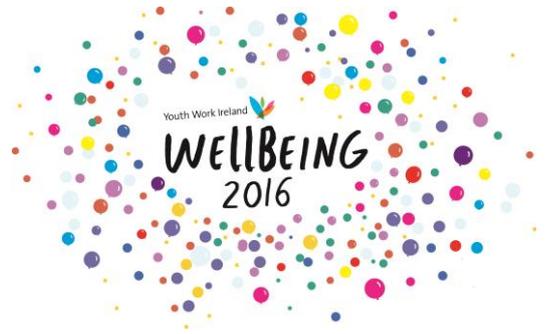


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Youth Work Ireland  
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## **Hundreds Gather at Well Being 2016 Conference to Discuss Role of Youth Services in Improving Mental Health and Young Peoples Well-Being**

Hundreds of young people, volunteers and youth workers will gather today in Dublin Castle to examine how youth work and youth projects contribute to improving the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Youth Work Ireland's WellBeing 2016 annual conference will be opened by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Katherine Zappone and will be led by young MCs. The event will also hear from Minister of State for Mental Health Helen Mc Entee along with Dr. Fergus Heffernan a leading psychologist and media commentator. Other issues covered will be anxiety, counselling, traveller wellbeing and much more. The event will also feature music and art exhibitions along with a wellbeing hub and even some massage and yoga! Through exhibitions, presentations, displays, showcases, demonstrations and workshops delegates will learn inspirational and practical skills they can take back to their youth group to support young people's mental wellbeing.

Explaining her role in the conference, 17-year-old Meghan Killilea, one of the two young Masters of Ceremonies for the event said she became involved because, "I believe young people can make a difference for mental wellbeing. This is something that is too important to just stand back and ignore. If we all get involved, we can make a difference. That's what WellBeing 2016 does."

"We wanted to raise awareness, but also show young people what they can do, so there are ideas and activities that they can take back to their clubs and projects." Said Daryl Kane (19) the other Master of Ceremonies.

"I am delighted to be given the opportunity to open the Youth Work Ireland National Consensus Conference and believe it offers a space for policy makers, young people and practitioners to address the topic which has been chosen as the theme of the Conference, namely wellbeing and more specifically youth work's contribution to young people's mental wellbeing. Youth work plays a fundamental role in providing support to thousands of young people across the country. It strives to equip them with the skills necessary for positive mental health such as confidence, resilience and life management and the safe and supportive space offered by youth workers is a resource young people consider essential." Said Katherine Zappone Minister for Children and Youth Affairs at the event

"Mental health has been, and continues to be, a major issue for young people and those who work with them. This was evident at last year's conference when delegates voted for mental health to be the focus of Youth Work Ireland's work in 2016. Rather than exploring the huge range of issues across the whole spectrum of mental health we thought it would be better to focus on a tangible part of this agenda; namely anxiety and building resilience. We are delighted to have Dr Fergus Heffernan, Ireland's leading voice and educator on stress management as our keynote speaker today" said Patrick Burke, CEO of Youth Work Ireland

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