

Connect

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MRII



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Issue 14 - September 2023



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The MRII is committed to the promotion of professionalism and best practice for all Healthcare Industry Representatives. We provide educational, development and networking opportunities, enabling our members to interact in a relaxed and friendly environment.



Professional Development
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Industry Representatives



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Welcome to CONNECT



Louise Brannigan, MRII President

President Address at Pulse: the National Medical Sales Conference 2023

On behalf of myself, the MRII Council, MRII members and our National Co-ordinator Andrea may I extend to all of you a most sincere warm welcome here this afternoon. Today is one of the most important events in the calendar of the MRII.

I also wish to extend our welcome and gratitude to our speakers and sponsors who are here today. Without their generosity we could not run this event. See page 17 for sponsor details.

My name is Louise Brannigan, I am delighted to be here today to speak to you as the newly elected MRII President, as we look forward to our day ahead which is offering you the opportunity to Re-engage, Re-energise, and Re-connect with industry colleagues and sponsors.

To make an impact as representatives we are required to be professional, insightful, personable, loyal, dynamic, intuitive, compassionate, organised, knowledgeable, flexible, target driven and incredible planners and schedulers.

Staying motivated in our roles to deliver results can be greatly assisted by interacting with and learning from

your peers. Your peers understand your challenges and successes. Today it is important to spend time with your peers.

Your membership secures the future of the MRII – this in turn helps us continue to assist those starting out in their career, members who are transitioning into new roles, and members progressing in their roles. Your membership also provides an opportunity for you to support yourself to rise to any opportunities and challenges your role presents.

When I joined the MRII in 2016 I was working with Ashfield Healthcare (now Inizio Engage), I was part of their syndicated team. Ashfield supported me in preparation for sitting the MRII examination the same year.

I have remained a member since, and in 2019 I joined the MRII Council.

My progression was made possible by utilising the development opportunities our professional body provides.

Finally – thank you once more for making the time for your attendance.

Thank you for our members' companies and management who have facilitated you being here.

Thank you to our sponsors and speakers.

Go raibh maith agaibh agus bain sult as do trathnóna.

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Thursday
April 25th
Westgrove Hotel,
Kildare



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- › **Are you considering a Healthcare Industry Representative role?**
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- › **Are you a company looking to network at our National Conference?**
Email info@mrii.ie for details and availability at our 2024 National Conference Trade Exhibition

Full agenda and booking details to be announced at a later date



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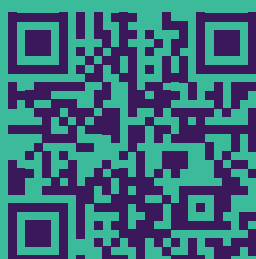
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Preparing for the Unexpected: the value of life insurance

William Murphy, Jade Insurance Management DAC

Are you protected from the financial uncertainties that can come with unexpected events in life?

Protection is life insurance. It is a practical way to make sure you have financial protection in place for your family if the worst were to happen. Your cover will pay out a cash lump sum if you die during the term of the plan. Your loved ones can use this money to help settle any outstanding debts or loans, pay off a mortgage, pay bills, whatever it takes to make them financially secure. It is hard to underestimate how valuable that financial peace of mind can be at a difficult time.

You can also give you and your family even more financial security by adding specified illness cover to your life insurance. This will help you cope financially if you're diagnosed with one of the specified illnesses we cover. Making sure your family will be taken care of financially if something happens to you is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Protection cover will help you do just that.

How does protection cover work?

Protection cover lets you choose your own combination of life insurance and/or specified illness cover. With this plan, you can get just the right combination of protection for the amount and length of time you need it.

The level of cover you choose will depend on your own family circumstances.

At the very least, you need to think about the amount your family will need to cover basic expenses if they lose your income.

Five questions to ask yourself:

- How much cash might your family need?
- How long do you want the cover to last?
- Do you want to cover just yourself or do you want to cover you and your spouse or partner? ▪ Do you want to make sure your cover keeps in line with inflation?

- Do you want to add a conversion option to extend your cover at the end of the initial contract without the need for a medical assessment?

How much will it cost?

The cost of your flexible protection cover will depend on a number of different factors.

These include:

The plan you choose – life protection, stand-alone specified illness cover or a combination of both

- the amount of protection you need
- the period of cover – the longer the term, the higher the cost
- whether you smoke – smokers pay more for cover
- your current state of health – if you're in poor health, your premiums will be higher
- whether you cover one life or two
- whether you want to add other options like index linking your cover or a conversion option.

Choose a flexible protection plan to suit you

You have two plans to choose from. Level term assurance plan gives you a set amount of life cover for a specified length of time. Alternatively our convertible term assurance is a level term assurance plan with an option to extend your cover in a follow-on plan without the need for a medical assessment.

Conversion Option (Always the right option)

Depending on the benefits chosen under your original plan, this could be a new Life cover and/or Standalone specified illness or Accelerated specified illness plan. This option will only apply if specifically chosen by you at outset and may be excluded from your policy if you are accepted for cover at special terms. You may exercise your conversion option at any time before your 85th birthday (or 70th birthday if you have chosen a specified illness benefit). If you wish for your new plan to include a conversion option, you must exercise your conversion option before your 83rd

birthday (or 65th if you have chosen a specified illness benefit). For joint life and dual life plans, the age of the elder life will be the age taken into account. If you select the conversion option, you can select any term for your cover from 2 to 50 years for life cover or from 5 to 40 years for Specified illness cover. You can convert the plan to a new plan at any time before expiry, without the need to provide further medical information. Important: Aviva Life & Pensions Ireland DAC reserves the right to offer alternative cover options for conversion should Flexible Protection cover be unavailable. You may exercise this option at any time during the original policy term, without needing to supply us with any further medical evidence no matter what your state of health is at the time.

