and fight the threat or to run away. We might experience an increased heart rate, jelly legs, butterflies in our stomachs, increased sweating, trembling, and other uncomfortable feelings. Understanding that the fight or flight response is a natural response to perceived threats and the associated symptoms can help people to better manage their anxiety and stress.

**RECOVERY** is the guiding philosophy behind mental health care. It does not necessarily mean "cure". Instead, it is a highly individualised process, where people are empowered to lead a meaningful life despite the presence of mental health challenges.

**RESILIENCE** the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. It is characterised by "psychological toughness".

**STIGMA** is a combination of negative beliefs about, and prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviours towards people who experience mental distress.

**SCHIZOPHRENIA** is a mental health issue characterised by some, but not necessarily all, of the following features: emotional blunting or low mood, social isolation, disorganised speech and behaviour, delusions, and hallucinations.

**SCHIZOAFFECTIVE DISORDER** is a combination of the symptoms typically seen in an individual with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, combined with a mood disorder, such as bipolar affective disorder or major depressive disorder.

**SUICIDE** is the act of taking one's own life.

**NOTE: The below exercises can be used if you are experiencing issues such as stress and anxiety. However, such exercises are not appropriate if you are experiencing a crisis.**

## DEEP BREATHING

Deep breathing exercises are powerful tools we can use to relieve stress. These are simple exercises that require no extra equipment – just find a place where you can sit comfortably, relax your shoulders, and pick a breathing exercise that works for you (remember, there may be some exercises you like, but there will be some exercises that do not suit everyone).

It can take practice for deep breathing exercises to work. Set aside a little time each day to practise these – you can start with just two minutes. As you become more comfortable using these techniques, you can then try to set more time aside to practise. Over time, we can learn to slow our breathing down at times when we experience stress or feel overwhelmed, which helps us to regain a sense of calm.

NOTE: If you experience breathing difficulties or asthma please DO NOT use these breathing exercises.

### Simple Breathing

Take a deep breath in through your nose. Then, with pursed lips, leave your breath out very slowly.

Repeat the cycle a few times and then let your breath return to normal.

### Positive and Negative Breaths

Take a deep breath in through your nose. Hold for a count of three. Then, with pursed lips, leave your breath out very slowly. Hold for a count of three before taking another breath.

Repeat the cycle a few times and then let your breath return to normal.

## Nadi Shodhana

Place the middle and index fingers of your right hand between your eyebrows. You are going to use your thumb and ring finger to cover your nostrils.

Bring your thumb to your right nostril then breathe out all the way through your left nostril.

Take a deep breath in through that nostril and then swap over so that your ring finger is on your right nostril.

Take a deep breath in through that nostril and then swap over so that your ring finger is on your left nostril.

Repeat the cycle a few times and then let your breath return to normal.

## 4-7-8 Breathing

- Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4.
- Hold this breath for a count for 7.
- Breathe out, through pursed lips, for a count of 8.
- Repeat for a couple of cycles and then let your breath return to normal.

## Box Breathing

- Take a deep breath in through your nose for a count of 4.
- Hold this breath for a count of 4.
- Exhale through pursed lips for a count of 4.
- Hold for a count of 4 before taking another breath.
- Repeat for a couple of cycles and then let your breath return to normal.

## Humming Bee Breath (Brahmari)

- Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose.
- Let out a deep exhalation through pursed lips, while making a humming sound.
- Continue to make this humming sound until you have completely exhaled.
- Repeat for a couple of cycles and then let your breath return to normal.

## MINDFUL FIVE SENSES EXERCISE

Sometimes when we experience stress and symptoms of anxiety (see FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE in the Glossary section), it can be helpful to bring our minds back to the present moment. This can be called "mindfulness", where human beings learn to be fully present in the current moment, meaning we are fully aware of our thoughts, our feelings, and how our body feels. The following is a mindfulness-based exercise that can be used in times when you feel overwhelmed.

