THINK

Teenage Health IN Kerry

A BOOKLET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS

KERRY CHILDREN'S SERVICE COMMITTEE

WWW.KERRYCHILDRENSSERVICES.COM

THINK
Teenage Health IN Kerry

working together
FOR CHILDREN
Kerry Children's Services Committee

The Kerry Children's Services Committee was established in September 2010 and has created working groups to address issues which have a significant impact on the lives of children, young people and their families including Youth Mental Health.

This booklet provides information on youth mental health, and issues that affect young people. It highlights the services that are available when help is needed. You can also log on to our YMH webpage for more information:
http://www.kerrychildrensservices.com/youth-mental-health.html

Kerry Children's Services Committee would like to thank the members of Kinsale Youth Support Services (KYSS) for permitting us to use their excellent MISE Booklet as a template for this Youth Health Booklet. We would like to acknowledge all their hard work & research.

When our mental health is well we can enjoy day to day life and we can get the best out of things. If it is not so good, help is available.

Contents

What Is Mental Health?	04
Depression	06
Anxiety & OCD	08
Eating Disorders	10
Relationships & Sexuality	12
Bullying & Abuse	14
Alcohol	16
Drugs	18
Psychosis	20
Self Harm & Suicide	22
Grief	24
Contacts	26

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is something we all have. Some people have described it as a feeling of contentment, well-being, being able to make decisions, being comfortable with ourselves and with others, being able to have fun and enjoy life. It is important to look after our mental health.

Minding your mental health

Here are some things that help you to maintain good mental health, and which can help you if you start to feel down:

- **Get involved and try out new things**
- **Keep active & eat healthily**
- **Appreciate what you have**
- **Accept yourself for who you are**
- **Develop your creative side**
- **Stay in touch with friends and family**
- **Find some time each day to relax**
- **Set little goals and work towards them**
- **Avoid or limit alcohol**

If you are worried don't be afraid to:

- **Talk to an adult you trust**
- **Ask for and accept help**

CHALLENGES TO MENTAL HEALTH

Everyday stresses with work, school, family and friends can make you irritable, unmotivated, or withdrawn. This is normal and these feelings usually pass. However, if they don't go away, or if you notice changes in your behaviour or the behaviour of someone you know, talk to someone about your concerns or seek further information, help and advice through some of the general websites mentioned below. As you read through this booklet, you will find further details of local and national services available to you or someone you know when mental health challenges are experienced.

Mental health issues may be present if you notice some or all of the following signs:

- **Withdrawing from friends, family, school or work**
- **Change in mood or unusual responses to situations**
- **Changes in sleep patterns-too much or too little**
- **Changes in eating patterns-too much or too little**
- **Doing things that don't make sense to others**
- **Seeing or hearing things that others don't**

If you notice these changes in yourself or others, it might feel a bit scary, but remember that help is available. Talk to a trusted adult and ask them to help you to find help. Visit your GP or local Health Service Offices.

For further information on mental health, please browse the following general websites or contact a 24 Hour Helpline:

- **www.yourmentalhealth.ie**
- **www.headstrong.ie**
- **www.mentalhealthireland.ie**
- **www.headsup.ie**
- **I Life 1800 247 100 or Text 'Help' to 51444 for 1 to 1 support**
- **www.kerrychildrensservices.com**
- **www.spunout.ie**
- **www.healthpromotion.ie**
- **Samaritans 1850 60 90 90 www.samaritans.org**

Finding the Right Help

The right service to help you or someone you know with any of the difficulties discussed in this booklet will depend on the level of the difficulty. When difficulties are severe you will need specialist help. Your GP, family and other health professionals/support services will help you to find the right level of support for you.

DEPRESSION

If you are feeling depressed you may experience changes such as:

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings usually pass within a couple of days. We often use the expression 'I'm feeling depressed' when we're feeling sad or miserable about life. Usually, these feelings pass with time. But if these feelings are interfering with your life and don't go away after a couple of weeks, or if they come back over and over again, it could be a sign that you are depressed in the medical sense of the term.