This conversion option is subject to the following conditions:

The amount of your cover under the new policy cannot be higher than it was under the original plan

- The premiums payable to the new plan will be calculated based on your age, smoker status and on the rates applying at the time of conversion for the plan selected. If any special terms were applied to your original policy, these will also be applied to your new policy on conversion.
- The person or persons to be covered under the new policy must be the same as under the original policy.
- The new plan will be subject to the standard conditions then applying to that type of policy.

Any questions regarding the above please contact William Murphy QFA/LIB/LIA/APA



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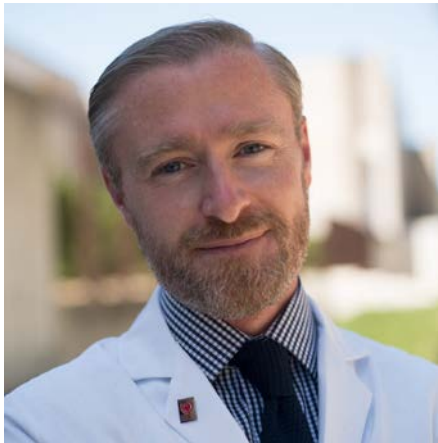
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Lift Heavy Things

Dr Paddy Barrett is a Preventive Cardiologist writing on preventing heart disease and living longer. If you like this content, you might like to sign up for Dr Barrett's free weekly newsletter here paddybarrett.substack.com



Why resistance training is the key to so many health issues

More activity. Longer, Healthier Life.

As a rule of thumb, we know that is true.

But the type of activity matters.

The WHO recommends 150 - 300 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week.

Weekly activity in this range and even above has been consistently shown to reduce the likelihood of an early death, cardiovascular disease, dementia; the list goes on and on and on ¹.

And on and on and on.

However, this is where most people stop.

What they fail to see is the next line in the WHO guidelines that suggest two (or more) strength training sessions per week, in addition to the 150-300 minutes of physical activity ².

I am one of the biggest offenders here.

When I started exercising, I exclusively did aerobic training, mostly running.

Weight training was just not on my radar.

I was wrong. Dead wrong.

I do not propose you switch from aerobic to resistance training.

What I am suggesting is that if you are not doing resistance training IN ADDITION to your aerobic training, you are missing out.

So what are the benefits of resistance training?

Less All-Cause Mortality (ACM) - Death From Any Cause

For those who engage in up to 60 mins per week of resistance training, there is a substantial reduction in the chances of dying from ANYTHING over a set period compared to those who do not do resistance training ³.

This level of weekly resistance training is associated with reductions in all-cause mortality of up to 27%. Interestingly, the benefit started to diminish with resistance training volumes above 60 mins per week.

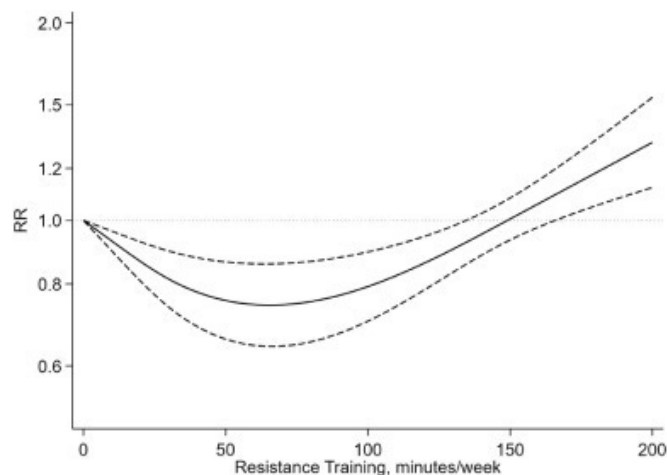
Dementia

The evidence that higher aerobic fitness levels are associated with lower rates of dementia is clear ⁴.

What is less clear are the benefits of resistance training in improving cognitive health and delaying cognitive decline.

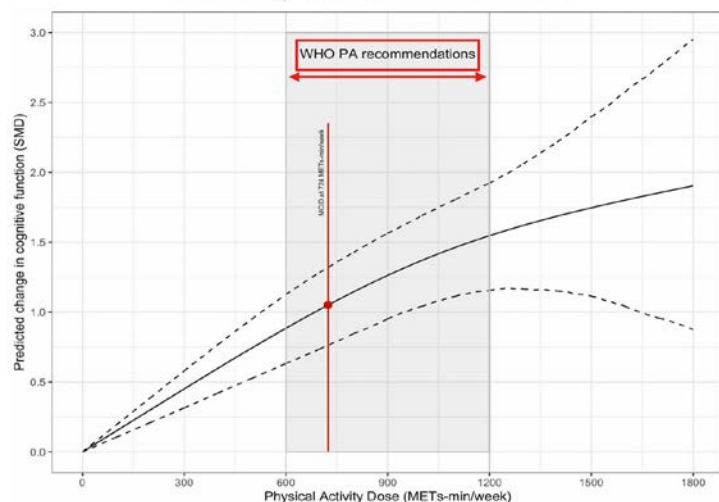
The vertical axis = Predicted Benefit. i.e. Positive measure.

