

# Redefining Institutional Stigma Education (RISE) - development of an innovative learning module for healthcare professionals

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## Background

- HIV continued to be a stigmatized condition in society
- Healthcare providers (HCP) are a major source of stigma with over a quarter of patients reporting feeling stigma in the healthcare space
- HCPs have no formal or structured education on HIV stigma throughout their training
- There are no healthcare education provisions in Ireland to address the gap

## Aims & Objectives

- Produce and disseminate an online module that provides a multidimensional approach to HIV stigma education in Ireland

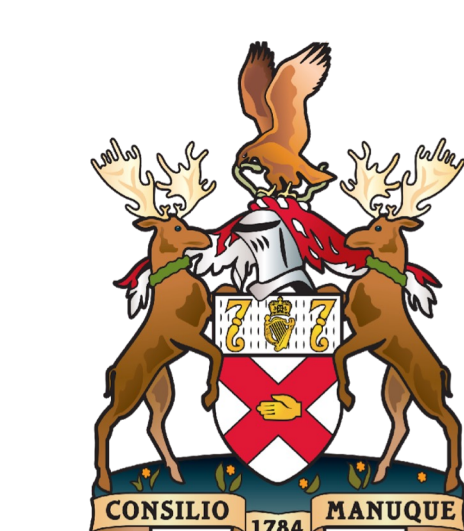
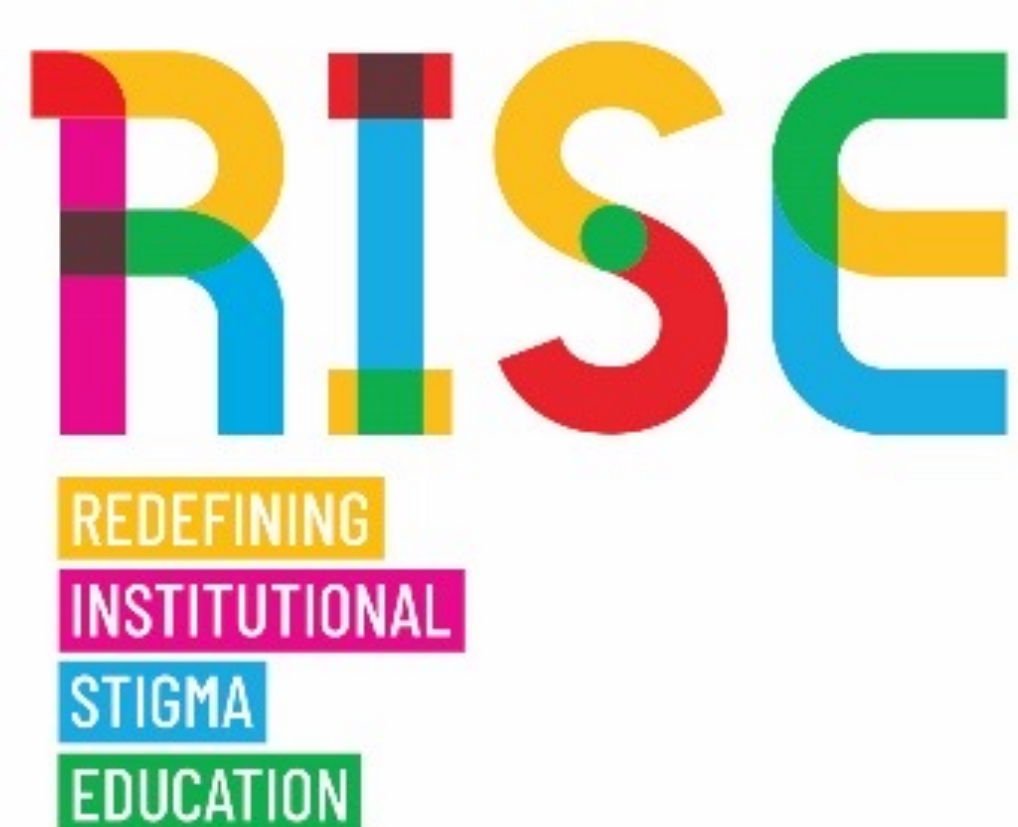
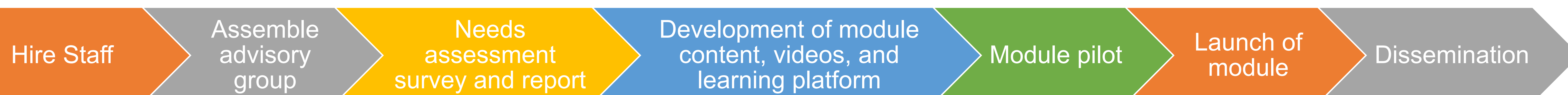
## Methodology

- RISE was set up as part of a Student-Staff Engagement Partnership (StEP) project
- The funding was used to apply for a larger fellowship fund that would facilitate staff hire, multimedia production costs, and platform
- Staff comprising a project lead, senior project advisor of person living with HIV, and a senior researcher were hired
- An advisory group was assembled that comprised of community members, academic staff, members of stakeholder organizations, and healthcare professionals
- A needs assessment survey of HCPs was done to identify gaps in knowledge
- Module learning objectives, content, videos, and learning platform was developed with consultation with advisory group
- Module was piloted with 20 HCPs and medical students with feedback integrated back into the module



**SCAN FOR**  
**ACCESS TO**  
**FREE**  
**COURSE**

RISE combines **theory**, **lived experiences**, and **practical roleplay** videos on essential skills for healthcare professionals on providing **culturally competent HIV care**, including delivering an HIV diagnosis and being an upstander. The module has received CPD accreditation from the RCPI and has been successfully integrated into Irish medical school curricula.



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## Results

- Launched by Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at an RCSI event with media coverage
- 2.5-hour free online module on HIV stigma
- Report published in July 2024
- Royal College of Physicians of Ireland CPD accreditation for 3.0 credits
- Integration into University of Galway and RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences Medicine Curricula
- Integration into Galway Sexual Assault Treatment Unit training
- Engagement with Irish College of General Practitioners
- **320** healthcare professionals/students have received certificate to date and on-going!
- **61%** of participants feel more prepared to communicate accurate information about HIV to combat stigma
- **52%** of participants indicated they are more comfortable being an upstander when faced with a stigmatizing situation

## Dissemination

- Medical faculty at University of Galway and RCSI university of Medicine and Health Sciences were approached for integration into curricula – which were successfully implemented
- A shortened version of the module was provided to BST trainees, presented at grand rounds, and to ID departments at Galway University Hospital and Beaumont Hospital
- On-going efforts to engage other professional bodies and training schemes, specially GPs
- Project was shared internationally at Gilead Sciences Fellowship event that allowed engagement with UK stakeholders

## Discussion and conclusions

- This project clearly increased awareness and competency of HIV stigma among healthcare professionals
- Used a person-centred approach to medical education regarding stigmatized topics can be immensely useful tool in pedagogy
- It aids in the development of safe spaces for those living with HIV leading to increased retention and eventually their health outcomes
- It is important to note that the module is lengthy and therefore limits update
- Given nature of the content, there is a high risk of “preaching to the choir” where those who may need the education most may have lower uptake. Therefore, important to continue integration into formal teaching

## Acknowledgements

- This project was funded by Gilead Sciences Fellowship fund
- This project would not be possible without the incredible stories shared by people living with and impacted by HIV. We are grateful for them to have allowed ourselves to share them with the aim of improving healthcare spaces
- Many thanks to Camilla Wemyss for on-going administrative support of the project