



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

Student  
Wellbeing  
Centre

# TEACHERS

*a guide to supporting your pupils' mental health*



**FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN TRANSITIONAL TEAM,  
FOR THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS FUNDED PROJECT**

# Foreward

## *Supporting your pupils and their mental health for the future*

The Transitional Wellbeing Team are part of a wider, Office for Students funded project based at the University of Lincoln, but supporting young adults from all over the country, wherever their destination may be – university, work, apprenticeships or gap year.

The team is in place to support young adults as well as schools, parents and teachers, offering workshops, talks and resources, to improve the mental health outcomes of students entering the next stage of their lives.



### *What's inside?*

- **Who we are/what we do**
- **What is transition?**
- **What is mental health?**
- **5 ways to wellbeing**
- **Resources for support**
- **What can you do to help?**

# Introduction

## *Who are we?*

The University of Lincoln Transitional Team (UoLTT) are part of a new project funded by the Office for Students. The team are based within the Student Wellbeing Centre at the University of Lincoln.

The aim of this project is to improve mental health outcomes by delivering a student led approach to mental health support.

## *What do we do?*

The UoLTT can offer support in a variety of ways. Through our outreach work, we deliver sessions to schools and colleges (either assembly or workshop style) where we focus on transition. This can include topics such as managing change, study tips, self-care and the impact on mental health, managing emotions, being independent and how to recognise when to ask for support.

The team are also happy to create bespoke sessions around the theme of transition. The team's work isn't solely focused on students who are choosing the university route but it is applicable to students who may choose to go into paid employment or alternative further study like apprenticeships.





# What is transition?

When we use the term “transition” with pupils finishing their A-levels, we often think about moving from Further Education (FE) to Higher Education (HE). However, it is not limited to this, transition is something every young person will go through once they have finished their A-Levels. Young people have so many choices, they could be moving on to a paid job (full time/part time), an apprenticeship, gap year or travelling.

For 2020 university entry more than 2,300 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds applied for an early deadline course. Widening participation efforts are paying off.

In 2017/2018 there were:


- 814, 800 people participating in an apprenticeship
- Higher proportion of starts from younger people
- For the first time more men than women starting an apprenticeship

Asked to consider what they thought as most important after finishing school, 42% of young people asked in a study said “pursuing a route that they were passionate about”.

Confidence, communication and resilience are among important skills that need to be taught equally to academics according to 62% of young people in a Prince’s Trust survey. They say this will help prepare them for the future.

Previous stigmas around mental health are now lifting, which is positive! The subject is talked about much more widely, with high profile support and stories shared from well-known names such as JK Rowling, Lady Ga Ga, Prince Harry and Stephen Fry.

Figures show that supporting young adults is vital. Even more so, during times of change or adversity.



1 in 6 people aged 16-24 has symptoms of a common mental disorder such as depression or an anxiety disorder<sup>1</sup>

1 in 8 young people have a diagnosable mental health problem<sup>2</sup>

Half of all mental health problems manifest by the age of 14, with 75% by age 24<sup>3</sup>

# 5 Ways to Wellbeing

## What is mental health?

Our mental health is just as important as our physical health and this is the case for **everyone**. Mental health does not discriminate. Anyone can suffer with a broken leg. Everyone is different, some may bounce back from hard times whilst others it could take some time.

It is good to be mentally healthy, but we understand that at times this can be hard. So, what is "good mental health"? Traits of good mental health can be feeling good about yourself, having positive relationships, managing full emotions from happy/excited to sad/angry.

If we are mentally healthy this allows us to: cope with day to day life when it has its ups and downs, be able to ask for help from others when we feel we need it and remain in control of our lives.

Therefore, we want to create a useful information resource, to help teachers, parents and guardians to be able to support young people with this.

## Steps for support

Being prepared for life and future transitions can help maintain a healthy, happy mind for young people. Encourage pupils to use the "**Five Ways to Wellbeing**". These help to regain a sense of control in day to day life and together help nourish mental health. This has been proven by research into young people's mental health.



