



Suicide Bereavement Support Service Launched in Louth

30th August 2023: HUGG is a national suicide bereavement charity. Our vision is that anyone bereaved by suicide can find hope and healing. HUGG provides information and support principally through the provision of local and online peer support groups, led by trained volunteers with lived experience of suicide bereavement.

For every person who dies by suicide, up to 135 people are affected. For many people, a level of support outside of family and friends is needed. With an average of 500 suicides annually in Ireland, that equates to 60,000 people affected by suicide every year.

HUGG is launching a new support group in Dundalk, Louth, in September. The group will be led by 3 local trained volunteers, who each have a lived experience of suicide bereavement. The group will be hybrid, meaning people can attend in-person or online.

Commenting on the launch of HUGG Louth, Marie McKeon, HUGG Groups Manager, said, *“After speaking at a “Mental Health & Resilience Building Community Information Event” last January in Louth, we recognised that there was a real need for a suicide bereavement support group in the region. We are delighted that Louth will have its own HUGG group, based in Dundalk. We hope that the group will greatly benefit the local community and the surrounding areas including those living in Ardee, Drogheda, Carlingford, Blackrock and parts of Meath including Duleek, Slane, and Donore”.*

Drogheda based volunteer Sarahmarie Kerr, reflecting on why she signed up to be a HUGG Volunteer Group Facilitator, stated, *“I lost my brother Dylan to suicide in 2011. I wanted to get involved with HUGG as I was drawn to the vision and work of the charity - their commitment to support those bereaved by suicide. Death by suicide hits different. Knowing you are in a safe, confidential space with others with a shared bond & lived experience is incredibly comforting and invaluable. Being able to talk openly with others who understood my grief was such a relief! There is a great sense of companionship in the support group, it helps to know you are not alone in your grief”.*

Fiona Tuomey, HUGG’s founder and CEO added *“Those left behind often carry unanswered questions, stigma, self-isolation and blame, in addition to the trauma of losing their loved ones. Being among others who understand this grief can be lifesaving”.*

To join a HUGG group simply complete the form on www.hugg.ie, or email: support@hugg.ie or call 01 513 4048 (monitored answering machine).

ENDS

For more information contact Arlene Hanratty: Tel: +(353) 86 271 4515 Email: arlene@hugg.ie

Note to editor:

History of HUGG: In January 2016, Fiona Tuomey CEO and founder of HUGG, lost her 11-year-old daughter Milly to suicide. Amid the pain, shock, and grief was a longing to meet others who had walked the same road, but were still living and functioning in the 'real world'. This led to HUGG's first support group being setup in Dublin in 2017.

Since then, HUGG continues to grow to meet the demand and requirements for those bereaved by suicide nationwide. HUGG has 16 support groups, 13 offered in-person and 3 online. HUGG focuses on "postvention", a specific form of intervention which is provided after a suicide in recognition of the increased risk of suicidal ideation among the bereaved family and friends.