

Nutrient therapy saved my life

A natural and effective approach to mental health is proving a big help to depression sufferers, writes **Maeve Halpin**

AT ANY given time, up to 400,000 people in Ireland suffer from depression. Rates of sedative and tranquilliser use are increasing, especially among professionals and senior managers. Many people are struggling with ongoing mental health issues, depending on daily medication to function.

The suicide rate in Ireland is higher than the European average. The personal, social and economic cost of mental illness is high and continues to rise.

A novel form of therapy is now available that may provide hope for some sufferers. Two Irish doctors, father-and-son team Edmond and Andrew O'Flaherty, are at the forefront of providing a powerful and effective form of psychiatric treatment called nutrient therapy. First developed in the 1950s in Canada, nutrient therapy assesses the balance of nutrients present in the patient's bloodstream. Doses of specific nutrients are then prescribed, with each treatment tailored to the unique biochemistry of the individual patient.

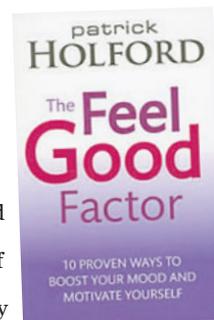
Tracy Quinn believes that discovering nutrient therapy saved her life. Tracy's parents split up when she was 16, and at 18 she moved back to Ireland from New Zealand with her mother and younger brother. Having dropped out of school and feeling stranded in a new country with no friends and no sense of direction, she slid into depression.

Although medication helped at the time, she was at the beginning of a rollercoaster of mental health problems that continued throughout her 20s. These episodes of depression were followed in her late 20s by periods of crippling anxiety.

Relationship break-ups would precipitate a "meltdown", which necessitated further medication.

"It was awful," says Tracy, "and it got worse over the years. I would feel useless, despairing, lost, full of self-criticism. I could say I have a degree in being lost."

The hopelessness of her situation, lurching from one depressive episode to another, led her to seriously contemplate suicide on more than one occasion. In 2011, Tracy checked herself into a psychiatric hospital.



NEW LEASE OF LIFE:
Tracy Quinn's road to recovery started after reading 'The Feelgood Factor' (right)