

*Be Bold, Be Brave,
Be Exceptional*



Inspire
Education Group

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY



2023/24
**BEACON AWARDS
COMMENDED**

o 2024 - 2027

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OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our vision is to be an exceptional learning organisation, empowering your future.

Our mission is to transform lives through inspirational and innovative learning.



- I Innovative
- N Nurturing
- S Sustainable
- P Passionate
- I Inclusive
- R Respectful
- E Excellent

WELCOME TO THE IEG MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

OUR COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Welcome to Inspire Education Group’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. IEG is dedicated to fostering an exceptional culture where wellbeing is prioritised, and every member of our community feels valued, engaged and empowered. This document outlines our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where every student and staff member can thrive. Aligned with our mission to be a leading provider of innovative and inspiring learning, this strategy is rooted in our mission to empower individuals to achieve their full potential.

OUR CORE VALUES

Our strategy; Be Bold, Be Brave, Be Exceptional, underpin our approach to mental health and wellbeing. We believe that fostering a culture of openness and support is essential. Being bold means proactively promoting wellbeing and challenging stigma. We encourage everyone to be brave in seeking help and supporting others. We strive to create an environment where everyone can be exceptional, prioritising mental health as key to overall success.

This strategy reflects our dedication to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), acknowledging the diverse experiences within our community.

We are committed to equitable access to resources and support, ensuring everyone feels valued.

This strategy is underpinned by our commitment to mental health and wellbeing, recognised in 2023/24 with an AoC Beacon Award. Grounded in the AoC Mental Health Charter, we prioritise mental health and wellbeing through three key areas:

- ✔ **Leadership and ethos** Championing an inclusive culture and embedding a whole-college approach.
- ✔ **Support for students** Fostering a safe environment and proactively supporting mental health.
- ✔ **Workplace wellbeing** Nurturing a culture that supports people and creates an exceptional working environment.

We believe that mental health and wellbeing are integral to success. This strategy outlines our plans to provide comprehensive support, promote positive mental health, and create a culture of belonging as we work together to build a whole-College approach and a community where everyone can flourish.

Sarah Young
Vice Principal for Student and Staff Experience



CONTEXT: MENTAL HEALTH IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The current mental health landscape among students and staff is a complex and concerning picture, marked by a rise in mental health challenges and a struggle to provide adequate support. The AoC Mental Health Report 2024 highlights the ongoing challenges faced by colleges in addressing mental health and wellbeing within their student and staff populations. While the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, the underlying causes are deeply rooted in societal structures and systemic inequalities. Around 1-in-5 children have a mental health difficulty in England, but only a third of those were able to access treatment last year. A growing number of children and young people are experiencing mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression and behavioural disorders.

KEY CHALLENGES AND STATISTICS IMPACTING STUDENTS

The impact of the pandemic, social media, and financial pressures is particularly acute. Social media has been identified as a major influence on mental health, contributing to underdeveloped social skills, social anxiety, and difficulties in managing relationships. The cost of living crisis is also a significant factor, with poverty and financial worries directly impacting student wellbeing.

**Source: AoC Mental Health Report 2024*

Alarming, there has been an increase in suicidal ideation and attempts among young people, highlighting the urgent need for effective prevention and intervention strategies.

- **Cost of Living Crisis:** 75% of colleges cited the cost of living crisis as a significant factor, with poverty and financial pressures directly impacting student wellbeing.*
- **Suicide and Suicidal Ideation:** 75% of colleges reported more than five attempted suicides within the previous year, and 30% reported at least one death by suicide. 74% of colleges noted an increase in suicidal ideation among 16 to 18-year-old students.*
- **Mental Health Disclosures:** 90% of colleges reported an increase in mental health disclosures among 16 to 18-year-old students, highlighting the need for robust support systems.*

LOCAL CONTEXT

The mental health and wellbeing landscape in which Inspire Education Group operates presents significant challenges. Data from Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire paints a concerning picture of rising rates of probable mental disorders among young people, with specific concerns around gender disparities, eating disorders, sleep difficulties, loneliness, and the vulnerability of SEND students.