Symptoms of Depression Include:

- **Persistent sad, anxious or 'empty' feelings**
- **Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism**
- **Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness**
- **Irritability, restlessness**
- **Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex**
- **Fatigue and decreased energy**
- **Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions**
- **Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping**
- **Overeating, or appetite loss**
- **Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts**
- **Persistent aches or pains, headaches**

Everyone can experience mood swings from high to low at times. This is normal. But when mood swings are extreme and interfere with life e.g. long periods of extreme highs – hyper/over-excited/ frenzied to extreme lows - depressive signs, the person may be experiencing a mixed mood disorder. You may hear people talking about **Bipolar** (or sometimes referred to as Manic-Depressive) **Disorder.**

Many people with a depressive illness never seek treatment. But the vast majority, even the most severe depression, can get better with treatment. If you are concerned that you or someone you know might be showing signs of depression it is important to get support.

- **Talk to a GP**
- **http://ie.reachout.com/**
- **www.aware.ie 1890 303 302**
- **www.spunout.ie**
- **www.leanonme.net**
- **Teentxt- Text the word TEEN to 50101**
- **Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081**
- **www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie**
- **www.southwestcounselling.ie**

ANXIETY AND OCD

Some common effects of anxiety & OCD include:

HELP IS AT HAND

ANXIETY AND OCD

Anxiety: Everybody gets anxious at some point in their life. Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, uneasiness, feeling faint, sweating, having jelly legs and feeling your heart racing. When these symptoms get really bad it may lead to a panic attack. Panic attacks can be extremely frightening however they are harmless and are very treatable.

Anxiety can affect both your physical health and your mental health (your behaviour, thoughts and feelings). The symptoms can depend on a number of factors. They may pass quickly or may stay for a long period of time. Talking to your doctor or counsellor can be helpful.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a form of anxiety where a person feels they have to do things repeatedly to prevent bad things happening to themselves or others. For example, washing your hands repeatedly, switching lights on and off repeatedly. If repetitive, unwarranted and excessive behaviour gets in the way of your daily life you may need to seek help.

If you or a friend has some, or any of the symptoms:

- **Talk to your GP**
- **www.teenline.ie 1800 833 634 (7pm to 10pm)- 7 nights**
- **www.letsomeoneknow.ie**
- **www.ocdireland.org**
- **Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081**
- **www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie**
- **www.southwestcounselling.ie**
- **www.oandaireland.com 021 4348728**
- **http://ie.reachout.com/**

EATING DISORDERS

How you may recognise it:

LET SOMEONE KNOW

EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are not primarily about food, but can be seen as a way of coping with emotional distress or other underlying issues. For the person with an eating disorder, controlling the food and the body is their way of relieving distress and achieving some degree of control over their life. Eating disorders can affect anybody, male or female. With appropriate help and support, people can, and do, recover from eating disorders.

Eating disorders can be complex. If you are worried or upset about something it is important to find someone to talk to. Don't bottle it all up.

How you might recognise an eating disorder – signs & symptoms may include:

- Guilt and shame about eating
- Not wanting to eat in front of others
- Preoccupation with food and weight
- Over exercising with the aim of losing weight
- Noticeable weight loss not connected to illness
- Counting calories and dieting when not overweight
- Compulsive over eating
- Frequent weight fluctuations (up & down)

Eating disorders do not include food allergies or illnesses of the digestive system. However, if you are concerned about changes in your eating behaviour or of those of a friend, contact your GP to check it out.

Remember there is help available! With appropriate help and support, people can and do recover from eating disorders.

- Talk to your GP
- www.bodywhys.ie 1890 200 444 Email Support alex@bodywhys.ie
- www.corkoa.ie
- www.bodypositive.com
- http://ie.reachout.com/
- Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081
- www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie
- www.southwestcounselling.ie

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY

There are people in every country, culture & society thinking about their sexuality:

IT IS OKAY TO BE YOU

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY

Relating to and dealing with others is a very important and normal part of being a person. In the teen years, friends are increasingly important and how you relate to family, friends and the wider community will change. One aspect of this is developing sexual feelings and forming new boy/girl-friend relationships. Exploring your sexuality and developing relationships can be a positive and challenging experience during teenage years.

