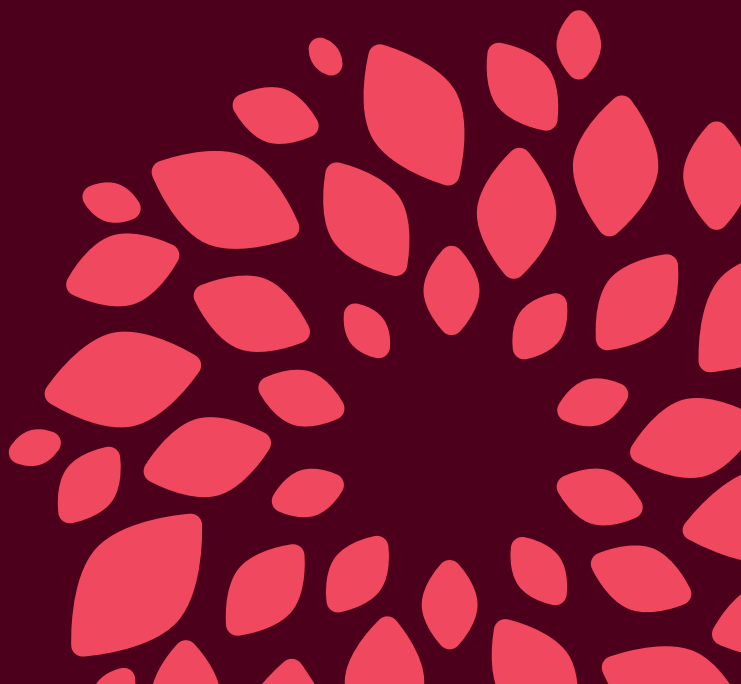




Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment Programme



What is the Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment Programme?

Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment is a group programme for people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI). This group is run by the Psychology Department at St Patrick's Mental Health Services.

The word "cognition" is used to describe how our brain manages important tasks such as thinking, learning, problem-solving and understanding. People with mild cognitive impairment usually notice some changes in one or more areas of their cognition. The different areas of cognition include thinking, language, memory, attention, problem-solving, planning or organising.



People with mild cognitive impairment may find that they can struggle with their everyday activities, for example things like cooking, driving, reading, or remembering to take their medications. Other people, such as your family and friends, might have also noticed these difficulties, and maybe pointed them out to you.

Having a mild cognitive impairment can also make it more likely that you will experience higher levels of anxiety, depression or general emotional distress than you might have done previously.

The Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment group offers support for people to come to terms with the diagnosis, talk about and learn to cope with some of the difficult emotions that can come with this, and speak openly in a group of others who have the same diagnosis and know what it feels like.

The group also helps people to learn more about the diagnosis and what it means.

The group aim is to help people continue to live a fulfilling life with a diagnosis of MCI. Group members will be encouraged to do a lot of the things they are interested in, find meaningful, and make them happy, such as being independent, engaging in hobbies, being active and being sociable.

However, participants might have to engage with these things in a slightly different way, using some compensatory strategies that are taught in the group.

Compensatory strategies are new habits that can be put in place to make up for some of the things our brain is struggling to do, such as pay attention or remember important details.

The strategies that are taught in group are informed by different evidence-based therapies that are designed to help people who are struggling with their cognition, such as cognitive stimulation therapy and cognitive rehabilitation.



Information is also given about lifestyle changes or adaptations that can be made to ensure our brain stays as healthy as possible.

Mild cognitive impairment can affect the whole family system. As such, support is offered to carers and family members too. They are invited into the group to give them space to talk about what they need to best take care of themselves, and also how they can best support their family member.

Who is the Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment Programme for?

- Adults that have a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment or experiences difficulties with memory, planning, organisation, language, word finding, attention or problem solving. If you think you might have mild cognitive impairment but are unsure, we encourage you to discuss this with your GP or your team at St Patrick's Mental Health Services.
- Those who have identified that cognition is an issue in some way and are open and motivated to learn more about it.



- Those who have a family member or carer that can attend one of the group sessions.

Please note, this programme is not suitable for those with a diagnosis of dementia.

What is the structure of the Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment Programme?

The Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment group involves eight group sessions that run once per week. After the fourth group session, each group member attends an individual session with a psychologist to reflect on their experience of the group before completing the rest of the group sessions.

Group members also attend individual sessions with a psychologist before beginning the group and after completing the group.

The Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment group is a closed group, meaning that all participants begin and end the group at the same time.

Who runs the programme?

The Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment group is run by two psychologists and one assistant psychologist.

St Patrick's Mental Health Services supports education, so occasionally a psychologist in clinical training may also facilitate groups.



When and where?

The Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment Programme runs once weekly on Monday afternoons from 2.00pm - 4.00pm. It is an in-person group that takes place at St Patrick's University Hospital, James' Street, Dublin 8.

How are referrals made?

If you are interested in attending the Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment Programme, you can discuss it with your team at St Patrick's Mental Health Services. Your team psychologist might meet with you and help determine if this group is a good fit for your needs.

GPs and Geriatricians can also refer directly to the programme using referral forms on stpatricks.ie, or by contacting the Referral and Assessment Service by email at: referrals@stpatricks.ie or Tel: 01 249 3635.

More information

For further information, contact the Living Well with Mild Cognitive Impairment Programme team on 01 249 3312.

If you are interested in finding out about other psychology programmes available to older adult service users, please don't hesitate to talk to your team at St Patrick's Mental Health Services.



Participant feedback

“It was helpful to know there are fellow sufferers of Mild Cognitive Impairment. That’s what stands out for me. There are other people out there, trying to get better together.”

“I’m glad I did it. It’s helped me get a handle on what’s going on and what has happened to me.”

“The material was simple and to the point. I never wanted to miss a session. The company of the fellow group members was a big factor. Everyone was honest and made genuine contributions. A lot of my past anxieties aren’t anxieties anymore. I’m very grateful for the programme. It really has been helpful.”

“I experienced reciprocal empathy from others.”

“[It was helpful to] receive support from others in the same boat.”

“[I benefited from] the atmosphere. It was never probing on sensitive issues. The presentations were simple and direct. Week by week I was more engrossed.”

“I loved being in this group. There was a lovely atmosphere even when talking about a topic that might be difficult.”

“The group was very cohesive. I’ll miss everybody. It was lovely.”

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