**Source: AoC Lincolnshire NHS 2023*

In Lincolnshire, probable mental disorders in young people have increased from 1 in 9 in 2017 to 1 in 6 in 2020**. This trend is mirrored in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, where an estimated 1 in 4 young people face a diagnosable mental health condition. Adding to this, adults in these areas are also experiencing increasing rates of mental health conditions.

Within IEG, Peterborough College has experienced the most significant rise in mental health casework, highlighting the growing scale and severity of student needs. This surge appears linked to the cost-of-living crisis and rising poverty, particularly impacting Peterborough's demographics and student population. Furthermore, a rise in students presenting with mild anxiety, depression, and undiagnosed mental health issues, alongside ongoing concerns around self-confidence, resilience, eating disorders, self-harm, and family bereavement, emphasises the need for robust support systems.

KEY CHALLENGES AND STATISTICS IMPACTING STAFF

For staff, workload is a major contributor to mental health issues, often exacerbating existing conditions. The education sector reports lower overall wellbeing scores compared to the national average, with stress, depression, and anxiety accounting for a substantial portion of work-related illnesses. Staff also face barriers in accessing mental health support due to a lack of awareness, long waiting lists, and limited resources. This impacts not only the individual staff members but also the institution as a whole, leading to increased absenteeism, reduced staff retention, and a negative impact on student experience and morale.

- **Workload and Existing Conditions:** 80% of colleges identified workload as a significant factor contributing to staff mental health issues, often exacerbating existing mental health conditions.*
- **Burnout and Stress:** The education sector reports a lower overall wellbeing score compared to the national average, with stress, depression, and anxiety accounting for a substantial portion of work-related illnesses.*
- **Access to Support:** Staff face barriers in accessing mental health support due to a lack of awareness, long waiting lists, and limited resources.*
- **Funding and Resources:** Colleges face challenges in securing sufficient funding and resources to address the growing mental health needs of both students and staff.*

Overall, the mental health landscape in the education sector is a pressing issue that demands a comprehensive and collaborative response. Addressing the challenges faced by both students and staff requires a multifaceted approach that includes prevention, early intervention, accessible support services, and a commitment to creating a culture that prioritises mental wellbeing. IEG's Mental Health Strategy sets out our vision and commitment to creating a consistent and coordinated whole-group approach to mental health and positive wellbeing.

**Source: AoC Mental Health Report 2024*

***Source: AoC Lincolnshire NHS 2023*

1 in 5 children and young people in England have a mental health problem.
Source: Mind 2024

7.8% of adults in the UK felt lonely 'always or often' in 2024.
Source: Mind 2024

In 2023, 6,069 deaths registered in England and Wales were caused by suicide. 75% were men.
Source: Mind 2024

CULTIVATING A THRIVING COMMUNITY

We aim to create an exceptional culture where wellbeing is prioritised. The Inspire Education Group has a whole-group approach to mental health and wellbeing and has identified three key themes/priorities that will provide the foundations and drivers for positive mental health and wellbeing.

PRIORITY 1

Leadership and Ethos

Through authentic leadership we will model and champion an inclusive culture that meets the needs of the College community. Embed a consistent and coordinated whole-College approach to mental health through effective governance and leadership that ensures wellbeing permeates all aspects of College life.

PRIORITY 2

Support for Students

Foster a physically and psychologically safe and welcoming environment that promotes wellbeing, proactively supporting students' mental health throughout their learning journey.

PRIORITY 3

Workplace Wellbeing

Nurture a culture that supports and invests in people and their wellbeing and create an exceptional working environment where colleagues feel valued, supported and can thrive.

PRIORITY 1

Leadership and Ethos

Through authentic leadership we will model and champion an inclusive culture that meets the needs of the College community. Embed a consistent and coordinated whole-College approach to mental health through effective governance and leadership that ensures wellbeing permeates all aspects of College life.

