

Covid-19 | Five Weeks in.

A review of Jigsaw's response to date.

April 20th, 2020.

Context.

As a society we are in uncharted territory as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and at Jigsaw, we are becoming acutely aware of the potential fall-out from this situation on our mental health, and particularly on that of our young people.

Isolation is leaving many without the core elements we value for our mental wellbeing. While we remain confident that we will get through this, what is clear is that lives will be lost. Families will break. Businesses will not reopen. And more.

So, what will be the potential impact on our young people? Our communities? Those who were struggling long before this pandemic came along?

Over the last 14 years, Jigsaw, Ireland's leading youth mental charity, has remained committed to advancing young people's mental health and to developing supportive communities by providing a range of primary care services and supports..

However, just as the Covid-19 situation has evolved and changed, so too has our response.

On March 12th, based on public health advice, we had little choice but to:

- announce the temporary suspension of our face-to-face services across Ireland
- pause the ongoing roll out of our post primary school initiative – One Good School™
- postpone all our community work across colleges and third level institutions, sports clubs and workplaces
- suspend all fundraising events.

However, our desire to play a part in this national emergency, and our commitment to those most in need, remained. We were clear that now, more than ever, we needed to be there for our young people and those around them.

A collective effort saw our teams across the country work tirelessly to re-orientate our organisation, to rethink how we operate and to develop a full range of information, supports, advice and services. This work manifested itself in a detailed plan of action aimed at marrying the opportunities that technology affords with our expertise and experience – a union that, to date, is offering real and tangible supports to many at this tough time.

This is our story to date – March 12th to today.





914 calls to young people
1,167 calls to parents of young people

**1800
JIGSAW**

Launched
April 15th

JIGSAW CONNECT

Online courses to help you build mental health literacy
and promote positive mental health in schools



3,977 sign ups for teachers courses

2,029 course completions.

69 sign ups for parents courses

23 course completions.

**LIVE
GROUP
CHATS**



34 Live Group Chats

for young people
302 registrations
114 participants

**LEAVING
CERT**

**COVID-19
ANXIETY**



76,899 page views to jigsawonline.ie

32,901 users
87% new visitors

**ASK
JIGSAW**



22 Q&As from young
people

**FOR
PARENTS**



**FAMILY
CONFLICT**



**COPING WITH
THE IMPACT**



**MANAGING
ROUTINES**



576 Jigsaw Update subscribers

Mindful meditation practice with Rachel



Today at 3 pm

**17,500 vlog
views** by clinicians

JIGSAW

Young people's
health in mind

Young People (aged 12-25)

All young people across the country are impacted by the current pandemic; we know that many are experiencing anxiety and fear and all are experiencing social isolation as a result of school and workplace closures and social distancing measures.

At Jigsaw, we have long held the belief in the potential for digital technology to transform the way young people look after their mental health and to transform the way Jigsaw and others design and deliver mental health supports and services. In April 2019, jigsawonline.ie, our mental health platform, went live.

Today, jigsawonline.ie is central to our Covid-19 response. Through the platform, we provide a space where young people can access mental health information, advice and support to help them to deal with the current situation, as well as things we know challenge young people's mental health during "normal times".

Our current levels of support offered to all young people include:

- **Outbound support calls** to those young people previously engaged in our face-to-face service, or awaiting their first appointment, aimed at providing a direct connection by offering strength-focused support and access to resources across our network (jigsawonline.ie, etc.) and to external resources including the HSE and others.
- **Regular supportive content** on a range of COVID-19 related topics such as anxiety, conflict resolution, relationships, uncertainty and more aiming at offering support and developing self-care strategies for young people through features such as peer-to-peer content, regular vlogs and audiograms from Jigsaw clinicians and more
- **Asynchronistic and anonymous messaging** through our 'Ask Jigsaw' feature on jigsawonline.ie
- Twice daily **live Group Chats** – scheduled, regular and anonymous online group messaging feature facilitated by Jigsaw clinicians, where young people can share their current experience of COVID-19 and get support from others
- **Jigsaw Support Line on freephone 1800 JIGSAW** (544729) providing free, relevant and accessible mental health support, education, advice and guidance to young people aged 12 to 25 years olds
- **Inbound SMS** (086 180 3880) **and inbound email support** (help@jigsaw.ie), both operated by a group of Jigsaw clinicians, aimed at offering all young people various options to get in touch and initiate a request for a return call from a Jigsaw Clinician.

Parents and Guardians of young people.