Sexuality is simply part of being human! It covers all aspects of being male or female such as gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, relationships and how we feel about our bodies and ourselves. Society often places labels and pressure on people in relation to sexuality and relationships. It is not uncommon to feel confused or unsure about developing relationships. It is important to take your time to learn about yourself and your own feelings.

FYI The legal age of consent for sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17.

You can avail of support and information from the following:

- **www.B4udecide.ie**
- **Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081**
- **Youth Health Service 021 4220490/1 www.hse.ie Email: YHS@hse.ie**
- **Tralee Family Planning and Women's Health Clinic 066 7125322**
- **STI Clinic, Kerry General Hospital (every 2nd Thursday) to book 021 4966844**
- **Kerry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Ltd. 1800 633333 or 066 7123122**
- **Kerry LGBT Project Ciarrai Amach find us on Facebook**
- **Kerry LGBT Youth Group Belong2 & KDYS, Tralee 066 7121674**
- **www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie**
- **www.southwestcounselling.ie**
- **www.belongto.org**
- **www.thinkcontraception.ie**
- **www.positiveoptions.ie or Text List 50444**

BULLYING AND ABUSE

Bullying & Abuse can take many forms; here are some of the ways it can happen:

TALK OUT, DON'T ACT OUT

BULLYING AND ABUSE

When somebody does something (or fails to do something) which results in notable harm to another person: it is called abuse. Bullying is a form of abuse.

Bullying and abuse can occur in many different ways including

Verbal – Name calling, teasing, taunting, insults, and verbal threats.
Physical – Hitting, kicking, throwing things at someone or spitting.
Social/Emotional – Deliberately ignoring or leaving someone out, putting someone down, blackmailing or forcing someone to do something against their will.
Sexual – When someone is forced to do or watch a sexual act they do not want to or when an older person manipulates a child to do or watch a sexual act. Bullying or abusing someone because of their sexuality or sexual orientation.
Cyber/E-Bullying– Using phones or the internet to hack someone's social media account to post offensive images, spread rumours or send abusive messages; internet stalking; 'hating' on social media sites

Bullying can happen anywhere to anyone regardless of age, class, race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. BULLYING is WRONG. ABUSE is WRONG.

Nobody has the right to hurt you physically or emotionally even if they are in a position of authority or they say they love you. Always refuse to accept abuse and remember that SECRECY is an abusers best weapon, so NEVER KEEP IT A SECRET and remember HELP IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE. The most important thing is to tell somebody you trust.

If you suspect someone is being bullied - Speak Out, Don't Be a Bystander

- **www.abc.tcd.ie**
- **http://ie.reachout.com/**
- **www.childline.ie 1800 66 66 66 (24 Hrs)**
  Text TALK to 50101 (2pm - 10pm)
- **www.ispcc.ie**
- **http://amen.ie 046 902 3718 (9am – 5pm)**
- **www.parentline.ie 01 873 3500 or 1890 927 277**
- **Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081**
- **www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie**
- **www.southwestcounselling.ie**
- **www.internetsafety.ie**
- **www.watchyourspace.ie**
- **www.webwise.ie**

ALCOHOL

It is not uncommon to drink alcohol occasionally. However, drinking alcohol as a young person seriously damages your development. You may have a problem with your alcohol use if you are:

DON'T BOTTLE IT, TACKLE IT!

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is the oldest & most widely used drug in the world.

Most of us use it for enjoyment, but sometimes drinking alcohol can be a problem. Fights, arguments, money troubles, family upsets, unsafe sex and crisis pregnancies are often a result of having had too much to drink. Alcohol can be the cause of hospital admissions for physical illness and accidents. It is also important to remember that alcohol has the potential to be addictive. Alcohol often lowers inhibitions which can result in embarrassing or dangerous behaviour.