The addition of regular resistance training has been shown to delay cognitive decline



All-Cause Mortality and Resistance Training Mins Per Week.

Activity & Dementia Risk



Optimal dose and type of exercise to improve cognitive function in older adults: A systematic review and bayesian model-based network meta-analysis of RCTs. Ageing Res Rev. 2022 Apr;76:101591.

in those with the early stages of cognitive impairment but also in those without cognitive impairment⁵⁶.

Resistance training regimes, even at moderate intensity, i.e. no very heavy loads, have demonstrated benefits in cognitive health and delays in cognitive decline⁷.

What is now clear is that if cognitive health is a priority for you, adding resistance training should be a major consideration.

Mobility & Falls

We all have to die from something.

Even if we maximally reduce our risk of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, other competing causes of death become an issue.

Falls are one of those issues.

For those with traumatic hip fractures⁸:

- One in ten is dead within one month.
- Three in ten are dead within one year.

Scary stuff.

The combination of aerobic, resistance and balance training has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of falls in high-risk patients⁹.

The key to not dying as a result of a fall is not to fall in the first place.

Most adults are losing muscle mass and, by the later stages of life, will have lost 25 to 33% or more of their original muscle mass¹⁰.

Cancer

Those with cancer often lose significant amounts of muscle mass over the course of their illness. This resultant muscle loss is termed sarcopenia or, in extreme cases, cachexia¹¹.

Regular physical activity in those with cancer has a range of benefits, including¹²:

- Less fatigue
- Improved quality of life
- Improved physical and psychosocial metrics
- Reduced chances of cancer recurrence
- Improved odds of survival.

All in all. Strength training is a must for those with cancer who can engage in physical activity.

Resistance training, specifically during cancer treatment, does not improve lean muscle mass, but it significantly reduces the amount that is lost. This is a major win.

This maintenance of lean muscle mass due to resistance training is associated with reductions in all-cause mortality in those who have had cancer previously.

Metabolic Health

Aerobic activity has traditionally been the go-to exercise for those looking to optimise their metabolic health, and the benefits are overwhelmingly obvious.

For those with the highest levels of fitness, rates of type 2 diabetes are almost nonexistent¹³.

So while I am a huge advocate of aerobic training to improve metabolic health, excluding resistance training is leaving a significant opportunity on the table.

The list of benefits from resistance training also includes:

- Increased lean muscle mass
- Improved metabolic rate
- Fat loss
- Improved physical performance
- Improved walking speed
- Improved functional independence
- Improved self-esteem
- Visceral fat loss
- Improved insulin sensitivity
- Lower cholesterol
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved bone health
- Less back pain

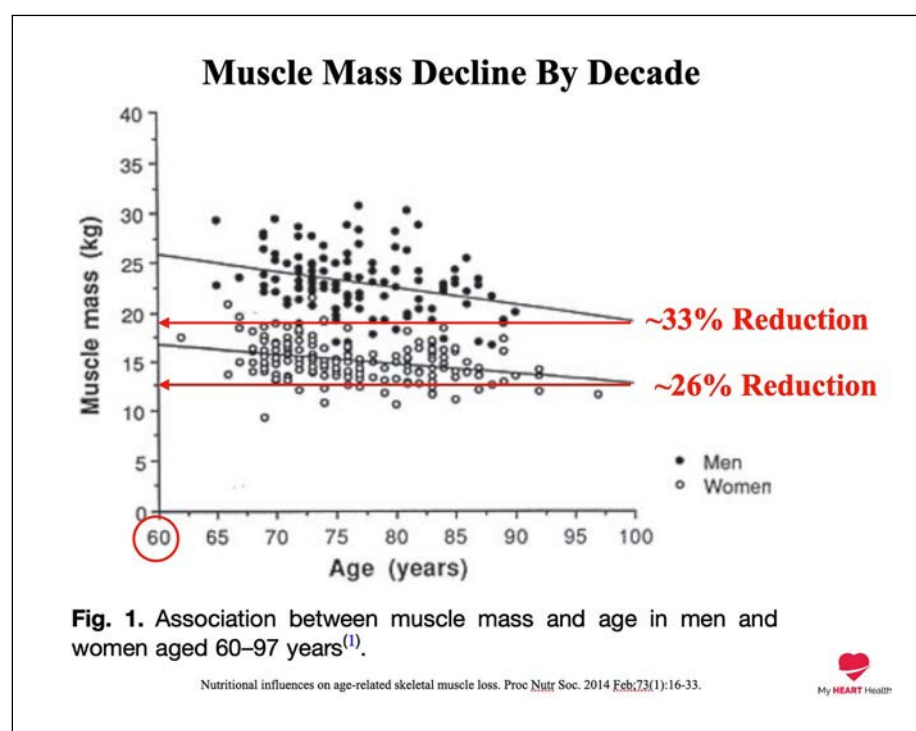
The benefits of resistance training are overwhelmingly clear.

This is not to suggest you switch from aerobic to resistance training.

This is about integrating both.

It's the combination that is key.