### Try to identify:

**5** things you can **SEE**

**4** things you can **TOUCH**

**3** things you can **HEAR**

**2** things you can **SMELL**

**1** thing you can **TASTE**

## THE MAMMALIAN DIVE REFLEX

The mammalian dive reflex (or diving reflex) is a primal reflex humans (and all mammals) have, left over from our ocean-dwelling ancestors. When we immerse ourselves in cold water, sensory receptors in our nasal cavities (nose) that are sensitive to wetness send messages to our brains; this is more strongly stimulated by temperatures of between 10 to 15°C. Various physiological changes are then initiated which prepare our bodies to conserve oxygen.

One of the physiological responses is that our heart rate slows down instantly; as we know from our discussion around the fight or flight response (see Glossary), an increased heart rate is related to stress and anxiety. Consequently, the mammalian dive reflex is useful for people who experience anxiety and distress.

**NOTE:** This reflex helps to slow down the heart rate, so DO NOT use this technique if you have any heart problems.

### How to Activate The Mammalian Dive Reflex

Fill a container with ice water; ideally the temperature should be between 10 to 15°C.

Hold your breath and submerge your face in the cold water for a few seconds. Make sure that the area underneath the eyes is covered in water.

Rinse your face and, if you wish, repeat the cycle.

## DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES

Sometimes when we feel stressed or anxious, it can be very difficult to move away from overwhelming thoughts. In such instances, using distraction techniques can be very useful. They can help our brains to focus on something else other than the overwhelming thoughts, giving us a chance to re-focus. You may already have hobbies you enjoy, such as listening to music or drawing, and these can be very useful as distraction techniques and should be used.

Here are some examples of other distraction techniques you can use when you find those hobbies aren't helping.

### Counting Backwards

Start at 10, and, very slowly, count backwards: 9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1. Repeat as necessary.

Or

Start at 100, and, very slowly, count backwards in "threes", e.g., 100-97-94-91-88, etc.

Or

Start at 100 and, very slowly, count backwards in "sevens", e.g., 100-93-86-79, etc.

### What's in the Room?

Pick a colour, such as green. Try to identify all of the green objects in the room. Once you have achieved this, pick a different colour, such as yellow, and repeat. The aim of this exercise is to focus your mind on something else other than the thoughts that have been overwhelming you.

### Physical Exercise

The link between wellbeing and regular physical exercise is well-established. Recent guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggest that children and teenagers aged 6-17 should do 1 hour or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily.

Additionally, when experiencing stress or anxiety, you might find it helpful to engage in intense physical activity for approximately 20 minutes. Suggestions include: running on the spot, going for a brisk walk, or jumping up and down.

## SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep hygiene refers to our sleep habits. Poor sleep hygiene has been shown to exacerbate symptoms of mental distress.

Recent studies have found that poor sleep hygiene can lead to increased levels of stress, difficulties regulating emotions, and problems with concentration and memory. In the long-term, poor sleep hygiene has also been linked with several physical health issues.

### Here are some tips to improve your sleep hygiene and your quality of sleep:

**Establish an appropriate space.** Make sure your bed is comfortable to sleep in, and that your room is quiet and dark (blackout curtains and eye masks may be useful here). Try to ensure that your room is the right temperature: people sleep better in a cooler bedroom.

**Bed is for sleeping.** Try to avoid doing your homework or watching TV in your bed. You need to establish the connection between your bed and sleep; engaging in these other activities compromises this connection.

**Establish a regular routine.** In addition to establishing a regular bedtime (and wake-up time) that you maintain all week, you may also wish to establish a pre-bedtime routine, such as having a warm glass of milk. This will help your body to start preparing for sleep.

**Caution re. food and drink intake.** Avoid caffeine and large meals in the hours leading up to your bedtime.

**Digital cleanse.** There is a link between poor sleep and use of electronics at night-time. Try to minimise (and cut out) use of devices such as phones and laptops in bed.

**Use breathing techniques.** Some of the breathing techniques described earlier in this resource pack may be helpful in helping you get to sleep.

**If at first you don't succeed.** Try and try again! If you find that you are still unable to sleep, it may not be helpful to continue lying in bed. Get up (but avoid reaching for your phone!) and engage in an activity you perceive as boring (e.g., reading the instruction manual for your microwave) – the key here is to avoid any potentially stimulating activity.