

My RA Story

Context

Over 2,000 people are diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in Ireland each year; three in four are of working age. In total, RA affects 45,000 people in this country; 70 per cent of whom are women.

For someone newly diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, coming to terms with the news can seem overwhelming. While there may be relief in being able to name what is wrong, there is also acknowledgement that RA is a chronic life-long condition, for which there is no cure.

Such a dramatic shift in life circumstance can impact one's physical and mental well-being. It can be overwhelming trying to filter the volumes of information, assess what is trustworthy and relate to at a human level.

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The purpose of this campaign is to increase awareness and understanding of rheumatoid arthritis, of what it is like to live with this chronic condition with its invisible pain and life-changing impact. In so doing, Arthritis Ireland hopes to give a platform to people to tell their own story, so that they can be heard. Crucially, we also wish to provide a resource for people who are newly diagnosed with the disease and uncertain of what the future holds.

Arthritis Ireland is inviting people who have rheumatoid arthritis and are living in Ireland to submit their stories about life with RA. It is envisaged that the pieces will touch upon themes such as pain, fatigue, emotional impact, disability, surgery, education, career, family, goal-setting, self-management, connecting with others, hope, etc. We wish to receive contributions from people of all ages, who are living with RA for many years, as well as from those who are more recently diagnosed.

The stories will be considered by a panel of readers with a view to choosing a selection for publication. The criteria are to have as representative a sample as possible of the various aspects of RA and how it affects people.

A collection of these stories will be published in book form in autumn 2019 by Arthritis Ireland, which will feature a foreword from campaign ambassador and best-selling author, Sinéad Moriarty.

Submitting your RA story and publication

- Stories should be no longer than 2,000 words in length and must be typed.
- They can be submitted by email or by post to Arthritis Ireland. Emails can be sent to communications@arthritisiireland.ie (please mark the subject line 'My RA Story') or by post to: My RA Story, Arthritis Ireland, 1 Clanwilliam Square, Grand Canal Quay, Dublin 2 D02 DH77.
- Stories must be received by Sunday 30 June 2019.
- Entries can be in Irish or English.
- Do not quote from copyrighted material e.g. song lyrics, literature, poetry, scripts, in your story.
- The author's name and contact details should appear on a cover sheet with your story.
- Authors of stories chosen for publication will be notified of the decision by the end of July 2019 and these will be asked to sign a contract.
- The copyright of each story remains the property of its author.
- No payment will be made by Arthritis Ireland for publishing any story.
- Each author will receive a copy of the 'My RA Story' book upon publication and will be invited to the launch in autumn 2019.
- The book will be sold to raise funds to support Arthritis Ireland's services for people living with arthritis. By submitting an entry, the author hereby acknowledges and agrees that if their story is published that they will not receive any payment or royalty from book sales for same.

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