Taking control and staying within low-risk drinking limits:

For drinking to be considered 'low risk', the Department of Health and Children currently advises:
Adult women should drink less than 11 standard drinks per week & 2 alcohol free days;
Adult men should drink less than 17 standard drinks per week & 2 alcohol free days.
A standard alcoholic drink in Ireland is considered:

A single measure of spirits = a small glass of wine
= a half pint of beer = an alcopop

These are low risk weekly limits, which should be spread over the week. Drinking 6 or more standard drinks (3 pints of beer) on one occasion is considered binge drinking.

Caution: These guidelines do not apply to people who are ill, run down, on medication or to children. It is not advisable for women to consume alcohol if pregnant or trying to conceive. Drinking alcohol as a young person seriously damages your development.

- **Talk to your GP**
- **www.drugs.ie 1800 459 459**
- **www.yourdrinking.ie**
- **www.spunout.ie**
- **www.drinkaware.ie**
- **www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie**
- **www.al-anon-ireland.org**
- **HSE Addiction Counselling Service 076 1083000 or 066 7184968**
- **Aisling Lodge Addiction Treatment Centre 056 8833777**
- **Cara Lodge Adolescent Treatment Centre for Boys 023 8839000**
- **www.srdtf.ie**

DRUGS

Using drugs can have immediate and long term effects. These effects may vary from person to person. Some immediate & long term effects of drugs include:

YOU USE, YOU LOSE!

DRUGS

While there is a lot of concern about illegal drugs, the most harm and the greatest risk to young people comes from using legal drugs such as alcohol, cigarettes and the inappropriate use of medicines, over-the-counter and/or prescription. People use many different kinds of drugs. These drugs may be legal or illegal, helpful or harmful. Every drug has side-effects and risks, but some drugs have more risks than others, especially illegal drugs. All medicines are drugs but not all drugs are medicines.

The risks and effects of drug use can depend on a number of factors such as:

- What drug is used
- Who is using the drug (especially their mood and personality)
- Why the drug is being used
- Where and how the drug is being used
- The amount of drugs used
- What combination of drugs are used

If you are concerned about someone and their use of drugs, please contact:

- Your GP
- www.drugs.ie 1800 459 459
- Narcotics Anonymous www.nasouth.ie 087 138 6120
- www.srdtf.ie
- Aislinn Adolescent Addiction Treatment Centre 056 8833777
- Cara Lodge Adolescent Treatment Centre for Boys 023 8839000
- HSE Addiction Counselling and Advisory Service 076 1083000 / 066 7184968
- Smokers Quit Line 1850 201203 www.quit.ie

PSYCHOSIS

If someone becomes very confused and appears out of touch with everyone else's perception of the world, they may be experiencing a psychotic episode. They may:

PSYCHOSIS IS TREATABLE, DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP

PSYCHOSIS

Psychosis is a serious mental health disorder. A person who is experiencing psychosis may seem disconnected from reality and display some of these signs:

- **Having hallucinations – visual and auditory**
- **Strange and Disordered Thinking**
- **Having false beliefs known as Delusions**
- **May appear quite flat emotionally**
- **Strange & disorganised behaviour**
- **Disconnected from reality around them**
- **Having difficulty speaking**

Some drugs such as hallucinogens, marijuana, amphetamines and steroids may trigger a psychotic episode. If someone is experiencing a psychotic episode, it is important that they seek help from a doctor who can then refer them to appropriate mental health services.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a very serious mental illness which affects approximately one in every hundred people worldwide. A diagnosis of schizophrenia indicates that psychotic and other mental health symptoms have been present over an extended period of time. Schizophrenia can be a life-long illness which can interfere with a person's daily life and ability to cope with social and work settings. A person who experiences psychosis or schizophrenia will need medical, social and psychological help to manage the symptoms and recover positive control over their lives.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be experiencing some of the above symptoms, it is important to seek advice and help:

- **Contact your GP**
- **Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service**
  066 7144081
- **www.recover.ie 1890 621 631**
- **www.shineonline.ie 1890 621 631**
- **http://ie.reachout.com/**
- **www.mentalhealthireland.ie**
- **www.detect.ie**
- **www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie**
- **www.southwestcounselling.ie**

SELF HARM AND SUICIDE

Feelings & Coping Strategies. Some suggestions to try & some signs to watch for include:

LIFE IS WORTH TALKING ABOUT

Self Harm

Self-harm is when someone deliberately hurts, cuts or injures him/herself. Most people who self harm do not want to die; it is often a way of coping with life, not giving up on it. Any form of self-harm is a dangerous way of coping with distress and should be taken seriously.

