



Dr Tony Bates

**FAIR DEAL
(NURSING HOMES
SUPPORT SCHEME)**

**WHAT HAPPENED
LAST WEEK**

Wednesday 18 May 2011

Upset and confusion followed the story last Wednesday night that the budget for the 'Fair Deal' scheme for 2011 had run out less than half way through the year and that, therefore, the scheme was going to be suspended, pending a review.

Reasons for this drastic turn of events were thought to include greater than anticipated demand for 'Fair Deal' beds and the cost of private nursing homes increasing by 4% this year. The collapse of property values was also considered to be a factor.

Organisations like Age Action Ireland took 'floods of calls' from families extremely worried about meeting nursing home costs if the scheme ceased.

COMING BACK

Friday 20 May 2011

As many older people and their families continued in panic mode about this news it was disclosed less than twenty-four hours later that the HSE had spent €100 million of the 'Fair Deal' 2011 budget on other things like medication and therapy.

Relieved older people and their families were glad to hear Minister James Reilly announce that this money would be taken back and funding restored to the 'Fair Deal' scheme.

The Minister said that older people who now apply for a bed and are approved will get nursing home places for the foreseeable future.

He also said he wanted to see greater use of home care packages as an alternative to placement in a nursing home.

Age Action Ireland said it was 'horrified' at the revelation that the money was used for other purposes by the HSE but welcomed the Minister's commitment to restoring the funding.

"People have been put through unnecessary anxiety," Robin Webster CE of the organisation said.

Over 22,000 people were receiving financial support under the scheme at the end of April 2011.

An investigation into the operation of the Fair Deal scheme is still being planned.

The average national cost per week of a stay in a private nursing home is €875. It is €1245 in a public nursing home."

Jigsaw model, he believes.

"It has to be something that the young people brand themselves by telling one another about it. No amount of marketing by adults could achieve the kind of buy-in by youth that comes from young people recommending it to their friends as a good place to go."

It often takes a few visits, however, before the young person asks for the real help they need when they visit a Jigsaw centre.

"Often the big thing is that it's not the mammy's GP that they are seeing.

After a few visits the young person might say 'I have a friend who took his own life recently and I have suicidal feelings myself sometimes.' At that point he might agree to see a counsellor at Jigsaw. That's what happens. Trust is built up and the young person can get the help they need."

JIGSAW TRALEE

Jigsaw in Tralee opened in August 2010.

"The centre is just off the town centre, near the train station so it's easy for young people to see and get to.

The Tralee centre's strongest ticket has been their strong youth advisory panel – there are 250 people on it so there is strong youth engagement."

GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO OPEN FIVE MORE JIGSAW SITES

Government funding has been agreed for five more Jigsaw sites around the country but Tony Bates can't say yet where they will be.

"We are already working with 14 communities but we have to advertise for expressions of interest and go through a transparent approval process. Our recommendations will go to the HSE for approval then as they will be providing the money."

Training courses are offered to communities before a Jigsaw centre opens in the area and the work of all the centres is rigorously evaluated.

Fund-raising is also very important for Jigsaw and

corporate sponsors like O2 have been very useful in raising awareness of Jigsaw and youth mental health through their 'ThinkBig' campaign, he says.

"Plans for the future include virtual reality 'Jigsaws' where those who check out the website can 'meet' all the staff online before they ever go through the doors.

Some young people would be very disinclined to engage with people, and the only thing they engage with may be the internet so we have to use that."

TOP 10 PRESENTING ISSUES AT JIGSAW GALWAY

1. Anxiety/tension/worry
2. Anger
3. Stress
4. Family problems
5. Depression
6. Use of alcohol
7. Low self-esteem
8. Isolating from others/withdrawal
9. Anger control
10. Parent/youth conflict

TESTIMONIALS

"I was nervous at first but I was quickly put at ease. I liked how welcoming it was." (Shona, 17).

"Jigsaw has been one of the best experiences I've had. I used to think that only the weak asked for help but I was wrong."

It takes a strong person to come forward and ask for help and leave their pride at the front door. It really is the case that a problem shared is a problem halved." (Marie, 19)

02 'Think Big' positive mental health comments contributed by young people to the www.02ThinkBig.ie website:

- Don't take tomorrow to bed with you.
- The more often I have a good attitude the more often I have a good day.
- Every minute of anger is 60 seconds of happiness wasted.

Note: We will feature the online support available from another youth mental health initiative www.reachout.com in a future issue. **CL**

FIONA HOBAN

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Meaning of life

recently said in exasperation to a friend: "If it's not one thing, it's another." "It is," he replied, "and thank God."

His response echoes what many existential therapists advocate – that it is a dangerous misconception of mental health to assume that what we need is equilibrium, or homeostasis, ie, a tensionless state. What we actually need is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling towards something: a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. Through this striving and struggling, each of us is challenged to find meaning in our lives. Such meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by us and us alone.

As far as the existential therapists are concerned, man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to seek a meaning in his life. If we cannot find meaning, we suffer from 'give-up-itis'.

Alternatively, a lack of meaning is often compensated for by the will to power, the will to money and the will to pleasure. The seeking of immediate pleasure takes over. We may gain power, status and success but we have failed in our ability to find real meaning in any of it. What invariably ensues is a feeling of boredom, restlessness and unease. In order to distract ourselves from such unease, we seek out even more power, money and pleasure (and whatever you're having yourself!).

Victor Frankl's book *Man's Search For Meaning* details his time spent in the Nazi concentration camps. Many inmates asked the question: "Will we survive the camp? For, if not, all this suffering has no meaning."

This is a common way of coping



Life is potentially meaningful under any conditions – even those which are most miserable.



with hardship if you think about it. We typically say: I can put up with the hardship if I get something at the end of it – even if it's simply an end to the hardship. If I don't get anything at the end of it, then there's no point.

Remarkably, Frankl turns this on its head. He did not ask: "Will I survive the camp?" He asked: "Has all this suffering meaning?" For, if not, then ultimately there is no meaning to survival. A life whose meaning depends upon whether one escapes or not, ultimately would not be worth living at all.

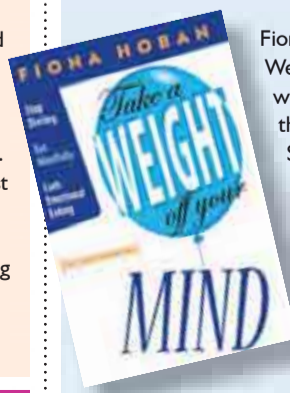
Makes you think, doesn't it? If I were to apply his philosophy to the hardship of this economic recession, for example, it would follow thus: if the meaning of my life depends solely on whether or not I manage to survive the economic recession, then ultimately my life is not worth living at all. Yikes!

What he's getting at is that life is potentially meaningful under any conditions – even those which are most miserable. He says: "Those who have a 'why' to live can bear with almost any 'how'." And it's up to each of us to find the why.

So rather than asking: "How much longer do I have to endure this?" Or: "What are the chances that this will pay off in the end?" He challenges us to answer this question: what meaning can I derive from this particular hardship in order to give my life a real sense of meaning?

I'll finish with one final quote from Frankl: "Man is that being who invented the gas chambers; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips."

GET IN TOUCH



Fiona Hoban works as a counsellor in Westport, Co Mayo and also lectures with the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Institute of Ireland (NCPII). She delivers well-being and motivational talks at various conferences and workshops throughout Ireland. For more details go to www.fionahoban.ie

If you would like to get Fiona's advice or insight on a particular subject please email info@fionahoban.ie or write to Fiona Hoban, Irish Country Living, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12.

WORDS OF LIFE

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3 v 16.