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## **Opening Statement for Meeting of the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

A Cathaoirleach Mr. Keogh and Members of the Joint Committee,

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important meeting today. We know that school bullying can have a detrimental impact on mental health. I have had the privilege of working with clients ranging in age from five to 88 who have shared their stories of bullying. Some of them were victims of bullying. Some were deeply ashamed of how they turned to bullying as a way of not being bullied. Others were distressed by how they let others down by not recognising that they were being bullied at a time when it might have made a difference.

Anti-bullying measures are essential. However, it is likely that bullying will always be an aspect of life. My submission invites you to focus on how we can help people of all ages develop coping strategies and build resilience, based on the key principles of cognitive behavioural therapy, so that treating themselves and others with respect and understanding becomes a more desirable option than bullying.

Go raibh maith agaibh.

*Claire Hayes.*

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Dr. Claire Hayes  
Clinical Psychologist.