Parents and guardians are experiencing significant challenges in this current situation, many having to work from home while at the same time juggling childcare and having to ensure that children and young people are doing their bit to adhere to the HSE's social distancing and hand hygiene guidelines. Many are being 'teacher' as well as 'parent', supporting their teenagers to complete school work and trying to maintain the routine of family life. For some of them, their child/young person may be experiencing distress or anxiety at this time.

Our current levels of support offered to all parents include:

- **Regular supportive content** on a range of COVID-19 related topics such as anxiety, conflict resolution, relationships, self care, One Good Adult® and more aiming at offering support to those caring for young people at this time.
- **Outbound support calls** to those parents of young people (under-18) previously engaged in our face-to-face service, or awaiting their first appointment, aimed at offering a level of additional support and guidance and signposting to appropriate and trusted resources (jigsawonline.ie, HSE and others).
- **Jigsaw Support Line on freephone 1800 JIGSAW** (544729) providing free, relevant and accessible mental health support, education, advice and guidance to parents of young people aged 12 to 25 years olds
- **Inbound SMS** (086 180 3880) **and inbound email support** (help@jigsaw.ie), both operated by a designated group of Jigsaw clinicians, aimed at offering all parents of young people various options to get in touch and initiate a request for a return call from a Jigsaw Clinician.
- **Live webinars (Jigsaw Connect for Parents)**, where parents can engage in live group chats to share their experiences and get support from a Jigsaw clinician
- **A range of online courses** available for download
- **Twice weekly Jigsaw Updates**, where subscribers can receive regular support directly via email.

Teachers and any other One Good Adult® working with young people.

While the ongoing roll-out of our post primary school initiative - One Good School™ - has been paused, we are acutely aware that, as teachers and young people try to navigate the challenges the current pandemic poses, the need to remain connected in a world that currently feels disconnected, is critical.

While teachers manage this situation and are adapting to a uniquely different approach to teaching and learning, they are reaching out for support for themselves as well as advice and guidance on how to support their students. At Jigsaw, we are here to offer support.

Since March 12th, we have seen significant demand for our online teacher courses, accessible through Jigsaw's eLearning platform.

Endorsed by ESCI (Education Support Centres, Ireland), Jigsaw's **suite of eLearning courses for teachers (both primary and post-primary)** was launched in 2019 and seeks to enhance the mental health literacy of teachers, equip them with skills for responding to young people who are experiencing difficulties and provide flexibility for teachers to complete them at a time and pace that suits them. Our courses emphasise the hugely important role that teachers can play in being that One Good Adult® for young people and we explicitly support with teacher self-care. With the number of teachers accessing our courses increasing daily, it seems now more than ever, that learning about mental health and wellbeing and supporting young people will be an ever more important role in the life of a teacher.

In addition, **in collaboration with ESCI – Education Support Centres Ireland**, we are rolling out a series of **webinars for teachers. The 'Jigsaw Connect for Teachers'** series are facilitated by Jigsaw's clinicians and include panels of teachers engaged in live group discussions on a range of relevant themes relating to experiences of teachers including:

- **Teacher Self-Care:** how are teachers maintaining self-care while juggling remote teaching, family life, home-schooling and other responsibilities)
- **Managing Student Stress & Anxiety:** how can teachers support their students to cope with stress of 'unknowns' re exams in the midst of the current pandemic
- **School Connectedness:** how are teachers currently maintaining school connections with students while being disconnected

The live webinars are recorded and can be accessed by other teachers on jigsawonline.ie as well as the ESCI website.

Where to from here?

For now, Jigsaw remain focused on ensuring young people, their families and educators have the access to the mental health services and supports they deserve and need, so they have the tools to thrive and to move on from these strange, uncertain and stressful events without lasting impact.

The coming days and weeks will see us continue to expand our service and support offerings to become a national organisation at the centre of a national crisis.

Our freefone support line (1800 JIGSAW), inbound SMS service and email service are now live and being manned by our trans-disciplinary frontline mental health clinicians across the country. Our webinar series - Jigsaw Connect for teachers and parents – will continue to ramp up. Our group chats and Q&A features will continue apace, our email updates will grow to twice weekly ... and much more.

We are, and will remain, very much open for business. We have to be.

Alongside this, we are mindful of the longer term role we have to play. Post-Covid Ireland will require our supports, and those of our colleagues across the mental health sector, like never before. At Jigsaw, we are committed to reopening our face-to-face services and continuing to pursue the expansion of these services into Wicklow and Tipperary and beyond. We are committed to continuing the work undertaken to date in our secondary schools through One Good School™. Our Research ambitions will remain central to our raison d'être, pivoting to respond to our current times. And jigsawonline.ie will remain open long after this pandemic has moved on.