If you, or someone you know self-harms it is very important to seek help and support. When you are feeling distressed it may seem that nobody will understand what you are going through, or that you are alone, but remember there is help available.

Suicide

Most people who feel suicidal do not really want to die; they just want to end their pain. You are not weak, crazy or a bad person if you feel suicidal. It only means that you have more pain than you feel able to cope with **Right Now**.

Life has its ups and downs and sometimes it may feel like things cannot get better and you may feel hopeless. If you feel this way it is important to keep yourself safe, to keep going & to keep looking for support to work things out. Try to remember that thoughts about taking your life are just thoughts. They do not mean you have to act on them, no matter how overwhelming they are. The most important thing to do if you are having thoughts of suicide is to talk to someone. Reach out to someone who can help. SUICIDE is NOT an OPTION! There is no way back. It is a final and permanent response to a temporary problem.

Ask for help:

- **Contact a GP, the Samaritans or the Emergency Services 999 / 112**
- **Contact Console 1800 201 890 & 1 Life 1800 247 100 - 24 hrs 7 days a week www.1life.ie**
- **Text Help to 51444 for 1-to-1 support**

What to do to help if you are concerned that someone has thoughts of suicide:

- **Speak openly about suicide**
- **Show you care**
- **Listen**
- **Encourage a person to get help**

- **www.samaritans.org 1850 60 90 90**
- **HSE Suicide Prevention Helpline 1800 742 745**
- **www.letsomeoneknow.ie**
- **www.suicideaware.ie**
- **www.mindingyourhead.info**
- **South Doc (Cork & Kerry) 1850 335 999**
- **Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081**
- **www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie**
- **www.southwestcounselling.ie**
- **www.pieta.ie**
- **www.yspi.eu**

GRIEF

Some of the things you may feel or experience after losing someone:

TO GRIEVE IS NORMAL AND IT TAKES TIME

GRIEF

It is normal to feel a sense of shock when someone close to you has died. Experiencing shock can mean you have a physical and emotional reaction. You may feel dizzy, nauseous, dazed, numb or empty.

Everybody grieves differently and lots of things can affect the way people experience grief. When someone we care for dies, our security in life is shaken. As we respond to the loss we may experience a number of reactions – Shock, Numbness, Denial, Sadness, Anger, Bargaining and Wishful Thinking. Acceptance of loss and coming to terms with living life without the person we loved is an important part of a grieving process. A sense of loss and sadness may always remain. Give yourself time and seek help and support from those around you to work out your feelings. A number of different factors may affect the way people grieve. Knowing these may help to understand yours and other people's reactions to loss. If someone's reaction is different to yours, it does not necessarily mean they care less or more than you! This is just each person's way of coping.

Some factors which influence your grief include:

- The type of relationship you had with the person
- The suddenness of the loss
- Cultural background - cultural groups express grief in different ways.
- Gender- males and females may have different ways of managing their grief. Males are less likely to show their feelings while females are more likely to share feelings.
- Other losses - a new loss may bring up a previous loss which can trigger more grief.

Help and support is available for you, or someone you know who is grieving. You may want to talk to your GP or contact some of the following agencies:

- www.barnardos.ie
- www.console.ie Console 1 Life 1800 201 890
- HSE Information line 1850 241 850 www.hse.ie
- Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081
- www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie
- www.southwestcounselling.ie
- Rainbows 066 7125932

CONTACTS

Key Local Contacts

If you are worried about someone's behaviour or mental health you should speak to your GP

- **South Doc 1850 335 999**
- **Kerry Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service 066 7144081**
- **Kerry General Hospital Accident & Emergency 066 7184000**

Local Health Service Executive (HSE)

