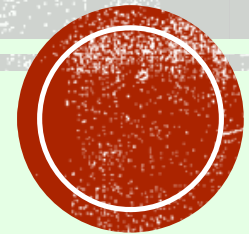


REFLECTIONS OF A WELLBEING CHAMPION: ONE YEAR ON

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BACKGROUND

- 2018: Trained as a Mental Health First Aider
- 2019-2020: Maternity Leave
- January 2020: Appointed Department Wellbeing Champion – with a focus on staff wellbeing
- February: Attended Embedding Mental Health Best Practice Conference (St John Ambulance)
- March: Staff Survey..... Followed by Lockdown
- July: Wellbeing Champion Network

Overall role: University/College level, and Departmental level



DEPARTMENT LEVEL

- Recognition at Departmental level
 - Fed on by ensuring Wellbeing is featured in all Staff Meetings
 - Visibility and increase in communication
 - Monthly newsletters - changed to monthly emails
 - Quick updates and access to what is available
- Focusing on staff
 - Staff Survey
 - Interventions
 - Focus on self-care and recognising signs of mental health issues in others
- Overview from two perspectives
 - Wellbeing Champion & NSS and Student Experience Coordinator



UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE LEVEL

- Be approachable and willing to help.
- Be knowledgeable and able to signpost colleagues and students to the relevant services available.
- Spot signs and symptoms of people who may not be coping and intervene with skilled wellbeing conversations.
- Champion and promote relevant health messages and events at Brunel.
- Be knowledgeable of self-care therapies to improve wellbeing.
- Be enthusiastic about, and interested in, wellbeing, improving the working environment and supporting engagement.
- Encourage colleagues and students to participate in Brunel's Wellbeing initiatives/challenges
- Advocate the University Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategies with individuals, partners, their team and their wider directorate/college.



CHALLENGES OF LOCKDOWN

Increased anxiety and uncertainty

- Initial focus on students
- Difficulties in communication and knowing whom to contact
- Understanding the changes being made – and keeping up with the speed...

Increase in physical and mental implications of increased screen time

- Reports of eye strain, back and neck problems and other associated conditions
- Adverse affect on those already suffering from disabilities
- Working from Home policies (more pressure or less?)

Increased workload and stress

- Learning experience for all
- Not just new technologies – reflecting on course design and delivery
- Balance between students and staff
- Recognising, we are no longer working from home, **we are living in work!**



RECOGNISING THE EFFECTS SOCIAL ISOLATION

‘Individuals who are socially isolated are between two and five times more likely than those who have strong social ties to die prematurely’

(Marmot M (2010), Fair Society, Healthy Lives. The Marmot Review)

- Combined with reduction in exercise and, in some cases, leaving the house
- Recognising mental and physical effects of isolation and loneliness
- Recognising some domestic situations are more complex

- Potential effect on work
 - Social support is recognised in some form within any models of sustainable resilience
 - Linked with our ability to detach – especially when things go well
 - Disassociation: Break with reality



SUCCESS

Local Level

- Continued recognition in staff meetings
- The creation of social spaces – coffee corners and ‘how are we doing’
- Increasing managers’ awareness of relevant training programmes
- Recognition that there are some living in very difficult domestic circumstances

Institutional level

- Increased recognition: Dedicated web-page and focus on Rewards and Wellbeing
- Wiki to share good practice
- Training on self-care and supporting others to self-care
- Chat Café being introduced at institutional level by the Wellbeing Champion Network
- Workplace Safeplace Training



A MESSAGE TO OUR STUDENTS

So when you're feeling all alone, turn on the light, turn on your phone,

Reach out, talk, smile and laugh, remember those around you,

Turn on the music, stand up tall and dance, close your eyes and remember good times.

And if you aren't sure reach out to me, to us, we're here and we will listen,

We care and when there is a greater need time can always be given.