1. Long-Term Leisure-Time Physical Activity Intensity and All-Cause and Cause-Specific Mortality: A Prospective Cohort of US Adults. *Circulation*. 2022 Aug 16;146(7):523-534.
2. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>
3. Resistance Training and Mortality Risk: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Am J Prev Med*. 2022 Aug;63(2):277-285.
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6. Lifting cognition: a meta-analysis of effects of resistance exercise on cognition. *Psychol Res*. 2020 Jul;84(5):1167-1183.
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10. Nutritional influences on age-related skeletal muscle loss. *Proc Nutr Soc*. 2014 Feb;73(1):16-33.
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Resistance training is the key to minimising the progressive loss of muscle mass and strength.

However, where the real gains are made is when regular aerobic activity is combined with resistance training to optimise one's metabolic health¹⁴.

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Changes to Company Vehicle BIK Rules 2023

Michelle Dunne, Associate Director – Tax Grant Thornton



In the healthcare industry, employees may be required to travel as part of their daily duties. Where this occurs, employers may either reimburse the employee for business mileage undertaken or provide them with a company vehicle. In cases where a company vehicle is provided, a taxable benefit in kind will arise for the employee unless certain exemptions are met.

Finance Act 2019 introduced a new method to calculate the cash equivalent of the use of company vehicles. These changes took effect from 1 January 2023. The benefit-in-kind (BIK) on employer provided vehicles is now calculated based on business mileage and the CO2 emissions of the vehicle. This change is largely driven by the Government's Climate Action Plan to encourage the use of electric vehicles and lower emissions produced by vehicles.

Company Cars

The BIK cash equivalent of company cars is now determined using the original market value of the car (OMV), business mileage undertaken by the employee and the vehicle's CO2 emissions.

It is worth noting that the OMV is the cost of the car in Ireland prior to its first registration, including all Irish taxes and duties. In cases where second hand cars are provided, it is important that the employer uses the cost at first registration, and not the actual purchase price of the second hand car.

The table below outlines the percentages used to calculate the cash equivalent of a company car.



Lower Limit	Upper Limit	A	B	C	D	E
Business KM	Business KM	%	%	%	%	%
-	26,000	22.5	26.25	30	33.75	37.5
26,001	39,000	18	21	24	27	30
39,001	52,000	13.5	15.75	18	20.25	22.5
52,001	-	9	10.5	12	13.5	15

Category	CO2 Emissions (CO2 g/km)
A	0 g/km up to and including 59 g/km
B	More than 59 g/km up to and including 99 g/km
C	More than 99 g/km up to and including 139 g/km
D	More than 139 g/km up to and including 179 g/km
E	More than 179 g/km

For example, if an employee is provided with a company car which has an original market value (OMV) of €50,000 with CO2 emissions of 120g/km and they travel 25,000 business kilometers per annum. The car is a category C vehicle. The employee's taxable benefit in kind is calculated as follows:

	2023
Company Car – OMV	€50,000
Bik rate based on Annual Business Kilometers & CO2 Emissions	30%
Chargeable BIK for the year	€15,000
Monthly BIK notional pay*	€1,250

*PAYE taxes will be applied to BIK notional pay

Electric Vehicles

For the tax years 2023–2025, a relief from the BIK charge arising during this period applies on a tapered basis for electric vehicles. For an electric vehicle made available for an employee's private use during the years 2023 to 2025, the cash equivalent will be calculated by reducing the OMV of the vehicle by:

- €45,000* in the 2023 year of assessment
- €20,000 in the 2024 year of assessment
- €10,000 in the 2025 year of assessment

*Increased from €35,000 to €45,000 as a result of 2023 temporary relief

This reduction applies irrespective of the actual OMV of the vehicle or when the vehicle was first provided to the employee.

Where the reduction reduces the OMV to zero, a BIK charge will not arise. Otherwise, the relevant BIK percentage will be applied to the reduced OMV.

Company Vans

From 1 January 2023, the cash equivalent percentage for company vans has increased from 5% to 8% of the OMV.

Temporary Relief 2023

In March 2023, the Irish Government announced temporary changes to the Benefit-in-Kind calculations for company cars for 2023. The following temporary measures were introduced for 2023:

1. The OMV of cars in the CO2 emissions category A–D, will be reduced by €10,000. This reduction is not applicable to cars in category E.
2. The €10,000 reduction in OMV also applies to company vans and electric vehicles.
3. The upper limit in the highest mileage band has been temporarily reduced. The CO2 emissions categories remain the same. The table below outlines the temporary changes to the mileage bands. Under the new temporary rules due to an excess of BIK being applied in previous month for employees, this refund should filter through the payroll function.

Lower Limit	Upper Limit	A	B	C	D	E
Business KM	Business KM	%	%	%	%	%
-	26,000	22.5	26.25	30	33.75	37.5
26,001	39,000	18	21	24	27	30
39,001	48,000	13.5	15.75	18	20.25	22.5
48,001	-	9	10.5	12	13.5	15

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The Power of Learning Coaching Skills: Benefits for Sales Professionals

Andrea Splendori, Tutor/International Faculty Member, Kingstown College



Introduction

Sales professionals play a crucial role in any organisation, acting as the frontline representatives responsible for creating value and fostering strong customer relationships.

To excel in this challenging field, mastering traditional sales techniques is important, but harnessing the power of coaching skills can take sales professionals to the next level.

Coaching skills empower salespeople to build lasting relationships, understand customer needs deeply, and drive continuous improvement.

In this article, we delve into the significant benefits that learning coaching skills can offer to sales professionals.

Active Listening

Often when we think of communication, we think about how good we might be at expressing our thoughts at communicating what is best of our product/service.

We give a lot of importance to what we believe our message needs to be and at times we forget the most important aspect of a good communicator: listening.

Active listening is a fundamental coaching skill that involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what the other person is saying.

Our default mode can often be “listen to respond”.

Active listening requires us to “listen to understand”.

This small shift in how we really listen to our customers, makes all the difference in our communication style and our rapport building.

By adopting active listening, we can create stronger connections with our customers, which is essential for building trust, rapport and longevity in the relationships.

By really listening, we give our interlocutors the chance to express themselves, allowing them to share with us what may be really important for them in that moment in time – and this is not always necessarily related to a work situation – but does help us to build and solidify our bond.

The key to active listening is to be curious, to have an explorer mind, to be open to learn from others.

Active listening is the gate through which those possibilities enter our realm feeding our knowledge.

When a salesperson practices active listening, they convey genuine interest in the customer’s needs, preferences, and concerns. This not only fosters a positive customer experience but also helps identify the most suitable products or services to meet the customer’s specific requirements.

Active listening enables sales professionals to understand customers’ pain points and desires, helping them tailor personalised solutions that cater to individual needs.

This level of personalisation can set a salesperson apart from competitors and lead to long-term customer loyalty.

Listening is a muscle that needs to be trained.

Small daily changes to our routines can help us to master this simple and yet powerful skill.

“In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert’s there are few” (Shunryu Suzuki)

Powerful Questions

Coaching skills often involve the use of powerful questions, which are thought-provoking and insightful queries that encourage customers to think deeply about their challenges and objectives. Incorporating powerful questions into sales interactions can open up new opportunities and generate valuable insights.

What often is called a powerful question could also be the simplest question that we have ever asked.

However, having listened actively to our customer, we can ask that all important question, at the right time, that will create an insight.

Asking a powerful question can help us unlock essential information about the customer’s needs, wants, goals and expectations. Having a deeper understanding of the customer allows us to be more efficient and align products and services with their requirements.

By asking questions that are seeking an insight vs questions that are looking for answers, we allow the customer to search deeper into what they may perceive as obstacles or reservations that they may have.

The questions that we want to ask need to encourage customers to reflect on their current situations and envision their desired outcomes.

This reflection process can lead to the customer’s realisation of unmet needs or untapped opportunities, making them more receptive to our proposals.

Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood (Steven Covey)

The Value of Silence

In coaching, silence is considered a powerful tool.

In sales, embracing silence allows sales professionals to create an environment for customers to process information and make considered decisions.

Far too often we feel the need to fill any awkward silence during a pitch, leading to excessive persuasion or pressure. Embracing silence, on the other hand, grants the customer space to weigh their options and make a more informed decision. It is important to be comfortable with the discomfort that we may experience during a moment of silence.

Silence allows customers to actively process the information presented to them. It gives them the opportunity to think critically about their needs and how the proposed solution aligns with their goals.

By allowing moments of silence, we show respect for the customer's thought process and decision-making.

It communicates that the customer's needs and preferences are paramount, fostering a sense of trust and partnership.

Most of us know how to say nothing; few of us know when. (Anonymous)

Effective Feedback

Coaching skills equip us with the ability to provide and receive feedback in a constructive manner.

This is essential for fostering continuous improvement.

We can collaborate with our customers to assess their needs, performance, and satisfaction.

Constructive feedback helps us identify areas for growth and refine their strategies.

Additionally, they can guide customers in recognising their own strengths and areas for development, fostering a sense of ownership over their progress.

The coaching approach to feedback seeks the best that there is, positive and constructive and transforms it into a Feedforward, concentrating on tasks instead of the person, emphasis on the future instead of the past and highlighting areas of improvements vs staying with the errors that might have been made.

"Examine what is said and not who speaks." (African proverb)

Long-Term Value Creation

The value of coaching skills extends far beyond individual sales transactions.

Sales professionals who embrace coaching principles focus on creating long-term value for their customers.

They engage in discussions about customers' strategic objectives and growth plans, positioning themselves as trusted advisors who contribute to customers' overall success. This approach cultivates a reputation for value creation rather than transactional selling, resulting in stronger customer relationships and increased customer retention.

Coaching is not just about guiding others; it's also about empowering individuals to discover their own solutions. By using coaching techniques, sales professionals can help customers uncover their own needs, preferences, and goals.

This self-discovery process increases customers' confidence in their decisions, leading to more satisfied and loyal customers.

Moreover, sales professionals who practice coaching skills also empower themselves.

They become more self-reliant, adaptable, and capable of tackling diverse situations with confidence.

Wealth is created from creating value. (Randy Gage)

Leadership and Team Development

Coaching skills are not only applicable to customer interactions but also to leading and developing sales teams.

Sales managers who possess coaching skills can nurture the potential of their team members, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

They can provide personalised guidance, set clear goals, and facilitate skill development, ultimately driving better team performance and cohesion.

Coaching creates a common language that when adopted by the whole team can drive the performance and leads to results in the most desirable manner possible.

"To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart." (Eleanor Roosevelt)

Some Statistics on Coaching (source ICF)

- 80% of coaching customers say that they improved their self-esteem or self-confidence thanks to coaching.
- 73% of coaching customers say that coaching helps them improve their relationships, communication skills, interpersonal skills, work performance, work/life balance, and wellness.
- 51% of companies with a strong coaching culture have higher revenues than other companies in their industry.

Conclusion

In the ever-evolving world of sales, learning coaching skills is not just a luxury—it's a necessity. These skills empower sales professionals to communicate effectively, build relationships, provide tailored solutions, and drive continuous improvement.

The power of coaching skills transforms sales interactions into meaningful partnerships, fostering success for both the sales professional and the customers they serve.

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Current biopharmaceutical industry trends and key areas of focus for IPHA

Michael O'Connell, IPHA President & Country Director for Biogen



Almost a year into his Presidency of the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association, Biogen's Michael O'Connell talks to us about current trends within the biopharmaceutical industry and discusses key areas of focus for IPHA, the representative body for the research-based biopharmaceutical industry in Ireland.

I consider it a great honour to be President of IPHA at what is a very exciting time for our industry. Right now, Ireland is seeing real economic benefits from the presence of many global biopharmaceutical companies choosing to locate and develop key facilities here. Investment and growth in this area has been incredible over the last number of years which is testament to our workforce and our ability to sell what Ireland has to offer on a global stage. On top of that, rapid advances are being made in research and development of new and innovative medicines and these advances have the potential to significantly impact patient outcomes in many areas.

Over the last few decades, innovation in medicines has delivered game changing results. For example, through the development of innovative medicines since the 1980's, HIV has now become undetectable and untransmissible for patients being treated for this disease. Between 2012 and 2021, the mortality rate for strokes fell by 48%. The introduction of immunotherapy as a means of treating

many types of cancer has given new hope to countless patients affected by life threatening disease.

Going forward, there are even more reasons to be hopeful as there are over 7,000 medicines currently in development.

- 1,813 for cancers
- 1,329 for neurological disorders
- 1,256 for infectious diseases
- 1,120 for immunological disorders

All of these advances are giving hope to patients and to healthcare systems. Additionally, the recent and very rapid development of AI has caught all our attention. Already it can be seen that AI has the potential to have a groundbreaking impact on healthcare. Using AI principles to augment research and development means that potentially we can bring even better, more efficacious medicines to patients faster than ever before.

For this reason, continued investment in healthcare is vital and must be a key focus for Budget 2024 and beyond. IPHA members expect to make applications for 47 new medicines in 2024 across many types of cancers, cardiovascular disease, transplants, ophthalmology, haematology, inflammatory conditions and HIV. Patients suffering from some rare diseases will see the Government and health systems responding to their particular needs.

At the heart of all of this is the recognition that no one body can work in isolation. Therefore, a key part of the mission of IPHA is to collaborate extensively with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that we work together to make a real difference in the lives of patients. These collaborations see us working with key personnel across the Department of Health, the HSE and the NCPE as well as forging very close relationships with patient groups and clinicians who have first-hand experience from the frontline. It is vital to get all perspectives to inform the correct strategies to tackle the many challenges we face. At IPHA, we are also looking forward to collaborating with the Department of Health and the Working Group which was established by Minister

Donnelly following the publication of the Mazars report. The aim of this process is to review and improve the reimbursement system and ultimately provide Irish patients with faster access to life-changing new medicines.

Another key part of our mission at IPHA is to shine a light on the impact that medical innovation has on the lives of real people. Our annual Innovate for Life campaign aims to tell the story of innovation by focusing on patients who share their lived experience of how medical innovations have positively impacted on their own journey. This year's campaign which launches in September, promises to bring something special as it will take the form of an animation telling the story of an everyday conversation between a granddaughter and her granddad who reflects on how medical innovations have helped him to live a longer, happier life.

As an industry, we are committed to maintaining high ethical standards. Since 2016, IPHA have worked to develop and deliver a centralised database for Transfer of Value (ToV) to ensure transparency between biopharmaceutical companies, Healthcare Organisations and Healthcare Professionals. The most recent data which was published in June this year, saw the highest ever rate of disclosure from HealthCare Professionals with the rate of transparency at 79% up 10% from 2021. This is a very positive step forward for openness and transparency.

So all told, this is a very positive time for the industry. Patients are at the heart of everything we do at IPHA and the member companies. To ensure that they have access to the newest and most innovative medicines, it is vital that we continue to work closely with all of our key stakeholders in the spirit of trust and collaboration so that patient welfare and positive societal outcomes are prioritised at all times.



**Irish Pharmaceutical
Healthcare Association**

Meet MRII Member Elaine Arozarena

Elaine Arozarena, Account Manager, Janssen



Tell us a little about yourself Elaine

A Mayo native, I've been living in Dublin for the past 20 years, most recently laying down roots in Portmarnock, with my husband Dan and two wonderful children, Maeve (5) and Senan (3). I completed a degree in Business and Transatlantic Studies at DCU in 2006, which involved a 2-year exchange programme with Northeastern University in Boston. I remained in the US for a further 2 years working in a Sales & Marketing role for a dental implant company, before returning to Ireland and joining the Janssen team 14 years ago.

How long have you been working in healthcare and what does your current role entail?

I started my pharma career at Janssen, a pharmaceutical company of Johnson & Johnson, as a Product Manager back in 2009, and have worked across a number of different therapy areas, as well as a 2-year stint in a global marketing role. I always wanted to gain field sales experience and took the opportunity to join the Oncology team back in 2017 as an Account Manager and I haven't looked back.