We will achieve this by:

- **Visible leadership** and a clear commitment to mental health and wellbeing across the whole organisation.
- **Championing an inclusive culture** that places compassion and kindness at its heart. Leaders model self-care and demonstrate the value and importance of positive wellbeing.
- **Whole-College approaches to mental health** inform the organisational vision, mission and values, and are embedded in policies, practice and culture.
- **Prioritising cohesion and inclusivity** of services across all provision, seeking appropriate collaboration across the College community and relevant external stakeholders, to support a whole-College approach to mental health services and support.
- **Creating safe spaces** creating physically and psychologically safe spaces within the College (on campus and online) and individuals feel able and are supported to disclose when they are experiencing poor mental health.
- **Nurturing a culture of belonging, inclusion and safety** where leaders work to prevent and address marginalisation, discrimination and harassment of individual students, staff and groups.
- **Deliver and develop services, policies and strategy** which are responsive to research and evidence of lived-experience and community need.
- **Provide transparent accountability** through consistent and effective mechanisms, regular evaluation and reporting and have a partnership approach to College activity
- **Robust governance** to ensure formal reporting to the governing body is consistent.
- **Act as a community educator** to demystify mental health concerns, championing positive mental health and wellbeing among staff, students, parents and carers.



PRIORITY 2

Support for Students

Foster a physically and psychologically safe and welcoming environment that promotes wellbeing, proactively supporting students' mental health throughout their learning journey.

2

We will achieve this by ensuring:

- **Measures to support transition** are in place throughout the learning journey.
- **The College invests time and resources into meaningful promotion** of mental health and wellbeing throughout the academic year.
- **Support services are accessible, sustainable and inclusive**, responding to current and future need, including that of the local context.
- **The College provides additional or specific interventions for students who need them**, removing barriers and tackling stigma to ensure services are inclusive and accessible.
- **The Colleges implement effective mechanisms to identify students in need of intervention** to provide early support and reduce and prevent crisis intervention.
- **Thoughtful curricula are designed to impact positively on the mental health and wellbeing of all students** across all courses. Embedding mental health and wellbeing into curriculum promotes awareness of support available and develops students' knowledge and strategies for self-care.
- **Parents and carers are provided with opportunities and resources to develop their knowledge** of mental health and wellbeing, to better support their young people.
- **The College proactively takes steps to build relationships with local NHS, social care and third sector agencies**, to safeguard the College community through improved access to mental health and wellbeing support services.
- **Capture and use student voice** specifically on mental health and wellbeing and use this to inform strategy and future development of support services.
- **Work in partnership with the Student Union and wider College community** to create a culture that supports positive wellbeing.
- **Engage and communicate** with parents and carers fostering a collaborative approach to positive mental health and wellbeing support.



PRIORITY 3

Workplace Wellbeing

Nurture a culture that supports and invests in people and their wellbeing and create an exceptional working environment where colleagues feel valued, supported and can thrive.

3

We will achieve this by:

- **Developing a culture** and environment that supports positive staff wellbeing and a welcoming workplace.
- **Equipping managers** with the knowledge, skills and confidence to support good wellbeing within their teams and respond appropriately when staff experience poor mental health.
- **Offer support** and ensure staff feel able to discuss their own mental health and wellbeing and have access to effective, accessible support and proactive interventions to help them improve their own mental health and wellbeing.
- **Promoting a workplace environment and management practices that support formal and informal reflection**, consultation and development for staff who may encounter student mental illness.
- **Understanding the lived experience of staff**, implementing mechanisms to gather intelligence to inform College mental health strategies and improve support services.
- **Ensuring staff are confident** in supporting students' mental health concerns, working within appropriate and supportive boundaries.
- **Ensure staff receive mental health training** that is context and role specific and are supported to develop, individually and collectively, the confidence and ability to promote positive mental health, responding appropriately and signposting to relevant agencies.
- **Ongoing clinical development and support** of specialist staff who support individuals with their mental health and wellbeing.
- **Ensure effective mechanisms are in place** to listen and respond to views of staff.
- **Supporting research into mental health and wellbeing**, inspiring the development of innovative practice that informs decision making and continuous improvement.



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

AT IEG, we recognise that wellbeing is fundamental to success. We are deeply committed to fostering a nurturing community that prioritises the emotional, physical and mental health of both our students and staff. There is a clear commitment to supporting both student and staff mental health and wellbeing that is shared by managers and leaders at all levels including the governing body.

This strategy will be driven forward by the Vice Principal Student and Staff Experience with the support of the Assistant Principal for Student Experience and Support, Group Director of HR and other key strategic leads across the group.