**Take notice**



**Connect**



**Keep active**



**Give**



**Keep learning**

# 5 Ways to Wellbeing

## 1. *Be active*

Physical activity can lower feelings of stress, anxiety and depression. It's proven! For your pupils making changes to their physical activity doesn't have to be huge, try to encourage them to incorporate things into their daily routine.

## 2. *Connect*

Social connections can be crucial to promote positive wellbeing. Talk to your pupils more and have them do the same with others. Encourage them to ask someone how their day has been, what they did that weekend and discuss the importance of taking time to actively listen and be engaged.

## 3. *Give*

Tell your class that giving can be one of the best activities to boost mental wellbeing and this can be done in many ways, big or small.

For example holding the door open for someone, smiling at a stranger or doing a job for a friend/family member (without being prompted!)



# 5 Ways to Wellbeing

## 4. Take notice

Life is almost in “fast forward” with everything accessible all at once. It is so important for young people to have an awareness of what is happening around them and be in the moment, so that they can enjoy it and make memories.

**Do they take notice of their surroundings, what have they not seen or noticed before?** We recommend engaging in some “Mindful Activities” to be more aware of our surroundings. For example, next time your pupils walk to school, suggest that they keep their phone in their bag and they look at what they pass on their journey instead of at a screen.

**Can they take notice of their feelings?** By recognising these, they will better recognise and appreciate the feelings of others and more importantly be aware of changes.



## 5. Keep learning

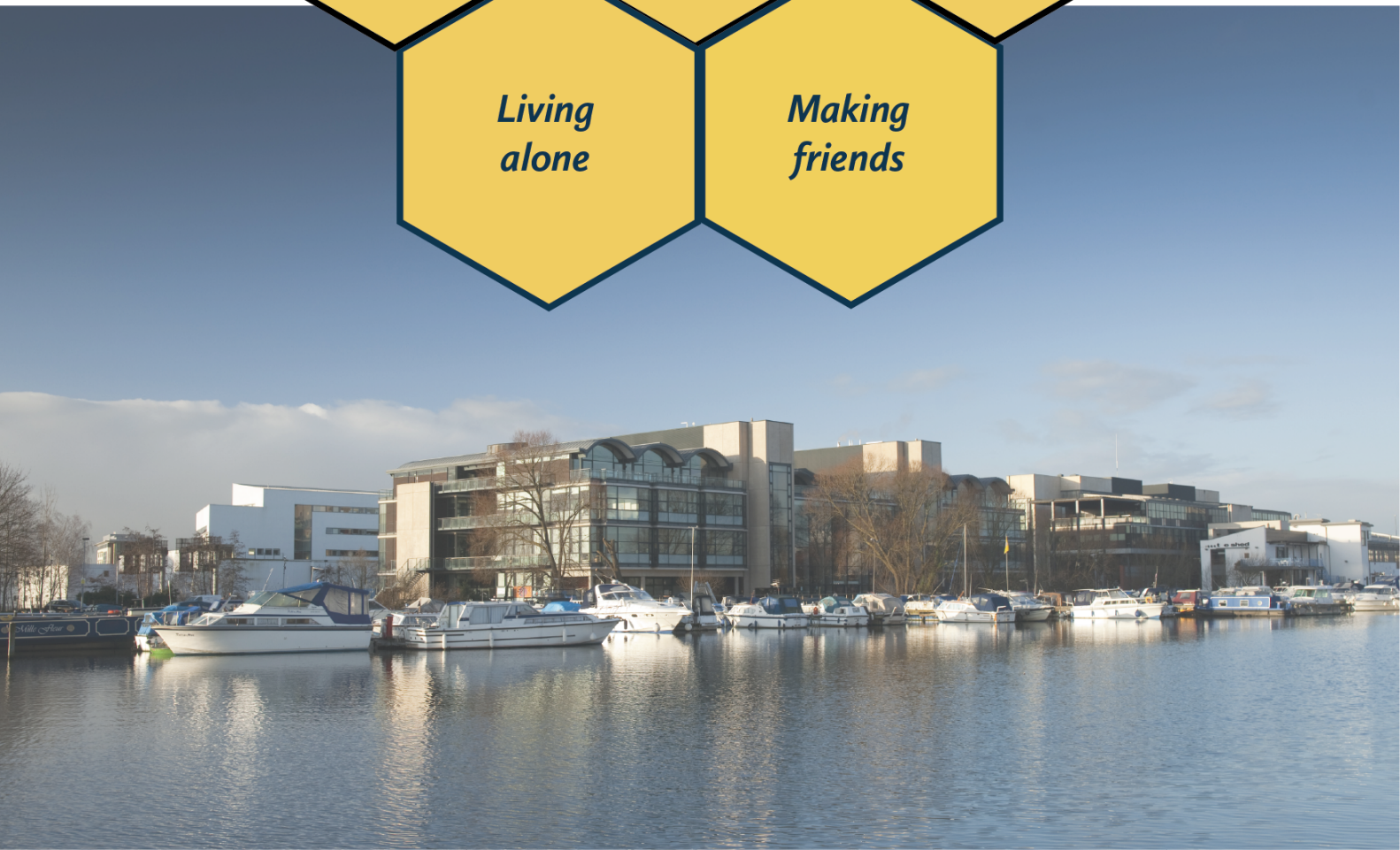
Learning and development can increase knowledge and skills as well as confidence and self-esteem. A nice way to connect with your child is through discovery, find out something new about a friend or family member.

