 AMACK: Social care training, support, supervision, reflection, mentoring and ideas.\_\_\_

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**The Student Mentoring Programme:**

The programme was brought to inception in conjunction with Social Care Ireland, it was designed to facilitate access to the annual conference for social care students who ordinarily would struggle with self and professional autonomy. It was piloted with two students being supported by two mentors for the two days of the conference. Those original participants evaluated the process and Social Care Ireland decided to support ten students at the 2023 and the 2024 conference. The student profile can include those who came through the college access programmes, those who have come through the care system, those who come from marginalised groups in society, those in recovery from poor mental health and or addiction etc and or any student that has struggled to get to where they are today.

**How do we support them?**

The support is twofold, it includes the financial and a mentoring component. The financial cost can be borne by an individual or an organisation, the cost covers two nights in the hotel, tickets to the conference and tickets to the awards ceremony. The mentoring component is fulfilled by an individual or organisation volunteering an experienced senior social care professional taking part in the conference and giving all their time to the student to enhance the students experience of the event. It is in this connection that the students have gained most, they are assisted by their mentor to reflect on any of the workshops that they have participated in with the mentor brining an experienced and critical eye to help the student have a more nuanced understanding of what they are taking part in. The student/mentor relationship is about helping the student feel safe, supported and unafraid to explore their professional autonomy in a space that is set up for them so that they feel their needs are being me without judgement. The whole programme is supported from Day 1 by Adrian (Ado) McKenna who will be there all through the process to guide and support all the participants.

Regards

Ado