

SKDC / inspire+ Wellbeing Project

Overview

inspire+ are a local sports and education charity founded in 2011. Our team are dedicated to facilitating greater health, wellbeing, and achievement for young people across South Kesteven providing opportunities for them to be healthy, happy, and active.

We have created a mentoring scheme, which includes sessions designed to build confidence, develop resilience, and positively impact on health and wellbeing. The scheme can be adapted to deliver in key stage 2, 3 and 4 (aged 7-16). The mentoring scheme helps young people develop mental resilience and positively impacts emotional wellbeing, enabling them to feel well, be happy and help them achieve their goals and ambitions.

Following funding received from SKDC, we delivered the wellbeing project with young people from 6 local secondary schools Bourne Academy, Deepings Academy, Priory Ruskin Academy, Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School, Kings School, and Walton Academy.

The sessions were also delivered as part of our community programme – our Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) camps, which saw over 3000 attendances from young people aged 5-16 during the summer holidays. This summer, our HAF camps were held in Bourne, Deepings, Grantham, and Stamford, providing opportunities for young people all over the district to access wellbeing activities. The nature of the HAF eligibility criteria ensured that children that would benefit most from accessing wellbeing activities were able to participate in the programme.

Session Content

In local secondary schools, a “care package” was offered for morning or afternoon blocks over 6 sessions, each session accommodating up to 15 young people. At our HAF camps, wellbeing was included as part of the programme during each week of the summer holidays. Each workshop consisted of a short presentation, accompanied by games, tasks and challenges to bring the initiative outcomes to life. Each workshop lasted 1 hour, and work completed by the cohort was personalised and logged in their wellbeing journals. Below is an overview of the workshops delivered.

Workshop 1

Introductions – this is a chance for the young people and mentor to get to know each other, discuss their experiences and inspire the pupils to think about their own personal journey.

Workshop 2

Young people profile themselves, how they are feeling, their traits and habits and other information about themselves. They will consider where they are currently, and where they want to be in the future.

Workshop 3

Young people are introduced to how to set goals and identify their support networks. Develop the skill of mediation and compromise, to manage relationships between family, friends, and teachers.

Workshop 4

Young people are introduced to the concept of resilience by taking part in a series of activities designed to challenge them.

Workshop 5

Discussion around management of emotional wellbeing, developing coping mechanism for stress, anxiety, and nerves. Presentation covering nutrition, hydration, sleep and mindfulness as the fundamental wellbeing jigsaw. Consideration of impact and usage of social media.

Workshop 6

Celebration and recognition of achievements. Engage in further activities that will help reinforce the messages and lessons learned. Opportunity to discuss and share thoughts about the next steps and future beyond the programme.

Participation

Across the duration of the project participation by young people was:

- Secondary school session participants: 72
- HAF programme delivery (community): 423

The secondary school sessions were more 'targeted', whereas the HAF sessions were to the whole group (but delivered in smaller sub groups). Young people aged 4-16 are eligible for HAF if they receive benefits-related free school meals, have a special educational need or disability, Homes for Ukraine children, ACRS, children deemed as at risk / vulnerable, children from low income households that do not receive benefits-related free school meals.

Impact

A survey was completed with young people that participated in the programme:

- 98% reported an increase in confidence after attending the sessions.
- 98% said that they found the programme to be positive and rewarding.
- 95% said they felt better prepared to deal with mental health and wellbeing issues as they have learnt new and more positive coping mechanisms as part of the project – including the 5 Ways to Wellbeing.
- 90% felt more comfortable talking with their peers about their worries / concerns after attending the sessions.
- There was an increase in overall mental health and wellbeing score for all participants who completed the wellbeing programme.
- There was an overall reduction in social isolation – giving young people the chance to talk to peers in similar situations was beneficial.
- There was a reported increase in growth opportunities – giving young people freedom to talk and discuss and provide them with the opportunity to support and grow.
- There were reported improvements in attitudes, routines and life choices made by young people (parent feedback).

inspire+ Mentor Feedback

“The young people that participated in the programme really seemed to grow in confidence from week 1 to week 6. To begin with, there was some resistance to share their experiences but week on week conversations grew and they were able to talk openly about things that might be worrying them.