The key strategic leads are responsible for ensuring that provision for students and staff needing specialist or targeted support / intervention is in place and is working effectively. In addition, the IEG Wellbeing Group ensures that we embed a consistent and coordinated whole-group approach to mental health.

All key stakeholders are involved contribute to fostering an environment that promotes positive wellbeing, proactively supports and leads on initiatives that will help students and staff implement preventative measures.

This working group consists of the following:

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Services
- Mental Health Lead
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Staff representation from Curriculum and Business Support
- Student representation from the Student Council
- Chaplaincy

The page opposite summarises the other College stakeholder groups who play a significant role in successfully implementing this strategy.



GOVERNORS

College governors are responsible for ensuring that wellbeing permeates all aspects of College life, championing effective practice. They will ensure all key priorities are met and that an annual mental health report is delivered to corporation.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND EXTENDED LEADERSHIP GROUP

Senior leaders will champion an inclusive culture that places compassion and kindness at its heart. Leaders will promote efforts to support staff and student's emotional health and wellbeing, overseeing the acceptance and embedding of a whole-group approach. They are responsible for communicating and embedding this strategy and the performance of all related activities.

EXTENDED LEADERSHIP GROUP

Nurture a culture that supports and invests in people and their wellbeing and create an exceptional working environment where colleagues feel valued, supported and can thrive. Making sure each curriculum area or department team delivers their responsibilities set out by this strategy and any supporting documents.

STAFF (CURRICULUM, STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND BUSINESS SUPPORT)

All staff contribute to creating an exceptional working environment where colleagues feel valued and supported. College staff are responsible for making sure the student need is met as well as taking ownership for their own wellbeing and assisting in the delivery of a whole-group approach to positive mental health.

STUDENTS

Students are encouraged to engage with wellbeing services and initiatives in order to develop resilience for themselves and for their peers. Student Voice is used to inform strategy and future development of support services.

PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and Carers are provided with opportunities and resources to engage and develop their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing to better support their young people promoting positive mental health.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Our commitment to mental health and wellbeing is underpinned by the AoC Charter, which informs IEG’s approach. Structured across four themes detailing good practice principles and standards, the Charter is linked to the DfE Principles of a whole-College approach to mental health. We will measure our impact on student mental health and wellbeing by prioritising both quantitative and qualitative metrics, undertaking a rigorous evaluation of services and interventions.

The Wellbeing Implementation Plan focuses on future actions and improvements across IEG, underpinned by our commitment to the AoC Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter. Progress is monitored regularly by the Wellbeing Group and reviewed annually to ensure relevance. An annual self-assessment, using the Charlie Waller C-MET Tool, informs the development and delivery of our mental health strategy. This self-assessment is built into the College business cycle.

To ensure a whole-College approach, we have nominated a member of SLT with responsibility for the Mental Health Charter Framework, working in partnership with the Senior Mental Health Lead. A Mental Health Working Group, reflecting input from senior leaders, curriculum teams, student services, business support, estates management, staff, and student voice, has been established.

The self-assessment outcomes are reflected against the good practice principles within the four charter themes: Leadership and Ethos, Student Support, Workplace Wellbeing, and Evidence and Impact. We report against these themes, highlighting where we meet core and enhanced standards, using C-MET assessment outcomes and Working Group reflections.

Following the annual self-assessment, a report is produced and delivered to Corporation demonstrating how we are delivering against the Charter Standards, highlighting effective practice and areas for development and is published on the College website.

The self-assessment outcome and annual report inform the creation and development of our Mental Health Strategy, with oversight of Mental Health Policies for Staff and Students. These documents outline how we intend to work in collaboration with key stakeholders in education, health, and the local community.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Association of Colleges (AoC) Mental Health Charter (AoC, 2024)
- AoC Mental Health Survey Report (Mar 2023)
- AoC Mental Health Report (2024)
- C-MET – the College Mental Health Self-evaluation Tool (AoC and Charlie Waller Trust, 2024)
- Inspire Education Group Be Bold, Be Brave, Be Exceptional Strategy 2024-2030
- Inspire Education Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027

- Inspire Education Group College Human Resources policies
- Inspire Education Group College Safeguarding for All Policy (SAF001)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE Sept 2024)
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook 2024)

- Promoting and Supporting Mental Health in Schools and College (DfE, 2024)
- The Big Mental health Report (Mind 2024)
- The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (DfE, May 2024)
- The University Mental Health Charter
- World Health Organisation

AoC MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER STANDARDS

The charter is structured across four themes detailing good practice principles, and standards which are marked either core or enhanced. The introduction of standards transparent accountability and consistent practice across the sector.

