



Creative Connections

It Takes a Village  

CAMHS-ID Parent Wellbeing Hub




WHY THIS MATTERS

For many parents, attending clinics or hospitals can bring back painful memories.

It can remind them of:

-  a diagnosis
-  difficult assessments
-  crisis interventions
-  discussions about risk and uncertainty
-  feeling unheard or overwhelmed

Simply walking into a clinic building can evoke anxiety and emotional distress. 

The library provided a neutral, welcoming community space where parents could arrive without pressure.





WHAT PARENTS TOLD US

-  "Less intimidating than a clinic."
-  "A place where I could just arrive."
-  "I didn't feel under pressure."
-  "It was nice to meet other parents who understood."
-  "I wasn't expected to explain everything."



Many parents reported feeling calmer simply by being in a community space with no expectation to discuss diagnoses, behaviours or appointments.

WHAT EMERGED

-  Feeling welcomed
-  Reduced anxiety
-  Connection with others
-  A sense of belonging
-  Increased confidence attending future sessions
-  Feeling understood by people with shared experiences



WEEK 1

A Safe Place to Arrive

Creating a Neutral Community Space for Mental Health Support



THE MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS



EMOTIONAL SAFETY

A space where parents felt welcome without expectations or demands.



CONNECTION

Reducing social isolation through shared lived experience.



VALIDATION

Recognising the emotional realities of caring for a child with intellectual disability and mental health needs.




HOPE

Building opportunities for supportive peer relationships.






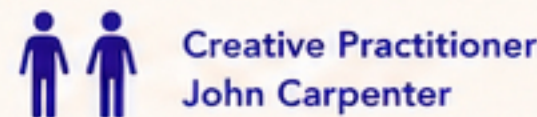
WELLBEING

Providing time for reflection, self-care and emotional regulation.

 A focus on parental mental health and wellbeing strengthens families and supports better outcomes for children.

WEEK 1 AT A GLANCE

-  Focus: Creating Safety & Connection
-  Theme: A Safe Place to Arrive
-  Creative Activity: Painting a House
-  Approach: Low demand, relational, and parent-led
-  Who: Parents and Carers of children with intellectual disabilities and complex mental health needs
-  When: Week 1 of a seven-week wellbeing journey
-  Where: Local Fingal Library



The CNS Beyond the Clinic Doors

Creative Connections demonstrated how CAMHS-ID Clinical Nurse Specialists can deliver mental health promotion and early intervention in community settings. Support was brought into a familiar, accessible environment – the library.



Sláintecare



Right Care



Right Place






Right Time

Providing support closer to where people live and connect.


OPTIONAL CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Painting a House



-  The painting activity was entirely optional.
-  Parents were invited to paint a house or place that represented:
 -  safety
 -  comfort
 -  belonging
 -  somewhere they could simply "be"

The activity served as a gentle reflective exercise rather than an art task.

Participation was voluntary, low demand and adaptable to individual comfort levels. For some parents, painting provided a way to engage without needing to talk. 

KEY LEARNING

The therapeutic intervention was not the artwork.

The therapeutic intervention was the creation of a psychologically safe community space where parents could connect, reflect and access mental health support outside traditional healthcare environments.

This became the foundation upon which the rest of the Creative Connections journey was built. 