What gives you the greatest job satisfaction?

We are very lucky in the line of work that we do to know that the medicines we make can have such a positive impact on the lives of patients and their families around the world. I feel privileged to work for a company that has brought 16 new medicines to Ireland in the last 10 years, several of which I've had the opportunity to launch and bring to our customers. My favourite part is hearing from our customers about the impact our treatments are having on their patients which provides a regular boost to me and my colleagues.

What are the greatest challenges you face in your role on a regular basis?

I'm sure like the rest of my industry colleagues, I breathed a sigh of relief when hospitals started opening up last year and we could return to in-person meetings after two years working remotely. Whilst digital tools and channels were an invaluable way to stay connected to our customers during the pandemic, they were no replacement for face-to-face interactions. However, whilst access has greatly improved over the past year, it has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Consultants and their teams appear to be busier than ever, largely as a result of staff shortages and increased patient waiting lists. It means you have to make the opportunities when you see customers in person all the more memorable and utilise an omnichannel approach to further enhance the customer experience.

What advice would you give to those who are contemplating sitting the MRII exam?

I finally sat the MRII exam earlier this year after two maternity leaves and COVID hampered my previous attempts. It's been a while since I've been in the "study zone" and having two young kids made it a little harder to set aside the time but it is worth it. I don't have a science background and therefore while I'm trained to be an expert in the therapy areas that I work in, it was particularly helpful to deep dive into areas of anatomy, physiology, clinical medicine, and pharmacology that I might not have been exposed to. It certainly increased my knowledge and confidence and I definitely feel it gives me enhanced credibility in the field. I was stunned to get the call afterwards that I had placed joint first and would be a recipient of the Dr B.D. Place Medal, supported by IPHA, which was the icing on the cake.

To anyone contemplating sitting the MRII exam, to borrow Nike's famous slogan, "Just do it". It's not easy but using the MRII guidance of studying the syllabus over a period of three to five months, depending on your background, you'll be able to put your best foot forward come the examination day.



What is your favourite holiday destination?

Right now, after one of the wettest Julys on record, anywhere with sun and a kiddies club would be wonderful!

About 10 years ago I took off for a year with my partner to travel around Central and South America. A trip with so many highlights, but probably my favourite spot was the Galapagos Islands. We got to spend a week cruising around the islands, exploring the protected terrain, snorkelling in the pristine waters, and getting up close and personal with the native species. A once in a lifetime trip. Take me back!

What were the last 3 podcasts you listened to?

1. Scamanda
2. The Witch Trials of J.K. Rowling
3. Basically with Stephanie Preissner

I'm a late comer to Podcasts. Any and all recommendations welcome!

What is your favourite book?

"The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch. I came across it about 15 years ago and return to it every so often. Randy was a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania. The university has a tradition of inviting professors to give a lecture where they pretend that it is their last chance ever to talk to their students. In Randy's case he didn't have to imagine it as his last since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. A lecture full of invaluable life lessons on how to live, love and let go, and a reminder of what is most important.

What is a personal or professional achievement that you're proud of?

In 2015 I did the Everest Base Camp trek. My mother likes to say that I climbed Everest; I tend not to correct her, but I definitely have no intention of going back to summit it anytime soon. Two weeks of stunning scenery, developing lifelong friendships, and just a touch of altitude sickness. It's an experience I'll never forget!

What is your motto or personal mantra?

"Sometimes you win. Sometimes you learn."

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WHY SHOULD I COMPLETE THE MRII EXAMINATION?

Healthcare Industry Representatives come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are science graduates and nurses and some have a business background. To standardise the background educational level of Healthcare Industry Representatives the examination is offered as a general standard. By sitting and passing it Healthcare Sales Professionals have shown an in-depth knowledge of Anatomy, Physiology, Clinical Medicine and Pharmacology. In addition they will have demonstrated an up to date understanding of the industry in which they work or propose to work.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Healthcare Industry Representatives who have not yet completed the MRII Examination or those who propose to work as a Healthcare Industry Representative.

Those who were unsuccessful in one paper in the past, you can apply to repeat only this paper.

WHAT IS COVERED IN THE EXAMINATION?

Physiology, Disease States/Related Pharmacology, Surgical Techniques and Industry.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

It costs €540 for your Examination Application to include Examination Syllabus.

HOW DO I APPLY



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* Revised syllabus to include Viruses, Vaccines and Anti-viral Drugs



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Mastering the Art of Work-Life Balance: Prevent Burnout And Preserve Your Mental Health

Melissa Stone, Career Coach



In the dynamic Pharmaceutical industry and in Healthcare, professionals often find themselves juggling high-pressure demands, long hours, and on the road travel. Amidst these challenges, maintaining wellbeing becomes essential, particularly for High-Performing Overachievers who consistently strive to meet and exceed expectations.

But what happens when Burnout occurs, and what can you do to safeguard your mental health and stop this from happening in the first place?

Understanding Burnout

Burnout is something we've been talking about for a few years now. But let's get clear on what Burnout actually means, because it's not a buzzword, or something we throw out there to describe feeling tired or stressed.

Burnout is a state of chronic physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, with typical signs including increased irritability, cynicism, and negativity, decreased motivation with a loss of enthusiasm and passion for work, frequent headaches, stomach aches, or high blood pressure, and a sense of feeling overwhelmed.