Core (C) Standards are minimum standards of delivery all colleges should be able to meet as part of their whole-College approach to mental health. **Enhanced (E)** Standards recognise additional practice above the minimum, adding enhanced value to our overall mental health work.

Each theme is clearly linked to the relevant DfE Principles of a whole-College approach to mental health and the standards will be reviewed annually.

Leadership and Ethos	Charter Standard	Rating
	There is a member of the College senior team with oversight of mental health and wellbeing.	C
	There is an active senior mental health lead within the organisation.	C
	The College has published its Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	C
	An annual mental health report is delivered to corporation.	C
	There is an established Mental Health and Wellbeing Group to monitor and measure effectiveness and impact of strategy.	E

Support for Students	Charter Standard	Rating
	There is dedicated internal resource to support students' mental health and wellbeing.	C
	There is clear evidence that mental health and wellbeing is embedded within the college's curriculum.	C
	Safeguarding to be effective at most recent Ofsted inspection.	C
	A model of effective support has been designed, demonstrating a triage support system that responds to students' needs and emerging themes and issues.	E
	Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are delivered with the objective of supporting all students to take proactive steps to be both physically and mentally healthy, such as promoting the benefits of the 'NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing' or other models.	E

Workplace Wellbeing	Charter Standard	Rating
	College people plans or staff development plans includes mental health and wellbeing training relevant to their role.	C
	The College has invested in training relevant staff to achieve the Mental Health First Aid certification.	C
	The College has invested in an external support programme for staff.	C
	Wellbeing is an integral part of all HR processes – recruitment and selection, induction, professional development reviews, 1:1s and professional development.	C
	The College holds an external accreditation that recognises its approach to staff, for example, investors in people.	E
	The College shows a proactive commitment to staff wellbeing by signing a workplace pledge, for example, a Menopause Workplace Pledge.	E

Evidence and Impact	Charter Standard	Rating
	The College has completed an annual self-assessment, using the Charlie Waller CMET Tool.	C
	The College has published an impact statement and annual report on mental health and wellbeing.	C
	The College has an established student and staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Group.	E
	The Students' Union has established the role of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Officer or similar.	E




Our Commitment To MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

IEG is dedicated to fostering an exceptional culture where wellbeing is prioritised, and every member of our community feels valued, engaged, and empowered. We strive to forge a truly inclusive organisation where everyone has equality of opportunity to succeed. This commitment is underpinned by the AoC Mental Health Charter and is central to our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which outlines our plan to create a supportive and thriving environment for all.

Leadership and Ethos

We are committed to fostering a culture where mental health and wellbeing are championed at every level. Our leaders will:

- Visibly prioritise mental health and wellbeing.
- Create safe and supportive spaces for all.
- Champion a compassionate and inclusive culture.
- Actively prevent discrimination and harassment.
- Embed wellbeing in our vision, values, and practices.
- Promote a sense of belonging for every individual.

Support for Students

- **Be Bold** We encourage you to seek support when you need it. We offer a range of accessible resources to help you through your learning journey.
- **Be Brave** Talking about mental health takes courage. We're here to listen and support you without judgement.
- **Be Exceptional** Your wellbeing is key to your success. We're committed to creating a safe and welcoming environment where you can flourish.

IEG will ensure:

- Supportive transitions throughout your studies.
- Proactive support to identify needs early.
- Year-round wellbeing promotion and activities.
- A curriculum that promotes wellbeing and self-care.
- Easy-to-access, inclusive support services.
- Resources and support for your parents and carers.
- Targeted help when you need it, without stigma.
- Strong partnerships with local health services.



Scan to access Spectrum Life digital student support services.

