

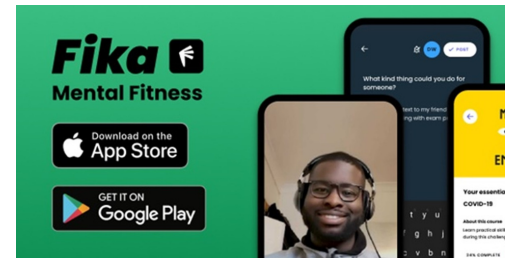
WELLFEST21 ROUND-UP

Last week, June 17th, we held our 2nd WellFest event for practitioners and support staff across the FE sector. For this years event we wanted it to be bigger and better than ever, so we joined forces with our friends and colleagues at Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network to have a greater audience. We also had some fantastic sponsors and supported again this year, with special thanks to Cache Alumni, NCFE, BDL, Skills Forward, LearnBox & Cognassist. This blog provides a summary of our fantastic speakers & experts covering important and insightful themes. All resources discussed will be made available from the WYLP website.

DR FRAN LONGSTAFF - FIKA & MARK GORDAN - NCFE

After the lunch break delegates were joined by NCFE & Fika who challenged the group to think about why we use the terminology 'mental fitness' - they also discussed why it is important to change the language surrounding mental health. Fika is a mental fitness skills development platform that our partners embed into their L&D strategy, empowering them to reach every employee in order to improve personal and team performance.

They discussed the techniques used in day-to-day life to improve mental fitness and how technology may have changed this due to the pandemic. There was also a discussion and demo on focusing on mental fitness in education in order to allow students and staff mindset to flourish.



Fika discuss the concept of Mastering the 7 skills of Mental Fitness – these being Focus, Confidence, Motivation, Connection, Meaning, Positivity and Stress Management.

Fika shared information on the App developed which they are currently offering a 1 Year usage to Fika funded by NCFE.

The Fika 7 Skills of Mental Fitness Curriculum has been endorsed by NCFE and is accessible for all college staff and students and has been Ofsted Mapped

More information can be found at - Fika | Mental Fitness

ANNE GORNAL & JAMES LEES - GMLPN

We then heard from Anne & James from GMLPN about the mental health project they are currently running. They have worked in collaboration with Association of Colleges and Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership to develop a Mental Health Charter for ITP's. The aim is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Apprentices and trainees. TP's will commit to:

- Promoting Awareness of Mental Health issues
- Attend Mental Health Professional Exchanges which are facilitated by GMLPN
- Share good practice and resources with the network
- Be available to help other network members if they need mental health guidance and support

As well as the charter there is a toolkit currently under development which will pull together best practice from across the sector to share with practitioners. To find out more follow the link below:

<https://gmlpn.co.uk/news/gmlpn-recruiting-mental-health-champions-mental-health-charter-supporters/>

There is currently 13 organisations signed up and 27 mental health champions. Some work has already been completed with a team walking the equivalent distance of the English Chanel.

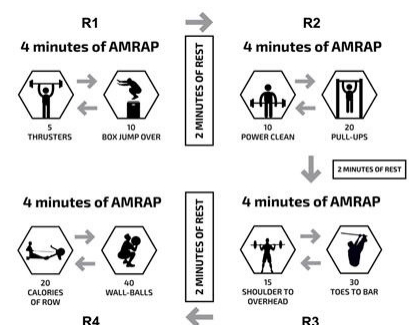
LUKE PODMORE - TAMESIDE COLLEGE

Luke opened his presentation by sharing details of the Revival project launched during lockdown – with AoC stating “The mental health and wellbeing of students and staff is a huge priority for colleges - even more so since the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic.”
AoC 2021

The recent AoC Mental Health in Colleges report (Jan 2021) details the challenges:

- 90% of colleges seeing an increase in students diagnosed with mental health conditions.
- 85% of colleges seeing a significant number of students with undiagnosed mental health difficulties.
- 94% of colleges have students who have attempted suicide in the last twelve months.
- Nearly half of colleges (41%) say that mental health referrals have been significantly higher since the pandemic began

Luke shared the Inactivity project set up to combat inactivity amongst students and staff at Tameside College and their increased focus on Mental health by sharing practical tips and solutions to support staff, this includes not just exercises but online quizzes, mindfulness breathing, Prize fund & incentives that can aid more activity/mindfulness



WELLFEST21

The college used the AMRAP method and all sessions were pre-recorded so students could access at any time. Luke concluded by sharing some of the outcomes the college has achieved in supporting mental health & well-being; including a new Well-being working group & strategy and the creation of their own fitness app in association with My PT Hub.

AMIE BENTLEY - DIGITAL WELLBEING

The delegates were then joined by Amie Bentley from Manchester Met University who shared her story of digital well-being. Amie discussed the importance of being aware of your 5 senses - do this after every meeting or task and allows you to re-focus.

18% of adults cited technology use as the main source of stress in their life and many stating the need for a digital detox. However many young people have FOMO when they are not using technology & that feeling of missing out on social media makes you constantly check it. - No boundaries constantly checking emails etc outside of work

Amie shared the benefits to digital detoxing; reduce stress, allows a more positive life perspective on life & improves sleep. Whilst detoxing it is suggested that you can come up with a plan of what makes you happy, what doesn't & concentrate on the positive. It is important to be realistic - don't completely disconnect, try a mini-detox first and to let friends and family know so they can support you and do not get concerned when you are not replying!

Amie shared information on how digital technology can be impacting your well-being; covering connectivity with people, lack of being outside and taking in nature, increases anxiety & loses sense of community - Amie also shared the positives of digital technology and that everything in moderation should be a methodology used.



SALLYANN COLEMAN - APPRENTIFY

Sally Coleman from Apprentify presented a session on Anxiety awareness focusing on the causes of anxiety and some tips on how to deal with it. Anxiety is a feeling of discomfort but not all anxiety is bad - It can energise us into action. For people who suffer with anxiety it is important that they recognise the good and bad anxieties before it grows/develops into more of a problem that could be more difficult to deal with - if learners are suffering with anxiety it is a good activity to complete signs of good & bad with them so they can learn from & adapt their response so it doesn't cause a negative mindset and outlook.

Signs of anxiety; Physical signs include - fast breathing, irregular heartbeat, sweating
Phycological signs - trouble sleeping& feeling depressed

Sally discussed that getting a good night's sleep is massively important for positive well-being and mental health and ensuring a regular routine around bedtime is critical, especially when looking at the pre-sleep arrangements and understanding that Your environment matters!

Sally believe that a solution could be to try journaling your thoughts and worries before bed, getting them all down and off your shoulders to help with the quality & quantity of sleep.

EMMA NOLAN - THALES UK

Emma Nolan finished the presentations and discussed her own experience with Anxiety and Depression.Emma shared openly and honestly that while they were present in her life for a few years, they were manageable up until the pandemic. Emma said she found guidance through her university counselling and tutors as well as through her Employer. Emma wants to share her experience as she hopes to open up the conversation on Mental Health and the support available - Emma stated that asking for help if you are struggling is difficult but important.

Emma shared that private therapy worked for her but may not work for everyone so finding a variety of solutions or asking for help from people will identify a response that works.

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