If you're unfortunate enough to feel burnt out, you can also likely expect poor sleep, anxiety, a lack of self-belief, self-confidence or imposter syndrome, and heightened stress levels.

It happens when the demands placed on an individual eventually exceed their mental, emotional and physical capacity to cope with them.

Burnout is like an empty gas tank in your car at night, leaving you stressed out and stranded in the dark, unable to move forward.

So What Are The Triggers To Watch Out For?

We typically see Burnout as a consequence of 5 Key Triggers:

Isolation and Loneliness: Frequent travel and extended periods away from home can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, taking its toll on mental wellbeing

Unpredictable or Irregular Working Hours: The need to accommodate clients across different time zones or day to day working hours can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to increased stress and fatigue

Lack of Control: Many professionals encounter unexpected setbacks and circumstances beyond their control. This feeling of helplessness can lead to frustration and a sense of being overwhelmed

Neglecting Self-Care: Continuous focus on meeting targets or KPIs can cause professionals to overlook their own wellbeing. This can exacerbate stress levels and mental strain

High-Pressure Environment: A competitive or high pressure environment often results in demanding and/or unrealistic targets – imposed on by both the Employer, and by the standard of expectation and excellence many successful professionals in this field impose on themselves

So What Can You Do About It?

If you feel you are at risk of Burnout, there are a number of strategies you can try to prioritise your mental health.

Firstly, I tell all of my clients to embrace self-compassion by avoiding self-criticism. Berating yourself about what you "should or shouldn't have done" isn't usually helpful. Instead, focus on all the great things you're going to do from today. There's a reason why the rear view mirror is so small and the windscreen is so wide. You'll never drive forward if you keep looking back.

Secondly, start thinking about routines you can establish to help you stick to boundaries you are going to put in place. These routines should read like a daily or weekly agenda, incorporating realistic working hours, time for sleep and rest, breaks to recharge your mind and body, daily light exercise, healthy meals, and nurturing important relationships in your life. Commit to sticking to these routines, and respect the boundaries you have put in place. If you don't, no one else will do it for you.

Finally, practice mindfulness – it's not a quick fix for Burnout, but incorporating mindfulness into your daily routine can gradually reduce stress, enhance emotional resilience, and improve your ability to manage the challenges of a demanding job. Consistency is key, so try to make mindfulness a regular part of your life to experience the full benefits.

If this sounds like something you'd like to try, here are my top 5 Mindfulness Exercises:

1. **Deep Breathing:** Find a quiet space, sit comfortably, and take slow, deep breaths. Focus your attention solely on your breath as you inhale and exhale. This exercise helps calm the nervous system, reducing stress and promoting relaxation.
2. **Mindful Walking:** Take a short walk, paying attention to each step, the

sensation of your feet touching the ground, and the movement of your body. Engaging your senses in this way helps anchor you in the present moment and clears your mind from stressors.

3. **Gratitude Practice:** Take a few minutes each day to reflect on the things you are grateful for. It could be as simple as appreciating a beautiful sunset, a supportive colleague, or a warm cup of tea. Practicing gratitude shifts your focus to positive aspects of life and reduces feelings of Burnout.
4. **Journaling:** Write down your thoughts and feelings in a journal regularly. This practice can help you process emotions and gain insights into your stressors, leading to better coping strategies.
5. **The Digital World:** Embrace technology through apps or online resources for meditation sessions, or take a digital detox by disconnecting from your devices for a set period to reduce mental clutter and improve mindfulness.

Ultimately, prioritising your mental health and wellbeing should be the number one priority for all in this fast paced, high pressure industry, particularly those who work odd hours or spend substantial time on the road.



If you find yourself struggling with persistent feelings of Burnout or emotional distress, seek support from your GP or a mental health professional. Therapy, Coaching and Counselling can also offer valuable guidance and get you back to feeling in control again.

By acknowledging the factors that contribute to Burnout and implementing practical strategies to protect mental wellbeing, you can enhance your capacity

to thrive in your career while leading balanced and fulfilling lives. Remember, by nurturing your mental health, you lay the foundation for sustained success and happiness in your personal and professional journey.

Melissa Stone is a career coach working with corporate professionals to find career fulfilment and achieve success at work.

2023 & 2024 Upcoming Events and Diary Dates

25 SEP 1.15pm	LIVE@LUNCHTIME Online, Prof. Derek O'Keeffe DIGITAL HEALTH 2023	FEB	IN PERSON EVENT In planning
18 OCT 12.30pm	NETWORKING LUNCH Prof. Rónán Collins LOUIS FITZGERALD HOTEL	2 MAR full day	MRII EXAMINATION 2024 Applications are now open on www.mrii.ie
23 NOV 1.15pm	LIVE@LUNCHTIME Online, Dr Deirdre Lundy	25 APR full day	PULSE 2024 National Medical Sales Conference

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10 Reasons

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- #1** Unparalleled networking opportunities allowing members to connect with other healthcare sales professionals
- #2** Educational events (online and in-person) allow members to keep up to date with topical subjects and news of interest for your continued education.
- #3** Active participation: will enhance your CV and you, both professionally and personally.
- #4** Some MRII members are job seekers and have secured jobs through active MRII involvement.
- #5** Use of the initials MMRII to denote full MRII membership.
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- #7** Student members can apply for the MRII examination giving you access to the MRII syllabus and providing you with an opportunity to gain an industry recognised qualification.
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