Use organisation code: **INSPIRE**



Workplace Wellbeing

- **Be Bold** Prioritise your own wellbeing. We encourage you to seek support when needed.
- **Be Brave** Open conversations about mental health are essential. We're committed to a culture of understanding and support.
- **Be Exceptional** Your wellbeing is vital to our success. We're dedicated to creating a thriving workplace where you feel valued and empowered.

IEG will ensure:

- A supportive and welcoming workplace culture.
- Your feedback shapes our Mental Health Strategy.
- Managers are trained to support your wellbeing.
- Confidence in supporting student mental health.
- Accessible support and interventions.
- Targeted mental health training.
- Opportunities for reflection and development.
- Ongoing development for specialist staff.

Scan to access more information on our Staff Wellbeing and Mental Health Platform on Inspire Insights.



5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

1

Connect

Talk and Listen: Improves wellbeing by 15%. Join activity groups, talk to everyone you meet and try to make them smile :)



2

Be Active

Improves wellbeing by 12%. Try yoga, walking, dancing, boxing or any other exercise.



3

Keep Learning

Improves wellbeing by 15%. New skills or physical activities are a great way to learn and keep active. Learn from others or help them which will help you to connect and give!



4

Give

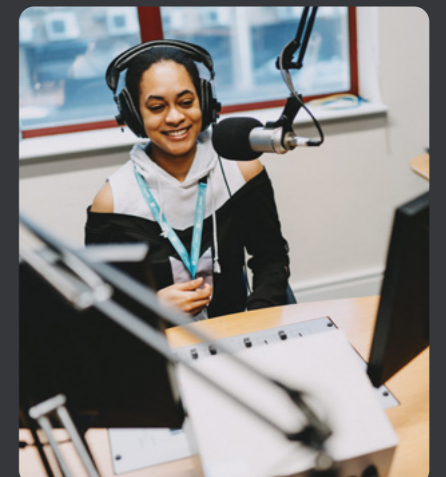
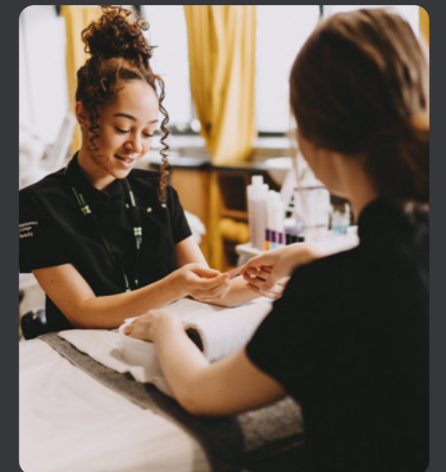
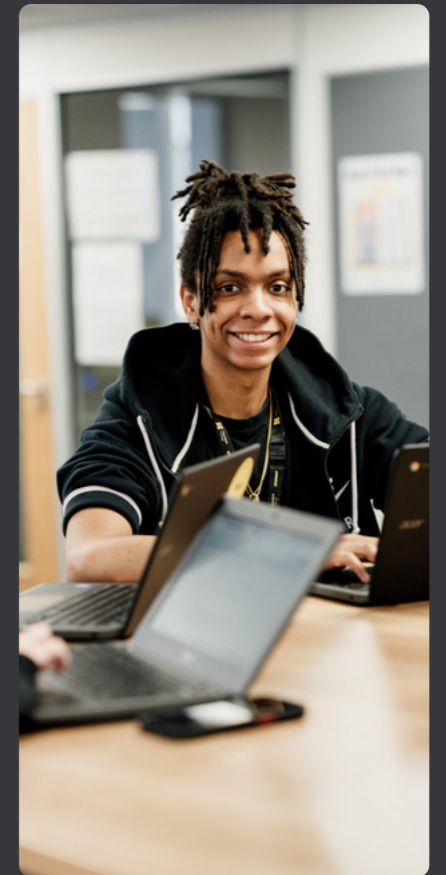
Giving through kindness or gratitude improves wellbeing by 24%. Smile at everyone you meet, kind words, kind deeds, write a positive journal.



5

Pay attention to the present moment

Improves your wellbeing by 10%. Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body, and the world around you. Some people call this awareness 'Mindfulness'.





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made available in large
print, audio, and Braille.
Translation can also be
available upon request.*