The sessions provided a safe space to share their feelings and experiences – often talking about the pressures in their lives but also what makes them feel good, and coping mechanisms. Young people left with a toolkit of resources to support them as they transitioned through the next stages and a journal to reflect on the topics that had been discussed.”

Kai Willerton, inspire+, Community and School Team Officer

School Feedback

- *“Thank you so much for all your hard work at our school. Our young people thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and have developed in ways that are not easy to do so in the classroom. It is a testament to the incredible work that you and inspire+ do for our pupils.”*
- *“Just a bit of feedback from today’s session, the kids I spoke to loved it, so a huge thank you for doing your thing; it has been a really positive experience and made a real impact.”*
- *“Thank you for your session today. The pupils from my class that attended came back talking all about it and continued to speak with each other and ask questions about the things they had talked about.”*
- *“Thank you for your time and enthusiasm. The programme was a great success, and I thought the messages given to the young people were easy to follow, powerful and very relevant.”*
- *“Thank you very much for delivering the programme in our school. I’ve had lots of year 11 students come up to me over the course of the day to say how much they enjoyed it. All of the students who were there, as well as the staff, thought it was fantastic. There were students in there who usually struggle to concentrate for 10 minutes so for them to be hanging on your every word for the whole session was incredible.”*

Parent Feedback

- *“Thank you for the opportunity for my child to be involved in the programme. The sessions were really engaging but also fun and interactive. My child came home from the sessions with a sense of pride. We would like to thank inspire+ and SKDC for funding the programme – it was fantastic, and it has made a real difference.”*
- *“Please could you pass on my thanks to the inspire+ team. My son really looks forward to the sessions that inspire+ put on. My son tells me nothing about school or what happens, but I get a blow-by-blow account of his sessions with inspire+, whatever he is doing, thank you. Please carry on inspiring children and helping them enjoy school.”*
- *“These workshops have had a real positive influence, it has definitely lifted my children’s mood this last week.”*

Young People Feedback

- *“I found it useful to hear that all my friends have the same concerns as me, and that I am not alone.”*
- *“I enjoyed the sessions because it has helped me gain confidence. It’s good to know that everyone is worried about the same things as me and that we can share our worries.”*
- *“I have enjoyed it as I have got the chance to reflect on aspects of myself.”*
- *“I have found it useful to discuss ways I can control my behaviour.”*
- *“Setting goals has been useful so I have something to work towards.”*
- *“I have liked having the chance to share stuff in a smaller group, I have really enjoyed the sessions.”*

Future Actions

We want to continue to deliver this intervention within a school setting and will be working with both primary and secondary schools to promote the initiative. We will continue to include wellbeing sessions in our HAF programme delivery. We are open to discussion around delivering this more openly in community settings, this could involve working with GP surgeries and community groups, as well as option for self-referral, to develop a scheme for social prescribing for young people in South Kesteven.

Other Wellbeing Activity

At inspire+ we recognise that we also have a duty of care for teachers and staff working in schools, to promote their own wellbeing. We facilitate a wellbeing programme led by former Head Teacher Carol Hines which leads our efforts to drive an important agenda. This includes:

- Introducing and supporting the ‘5 ways to well-being’ for schools through Senior Leadership Team engagement and staff training.
- Various courses, such as ‘Supporting your child mindfully through SATs’.
- Advice and guidance for creating a mentally healthy school.
- Free access to teacher mindfulness courses for interested staff.

As mentioned, wellbeing features as a key theme during our Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) camps during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. Children that attend are eligible either because they receive benefits-related free school meals or meet other eligibility criteria – including an Education Health Care Plan, children under Homes for Ukraine, Afghanistan refugees, children living in areas of deprivation and children in care (or previously in care). Sessions focus on discussion around wellbeing, often spending time outside with nature and / or creative activities that encourage relaxation and create a safe space for discussion.