

## **Aware and mytaxi launch new ‘Drivers of Change’ mental health campaign**

**Wednesday, January 31, 2018:** A new campaign by Aware and mytaxi aimed at encouraging taxi drivers to use their nationwide reach to help promote positive mental health was launched today.

With one in four people using a mental health service at some stage of their lives according to Mental Health Ireland, the ‘Drivers of Change’ initiative is focused on helping taxi drivers to use their daily interaction with the public as an opportunity to become positive mental health advocates across Ireland.

The new multi-media campaign, which kicked off with a mental health workshop for taxi drivers in Clan Na nGael GAA Club, Co. Dublin features an innovative video discussing mental health challenges, stigma and highlighting the services available to help those affected. The ‘Drivers of Change’ video will be distributed to multiple audiences via an array of digital and social channels over the coming weeks.

Commenting at the launch, Brid O’Meara, Director of Services at Aware said: “We were delighted with the opportunity to partner with mytaxi on this initiative. Taxi drivers are very well placed in the community to assist in the reduction of stigma in the area of mental health. Our first workshop with drivers, which is hopefully the beginning of many, was a very valuable opportunity to impress upon the drivers the role they can play in signposting information and supporting services where appropriate. There is real potential for taxi drivers to foster positive change as part of this campaign.”

Christopher Flynn, a driver with mytaxi who attended the first workshop, said: “The Aware workshop and introductory training gave me a real insight into the mental health challenges faced by so many people in Ireland on a daily basis. It supported real awareness-building for me, and I now feel better equipped to impact positively on the general population around mental health issues. I would strongly urge my colleagues to also get involved in this campaign - our daily interaction with the public gives us a real opportunity to relieve some of the pressures felt by those suffering in this area.”

The three-hour workshop for taxi drivers, facilitated by Director of Services at Aware, Brid O’Meara, covered topics such as Aware’s national services, an overview of mental health conditions in Ireland, symptoms of depression, how to have a conversation with someone who appears depressed, stressed, or anxious and tips for positive mental health.

Drivers that participate in the campaign will also be encouraged to use Aware stickers and leaflets in their taxis as part of educating themselves and their passengers about mental health generally, the Aware organisation, and its services.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign, Roisin O'Brien, Head of Marketing, mytaxi Ireland, said: "Aware and mytaxi are partnering to give our taxi drivers the opportunity to also become drivers of mental health change in Ireland. Taxi drivers offer the perfect resource to challenge mental health stigmas and, with the benefit of an information workshop, provide information and signposting services in an informal setting. mytaxi is very pleased to give our drivers the chance to have a positive impact in this important area."

The 'Drivers of Change' campaign will involve public outreach using the driver-passenger video through Ireland's biggest Facebook groups, Facebook Messenger ad campaigns, and a focus on drivers sharing the video with their networks.

For further information on the campaign, watch the campaign video at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/AwareIreland/videos/101561523554695>

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