



### **The Beginnings of the Rutland Centre**

The Rutland Centre was founded 40 years ago by Fr Raphael Short and Mary Bolton. Fr Short was a visionary priest, educated in clinical psychology. He trained in the Minnesota Model in the U.S. before bringing groundbreaking alcohol addiction treatment techniques to Ireland.

One of the cornerstones of the Minnesota Model which resonated with him was the positive impact of 'talking therapy'. He saw the significant positive impact this could serve as a means of helping individuals in need of alcohol treatment.

In addition to delivering alcohol addiction therapy himself, Fr Short created and delivered onsite and overseas training programmes so that others could join him and help those in need.

Mary Bolton was an inspirational therapist, initially recruited by Fr Short. She had a unique ability to connect with individuals and their families, accompanied by unrivalled empathy with their unique circumstances.

Initially based in Monastery Road in Clondalkin, the centre moved to its current premises on Knocklyon Avenue in December 1983. The Rutland Centre was the first addiction treatment centre in Ireland to follow the Minnesota Model, or the 12 Steps approach.

We estimate that in the last 40 years, 10,000 people have been treated at the Rutland Centre. What began as primarily a centre for treating alcohol addiction has grown into the largest private addiction rehabilitation centre in Ireland, treating addictions of all sorts including food, drugs, sex, gaming, pornography and gambling.

### **The Mission of the Rutland Centre**

So much has changed in the past 40 years in Ireland. One thing that hasn't changed is the mission of the Rutland Centre. Our goal is to provide a world-class standard of addiction treatment to guide individuals and their families into recovery.

The Rutland Centre has always integrated the most recent and relevant research into our treatment model, but certain key aspects of our treatment have been this way since 1978. For example, we run a drug-free program and we always have done. A central part of our ethos is that we do not treat addiction with any mood-altering medications. Our residents have also undergone detoxification prior to beginning treatment at the Rutland Centre.

At the Rutland Centre, we have fundamental beliefs that underpin all of the work we do.

- We believe that every person trapped in a cycle of addiction wants help.
- We believe that every person is capable of change.

- We believe that no-one can change another person.

In this way, our role is to facilitate an individual's journey to recovery. Our contribution is to provide the most appropriate support and guidance to them, to give them the best chance at achieving recovery.

With 40 years' experience in assisting clients in addiction recovery, we have seen people completely transform their lives under our care. Our clients take back the power they need to change their own lives, with help from us in identifying the parts of their lives they can work on.

### **The Values of the Rutland Centre**

Since we opened, we have held certain values dear, and these inform how we relate to our clients. We always:

- Treat all clients with dignity and respect.
- See each client as a whole person, not just an 'addict'.
- Support our clients in their courageous struggle to tackle their illness.

It's very important to us that clients are treated as complete individuals and that their addiction is understood to be one aspect of their lives, albeit a dominant aspect. Since the beginning of the Rutland Centre, we have considered addiction a disease that is separate to the individual affected by it. We also subscribe to the view that addiction is in itself a primary disease that warrants direct treatment in its own right.

These underlying beliefs and values have been pillars of our organisation for 40 years. At the same time, we are ever-evolving in our approach to treatment as we incorporate the latest treatment options endorsed by global experts.

### **The Stigma of Addiction**

Much has happened in Ireland in the last 40 years. In many ways society has grown more accepting and compassionate than in days gone by. Unfortunately, we still find that addiction carries a huge stigma and this can exacerbate an already challenging situation for someone.

The stigma of addiction creates an unfriendly environment for an individual to seek help, as the culture is one of blaming people for their addictions and judging them for their struggle. Ironically, this judgement is often what prevents someone from asking for help and can actively keep them trapped in a cycle of addiction.

There are still derogatory words used to describe people struggling with addiction, and this negative language creates a reality in which these people are dehumanised. That's why Recovery Month, celebrated every September, is so important. By raising awareness of these issues and changing the language we use, we can give a positive message of hope, of life beyond addiction, and of the potential every single person has to achieve recovery.

While the stigma of addiction is one thing that has not changed too much in 40 years, we are optimistic that open communication can develop greater empathy around addiction in our society.