Encourage your child to read a new book or watch a TED talk (these can be found through Google/YouTube) there are thousands on every subject imaginable, they will be sure to find one that intrigues them. They may even discover something new they enjoy!



# What have pupils told us they want to know about?

It's an important part of the Transitional Team's work to ensure that the content we deliver is relevant to pupils. With this in mind, we have completed focus groups with pupils and as a result, here are some examples of the things they said they would like to hear about.



# As a teacher, what can I do to help my pupils?

A lot of the issues we see through the Student Wellbeing Centre are to do with resilience. Anything that teachers can do to encourage pupils to work on their resilience, will ultimately be beneficial.

Encourage pupils to look at online resources such as;

## ***Budgeting/financial planning*** -

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-guide/>

## ***Being independent (skills that this involves)*** -

<https://www.unitestudents.com/the-common-room/student-living/Independence-How-to-be-self-sufficient-at-uni>

## ***Making friends*** -

<https://www.unitestudents.com/the-common-room/student-living/-Bonding-as-a-flat-Our-top-5-things-to-do-together>

## ***Living alone*** -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZk4ZNAY09Y>

## ***Differences between school and University*** -

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/blogs/differences-between-school-and-university>

## ***Organisation*** -

<https://studyhub.fxplus.ac.uk/getting-organised>

## ***Managing emotions*** -

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-every-day-living/student-life/#.Xc2A7ZL7SUm>

# Managing Emotions

Reassure your pupils that anxiety, stress or worry at certain times can be normal. We all feel anxious in some situations, like meeting new people or going somewhere new.

Reassure them that making mistakes is not always a bad thing, these can be inevitable at times but positives can always be found. Help them to see this as a learning process and a steppingstone to a better outcome.

Many young people don't recognise when to reach out for help and support. **Ask them about any changes in their sleeping, eating, socialising, mood or thoughts - did they notice any?**

Often these changes can be early signs of struggles and the ideal time to reach out for support.

It is important to ensure that they know and understand their support network. These are the people who they may call upon should they need to. **Do they know what support services are available to them locally and do they have all the resources that they may need?**



# Useful information

## Useful Links –

There are some fantastic websites available that offer resources and further information should you or your child wish to.

Our particular favourites include -

Student  
Wellbeing  
Centre

### **[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)**

Essential support for under 25's, for any challenges that young people may face.

### **[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)**

The UK's leading charity for children and young people's mental health. Information, advice and resources.

### **[www.studentminds.org.uk](http://www.studentminds.org.uk)**

The UK's student mental health charity. Some great resources and information for parents too. Their Transitions Guide in particular offers up a wealth of advice.



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In partnership with -

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#### Sources:

1 NHS Digital (2017) Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England, 2014.

2 NHS Digital (2018) 'Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017'

3 Kessler RC et al. (2005). 'Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication'.

4 Thompson, D. and Fabienne Vailes (2019). How to grow a grown up: prepare your teen for the real world. London: Ebury Digital.