

WellFest 2021

Report

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Background

WYLP

West Yorkshire Learning Provider and North Yorkshire Learning Provider is a network of training organisations operating across Yorkshire, representing training providers, colleges, universities and schools. WYLP has previously hosted WellFest over 4 days in 2020 which included 4 different themes:

Theme 1 - Health, Nutrition & Exercise

Theme 2 - Inspirations FE Sector Stories

Theme 3 - Well-being & Mindfulness

Theme 4 - Pride

This event had an audience of over 200 Training Providers, Colleges and Universities.

“WYLP held the first WellFest last year during the pandemic to support our members with their own mental wellbeing & from that success we wanted to make WellFest21 even better, reaching a wider audience so they can benefit from the fantastic speakers & guests we had on offer. We therefore joined forces with our network colleagues across the Pennines to bring this year’s festivities” Alex Miles, Managing Director for WYLP

GMLPN

Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network is a network of over 100 Independent Training Providers, Colleges of Further Education, Schools and Universities.

‘It’ was great to work with WYLP and NYLP on WellFest 2021- a festival for Wellness. Mental Health and Wellbeing is priority for us and our members – to support staff and learners - and we were excited to explore some of the mental health challenges and solutions at the conference.’ Anne Gornall, Executive Director for GMLPN.

WellFest

WellFest virtual conference was aimed at work based learning tutors and practitioners, and provided them with a virtual 'get away day'. Covering not only CPD but also support for positive wellbeing practices, sharing lessons and successes, coping mechanisms for stress, caseload management and overall help to maintain mental wellness.

GMLPN and WYLP were excited to mark Mental Health Awareness week with the launch of WellFest 2021. Mental Health Awareness week took place from 10th May - 16th May, with the theme of the week being nature and how nature helps Mental Health and Wellbeing

Attendees

WellFest was attended by **13** Training Providers, **2** colleges, **2** councils, **2** employers, **1** university and **1** charity.

In total there was **39** attendees.

Morning Speakers

Firstly, we welcomed Alex Miles, Managing Director at WYLP who provided an opening for the morning session.

Physical Exercise for the mind and body

Thomas Minns | MinnsMind

Thomas Minns is a Professional Rugby player and set up MinnsMind to be able to go into work places and schools to raise awareness on Mental Health, sharing personal stories and tips to overcome Mental Health.

Thomas spoke about his own journey with Mental Health and how turning to sport and rugby really helped him.

The importance of Healthy Eating for a healthy mindset

Louise Mercieca | Healthkick

Louise spoke about how there is a vicious cycle when it comes to stress and also the importance of having a healthy mindset for food. She discussed how to keep in control of healthy eating and how food manufacturers influence one's mindset when it comes to eating.

Taking steps forward: Practical support to prevent Mental Health crisis

Bob Kitchen | Big Dog Little Dog & Richard Powell | NCFE

Bob introduced the concept of Mental Health and what is and is not Mental Health. He then shared with attendees the Mental Health Continuum and looked at the different lines of the spectrum people maybe on with respect to their Mental Health. Within the Mental Health Continuum, attendees looked at the Protective Factors on how to maintain positive Wellbeing.

How to have a balanced lifestyle

Stephen Mordue | University of Sunderland

Stephen shared insights on how to understand and achieve a balanced lifestyle and how to control stress and chaos, by planning and self-care. There are 2 factors to a productive life which are personal responsibility and the environment.

Stephen went through the 5 gears to being productive, managing time and winding down when it comes to rest and family time. Stephen stated that structure is everything and it generates flow with family, friends and work. Rest is also important: "...make sure to plan your rest and do not put it off."

Neurodiversty

Helen Wilson | Cognassist

Helen started the session with a Brain Break which meant going through the whole body noticing any physical tension and making sure it is released, as it could be adding stress to your daily life.

Afternoon Speakers

The afternoon session was opened by Anne Gornall, Executive Director at GMLPN who welcomed back attendees.

Establishing Mental Health fitness in Education

Dr Fran Longstaff | Fika & Mark Gordon | NCFE

NCFE introduced how they are working and supporting with Fika's mission to mainstream mental fitness through education. They then discussed with the attendees the techniques to use and the importance of Mental Fitness.

Fika have developed a programme '7 Skills of Mental Fitness Curriculum' which is endorsed by NCFE. This is accessible for all college staff and students.

[You can find out more here](#)

AoC/GMLPN Mental Health Project

Anne Gornall & James Lees | GMLPN

GMLPN shared with attendees the Mental Health Project currently undertaken by GMLPN, in partnership with the Association of Colleges and funded by the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. This is an exciting project, strengthening the Mental Health support for Learners, Training Providers and Employers particularly for Apprenticeships.

The project has enlisted **27** Mental Health Champions, **13** organisations signed up to the Mental Health Charter and facilitated **4** Mental Health focus groups with **140** attendees in total.

This session previewed the Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit for Training Providers.

[You can find out more here](#)

Fitness and Wellbeing during Lockdown

Luke Podmore | Tameside College

Luke spoke about how they helped their students to tackle potential inactivity throughout the national lockdown. They then set up 'Revival' which was an project to combat inactivity amongst students and staff at Tameside College.

The core focus of this was Mental Health. They did this by physical activity sessions, online weekly quizzes, live animal 'cameras' and mindfulness breathing. To encourage students and staff to become more involved, they offered a prize fund and incentives.

Digital Wellbeing

Amie Bentley | Manchester Metropolitan University

Amie discussed Digital Wellbeing and how digital technology can impact on wellbeing, describing the 5 senses exercise: See, Hear, Feel, Smell and Taste. Also, sharing what the signs are when in need of a digital detox and combat this there are ways to manage one's Digital Footprint.

Managing Anxiety

SallyAnn Coleman | Apprentify

SallyAnn is a Mental Health Champion for Apprentify and GMLPN. SallyAnn explored what anxiety is, what the physical and psychological signs are. Looking at the brain, the Amygdala part is responsible for learning, memory, behaviour and response to fear. Attendees then looked at what worries can be solved and those that cannot. SallyAnn then shared best practice to help, including distraction, routine, appreciation, practice gratitude and reconnecting.

Mental Health and Apprenticeships - An apprentice perspective

Emma Nolan | Thales UK

Emma provided an insight into her own Mental Health Journey - on the impact of the pandemic as an apprentice and also the support she received from her employer, University tutors and counselling.

Resources

[You can access the recording here](#)

[You can access the slides here](#)

How to stop your apprentices dropping out?

5 top tips to increase learner confidence, improve engagement and prevent drop out.

[Click here to access](#)

Tameside College Revival Impact

Summary of student and staff engagement

[Click here to access](#)

Improve Mental Fitness and Student Outcomes

Video with Fika and NCFE

[Click here to access](#)

Neurodiversity Masterclass

Free qualification in Neurodiversity

[Click here to access](#)

Primarily we would like to thank our sponsors to enable GMLPN, WYLP and NYLP to facilitate this conference:

