



SHEP

Capacity for Personal
& Social Transformation

LEADERSHIP for Living & Social Action

LEADING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

An innovative & experiential programme

SHEP CPD Certificate

FEBRUARY – NOVEMBER 2026

Fully In-Person:

Monday Evenings (7pm -9.30pm)

& five Saturdays, in Cork

- where you will meet other like-minded people, get to know yourself better, and learn together with curiosity, compassion and courage?
- Is your intention to **make a difference** to your community in this time of increasing uncertainty and change?
- Do you want to be better able to **influence positive change** in our contemporary, disrupted world?

If so, this SHEP Continuing Professional Development Course may be for you.

"Participating in the SHEP Leadership for Living & Social Action programme helped me to slow down and be more consciously aware of my influence as a leader. Through the combination of Theory U, reflective practice, and group learning, I learned more about how I lead and that I want to ensure I was leading from a place of authenticity, empathy, rather than pressure or performance."

The facilitators created a genuinely supportive space where everyone's voice mattered. The group was diverse in experience and perspective and were so generous in sharing their knowledge and experience, it was a huge benefit to the learning. I learned as much from my peers as from the course content."

The group improved my understand of leadership itself. I felt more grounded and hopeful to take meaningful action in my community. I would wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who wants to lead with curiosity, compassion, and courage."

SHEP Leadership Graduate 2022, Tian Herbert.

The Aim of the programme

The overall aim of this programme is to contribute to the emergence of a stronger base from which to address the unprecedented challenges of our time. We will do this through supporting a group of passionate and motivated people to reach their personal potential and to enable them to be better equipped to contribute in a positive way to social well-being. The focus of the programme is on moving away from habitual ways of thinking and doing towards a more self-aware, embodied and emergent way of being in the world. A key theme will be deepening our connection to ourselves, each other and the wider world.

Who is this programme for?

This programme is designed for people working in any sector willing to commit to a group journey of learning, with a strong commitment to promoting equality and social justice; and with a clear commitment to taking action with others so as to contribute to community life and social well-being.

This programme is open to everyone. Applications from people from diverse backgrounds and different age groups are welcome and encouraged. Your educational and/or employment status doesn't matter. What matters, is your motivation and commitment! People volunteering in the community are particularly welcome to apply, particularly those in leadership roles or preparing for leadership roles.

Who is running programme?

This programme has been designed by SHEP (The Social and Health Education Project CLG) which has been designing and delivering experiential training programmes since 1974.

What is SHEP's philosophy on leadership?

This programme is informed by SHEP's commitment to enhancing human well-being and social justice. It recognises that effective leadership begins with **self-awareness and presence**. Importantly, this programme is based on an understanding that leadership must be **values-led, integrated and facilitative**. We see leadership as a mind-set, not a skillset.

Key themes

This SHEP course draws innovative models of leadership particularly Theory U (Otto Scharmer, 2007) (<https://www.presencing.org/>). The emphasis is on **awareness, connection, and mind-sets** rather than on skills development. It is a highly experiential programme where together we will co-create a learning community. We have the freedom and capacity to customise the course to best suit where the group is at.

There will be six areas of particular exploration:

- Theory U
- Personal Leadership
- Systems Thinking
- Social Justice & Inclusion
- Environmental Awareness & Action
- Critically Reflective Practice

The intention is that this programme will be interactive, challenging, rewarding and enjoyable. The emphasis is on non-formal learning and learning from each other. It will be customised according to the needs and interests of the group. It will be a group journey: a variety of participatory approaches will be used including discussion of formal inputs, experiential group-work, group activities, team projects, guided reading and learning circles.

'I was grateful to have the opportunity to explore Leadership studies ...It was also interesting to look at my own leadership qualities and abilities. The diversity within our group highlighted for me, the importance and benefits of inclusivity. There were also other significant learnings along the way such as: the power of listening, how to deal with conflict, group dynamics, experiential learning, the benefits of journaling and personal development. Overall, it was a really enjoyable course and I would definitely recommend it.'

SHEP Leadership Participant

What is the time commitment?

The programme involves 70 contact hours, intentionally spaced out over 11 months to provide a measured pace to allow students to integrate the learning. It will involve 14 evening sessions (on Mondays, 7-9.30pm) and five day-long sessions (Saturdays 10am-5pm). It is important to point out that while this course is part-time it is an intensive course - participants will need to be able to devote sufficient time to participate. There will be a break for Easter and a long Summer break.

Are there assignments?

There will be a number assignments which will support your experiential learning and skills development, as follows: Everyone will: present a leadership case; ii) research a topic & make a short individual presentation based on the research; iii) participate in a Group project; iv) compile a Reflective Learning statement; and v) prepare a Personal Leadership plan.

Assessment will involve self-assessment and some peer assessment.

Is there a core text?

There will be a core text for this programme will be 'The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications' (Otto Scharmer, 2018) – available online. We will provide a copy of this reader to all participants.

Is the programme certified?

On successful completion of the programme participants will receive a SHEP Certificate in Leadership. To complete the course 80% attendance is essential, along with completion of all assignments.

Who will be facilitating the programme?

The Anchor Trainers will be Jim Sheehan and Norma Roche. The Course Co-coordinator will be Jim Sheehan (Project Director, SHEP).

What are the entry requirements?

This is an open-access programme, though there are entry requirements. Candidates must:

- be willing to commit to a group journey of learning
- have a strong commitment to promoting equality and social justice
- have a clear commitment to contributing to community life
- be interested in the learning about the major challenges of our time
- be at least 18 years of age

What is the cost?

This course is subsidised by the HSE and co-funded by the Perry and Sandy Massie Foundation. Our intention is to make this training accessible and affordable – yet we have to work within our own budgetary constraints and we will rely on those who can pay more to do so.

Course fee: €390

No deposit is required with the application. A payment plan will be available for those who wish to pay in instalments. A small number of Perry & Sandy Massie Foundation Bursaries (valued at €340 each) are available to those facing genuine financial hardship.

Closing Date

Monday, 12th January 2026.

We expect this course to be oversubscribed. Candidates will be shortlisted on the basis of their application and all shortlisted candidates may be required to attend for an interview. Early application is advantageous. Being called for an interview does not guarantee an offer of a place on the programme. Successful applicants will be notified by late January/early February 2026.

How do I apply?

Completed application form to be submitted electronically (see application form for details).

The Facilitation Team

Jim Sheehan: Jim has been the Director of The Social and Health Education Project since 2009. He has been in a number of team leadership roles since 1993, including overseas in Africa and Asia as a Programme Manager with Concern Worldwide. He is particularly interested in promoting inclusion through equality, advocacy and community development initiatives. He is a graduate of Mater Dei Institute of Education, the London School of Economics, and Waterford Institute of Technology.

Norma Roche: Norma has been working in the community and voluntary sector for over 25 years. She holds a B.Soc.Sc in Youth and Community Work and a Higher Diploma in Leading and Managing in the Community and Voluntary sector. She is a community tutor with SHEP. She is passionate about innovative and holistic approaches to social justice and has worked on dynamic projects in both Ireland and Australia in the youth and community work sector.