The HSE provides health and social services to everyone living in Ireland. The Kerry Local Health Office can provide a more detailed guide to the support services available in Kerry. Services available in Kerry are wide ranging and include general practitioner services, public health nursing, child health services, community welfare, social work, addiction counselling and treatment, child, adolescent and family psychology services, occupational therapy, psychiatric services and home help.
The Local Health Office is based at: HSE South, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry Tel: (066) 7184500. For further information contact the HSE information line on 1850 241850 or log onto www.hse.ie

- **HSE Child Protection Social Work Department: Tralee (066) 7121566 Killarney (064) 6636030**
- **HSE Child, Adolescent & Family Psychology Service: (066) 7199708**

Local Counselling Services:

- **Kerry Adolescent Counselling Service www.kerryadolescentcounselling.ie 066 7181333**
- **South West Counselling Centre www.southwestcounselling.ie 064 6636416**

Youth & Community Support Services:

- **Kerry Diocesan Youth Service www.kdys.ie 066 7121674 / 064 6631748 / 068 23744**
- **Family Resource Centre – for the contact details of all family resource centres in Kerry please see www.kerrychildrensservices.com/parenting-family-learning.html**
- **Jigsaw Kerry www.jigsaw.ie/kerry 066 7186785**
- **Homeless Information Centre, Tralee 066 7129100**
- **Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre 066 7123122**
- **Living Links www.livinglinks.ie 087 900 6300**
- **Aware Support Group Tralee www.aware.ie 087 299 3124**
- **Tralee International Resource Centre (TIRC) www.tirc.ie 066 7127918**
- **Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative (KASI) Drop In Centre www.kasi.ie 064 6620705**
- **Kerry Travellers Health & Community Development Project www.kerrytravellersproject.wordpress.com 066 7120054**

CONTACTS

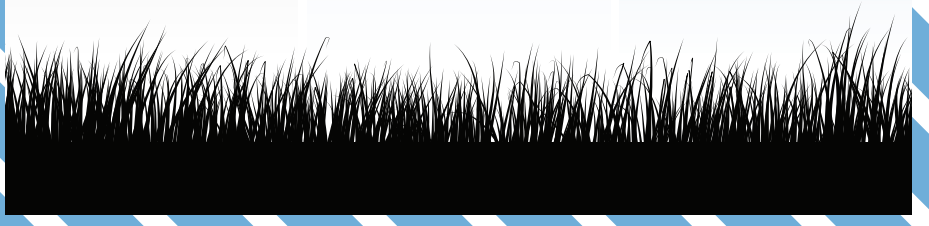
Key National Contacts

- Barnardos www.barnardos.ie 1850 222 300
- Parentline www.parentline.ie 1890 927 277
- HSE information line 1850 24 1850 www.hse.ie
- Childline www.childline.ie 1800 66 66 66 24 hour service for under 18s Online and text service available too
- ISPCC www.ispcc.ie 021 450 9588
- Health Promotion www.healthpromotion.ie
- Spun Out www.spunout.ie
- Mental Health Ireland www.mentalhealthireland.ie
- Let Someone Know www.letsomeoneknow.ie
- Aware Support & Information on Depression www.aware.ie 1890 303 302
- OCD Ireland www.ocdireland.org
- Eating Disorder Association of Ireland www.bodywhys.ie 1890 200 444
- Belong To www.belongto.org
- Web Wise www.webwise.ie
- ABC Anti-Bullying Centre www.abc.tcd.ie
- Drugs & Alcohol www.drugs.ie
- Detect: Psychosis Information Website www.detect.ie
- Reach Out www.ie.reachout.com
- Console www.console.ie 1800 201 890
- Samaritans www.samaritans.org 1850 60 90 90
- Pieta House www.pieta.ie
- TCD Anti-Bullying Centre www.abc.tcd.ie

THINK

Teenage Health IN Kerry

For further information on issues discussed in this booklet, please log on to the Kerry Children's Services Website for links to information and support services.

WWW.KERRYCHILDRENSSERVICES.COM

Kerry Children's Services Committee would like to thank Kinsale Youth Support Services for the use of their MISE Booklet as a template for this Youth Mental Health Booklet.