And we remain committed to working with you – government agencies, educators, community leaders, funders and supporters. As an organisation with a track-record of delivering a range of services and supports at the primary care level, in schools and in communities, across the country for over 14 years, we believe we are well-placed to inform youth mental health policy and practice, to guide collective thought on youth mental health and to assist in the development of innovative and effective solutions for our young people.

While the current cost of the Covid-19 pandemic to individuals, families, schools, communities and society at large remains uncertain, what is clear, is that we all have to play our part. At Jigsaw, we are fully committed to playing ours.

Yours,



Dr. Joseph Duffy
CEO

Jigsaw.

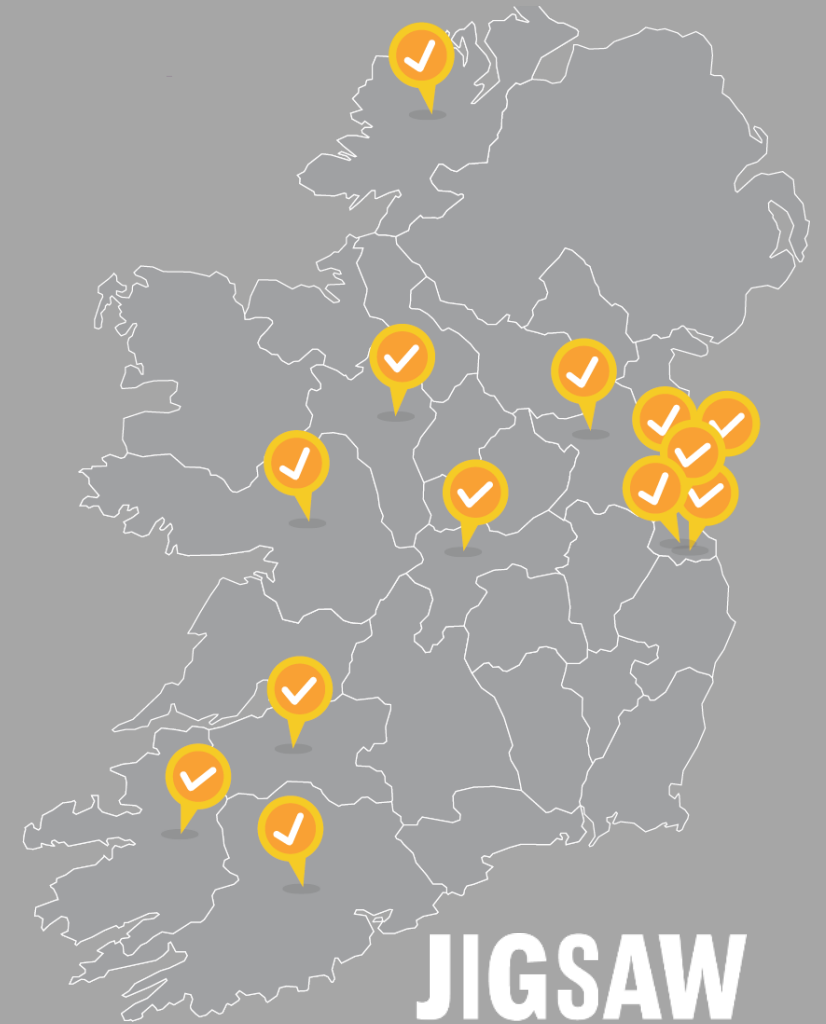
Jigsaw is Ireland's leading youth mental charity and is committed to advancing young people's mental health and to developing supportive communities by providing a range of primary care services and supports across the Republic of Ireland.

With the support of the HSE Mental Health Directorate, the Sláintecare Integration Fund and a range of public and private funders, we deliver a range of free primary care mental health services and supports for young people and adults including:

- delivering free, one-to-one, primary care therapeutic sessions with young people (aged 12-25)
- offering community-based programmes aimed at better informing, supporting, educating and empowering young people and those around them, in places where they live, learn, work and play
- undertaking pioneering research and robust evaluation leading to transformative evidence
- providing a wide range of mental health supports through jigsawonline.ie
- rolling out a comprehensive secondary schools programme (One Good School™) aimed at supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people by developing a shared responsibility for mental health across the whole school community.

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We believe in an Ireland where every young person's mental health is valued and supported.
For information and support go to jigsawonline.ie



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Young people's
health in mind