

Coleg Penybont  
Bridgend College



**BUILDING RESILIENT  
COMMUNITIES IN  
FURTHER EDUCATION:  
PHASE 2**

**PROJECT EVALUATION  
REPORT**

**AUGUST 2022**

## FOREWORD

This report has been produced via a collaboration between Bridgend College, the partnering Colleges involved in the project, and the University of South Wales (USW). Specifically, Joe Baldwin, Assistant Principal Learner Journey, Bridgend College, and Elizabeth Rees, Project Coordinator, commissioned researchers from USW to conduct a multi-method programme of research designed to evaluate the impact of the **Building Resilient Communities in FE Phase 2** project on college learners and staff.

Support provided by Elizabeth Rees and the partnering Colleges has been significant in the completion of this evaluation project. In addition, it is important to highlight the efforts of the researchers involved in the project, without which the project would not have been brought to a timely and thorough conclusion:

**Professor Brendan Cropley (Principal Researcher)**

Professor of Sport Coaching at USW

**Professor David Shearer (Principal Researcher)**

Professor of Elite Performance Psychology, USW

**Hannah Wixcey (Research Support)**

Research Assistant in Sport at USW

**Alan McKay (Research Support)**

KESS Funded PhD Candidate at USW

For information relating to this project, including methodology and findings, please contact:

Professor Brendan Cropley Ph.D., C.Sci., FBASES, FHEA  
School of Health, Sport & Professional Practice  
University of South Wales  
USW Sport Park, Treforest Industrial Estate, Pontypridd, CF37 5UR  
Tel: +44 (0)1443 654874  
Email: [brendan.cropley@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:brendan.cropley@southwales.ac.uk)

## CONTENTS

| Section – (Hyperlinked for Access)                             | Page |
|--|------|
| <b>Foreword</b>  | 1    |
| <b>Contents</b>  | 2    |
| <b>List of Tables and Figures</b>                              | 3    |
| <b>Introduction to the Report</b>                              | 4    |
| Approach to Data Collection                                    | 5    |
| Structure of the Report  | 6    |
| <b>Summary of the Key Findings</b>                             | 6    |
| <b>Valleys Steps</b>   | 9    |
| Introduction to Valleys Steps                                  | 9    |
| Everyday Mindfulness   | 9    |
| Everyday Mindfulness Participants                              | 10   |
| Everyday Mindfulness Findings (Learners)                       | 11   |
| Everyday Mindfulness Findings (Staff)                          | 18   |
| Building Resilience  | 24   |
| Building Resilience Participants                               | 25   |
| Building Resilience Findings                                   | 26   |
| <b>Mental Health First Aider Training (MHFAT)</b>              | 32   |
| Introduction to MHFAT  | 32   |
| MHFAT Participants   | 32   |
| MHFAT Findings   | 32   |
| <b>Social Prescribing Training</b>                             | 37   |
| Introduction to Social Prescribing                             | 37   |
| Social Prescribing Participants                                | 37   |
| Social Prescribing Findings                                    | 38   |
| <b>Platform 4YP</b>  | 41   |
| Introduction to Platform 4YP                                   | 41   |
| State of Mind  | 41   |
| State of Mind Participants                                     | 43   |
| State of Mind Findings   | 44   |
| Peer Mentoring Programme                                       | 52   |
| Peer Mentoring Participants                                    | 52   |
| Peer Mentoring Findings  | 52   |
| <b>Reflections on Data Collection &amp; Project Evaluation</b> | 56   |
| <b>Appendix</b>  | 58   |
| Appendix A   | 58   |
| Appendix B   | 62   |

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

### TABLES

- Table 1.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Participants: Learners
- Table 2.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Participants: Staff
- Table 3.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Learners
- Table 4.** Paired Sample t-Tests for Everyday Mindfulness: Learners
- Table 5.** Everyday Mindfulness Learner Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment ( $n = 17$ )
- Table 6.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Staff
- Table 7.** Paired Sample t-Tests for Everyday Mindfulness: Learners
- Table 8.** Everyday Mindfulness Staff Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment ( $n = 9$ )
- Table 9.** Valleys Steps Building Resilience Participants
- Table 10.** Valleys Steps Building Resilience Descriptive Findings
- Table 11.** Paired Sample t-Tests for Building Resilience
- Table 12.** Building Resilience Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment ( $n = 29$ )
- Table 13.** MHFAT Participants
- Table 14.** MHFAT Participant Evaluation ( $n = 9$ )
- Table 15.** Social Prescribing Participants
- Table 16.** State of Mind Participants
- Table 17.** State of Mind Descriptive Findings
- Table 18.** Paired Sample t-Tests for State of Mind
- Table 19.** State of Mind Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment ( $n = 47$ )
- Table 20.** Peer Mentoring Participants

### FIGURES

- Figure 1.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Learners
- Figure 2.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Staff
- Figure 3.** Valleys Steps Building Resilience Descriptive Findings
- Figure 4.** State of Mind Descriptive Findings

## INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

Phase 2 of the Building Resilient Communities in FE project has run across the 2021-2022 academic year and once again has been hosted by a consortium of Colleges across South Wales and led by Bridgend College. The participating Colleges, with whom this evaluative research has been conducted, are:

Bridgend College; Coleg Gwent; The College Merthyr Tydfil; St David's Catholic Sixth Form College; Coleg-y-Cymoedd; and Cardiff and Vale College.

Building on the success of Phase 1 of the project, Phase 2 of the Building Resilient Communities in FE project aimed to:

“Develop personal strategies to improve resilience and self-regulation, focusing on approaches to growth mind-set, coaching and behaviours. To develop self-belief, personal responsibility, and resilience by helping learners to understand and believe in themselves and their strengths and to make a positive contribution to their community.”

Phase 2 of this project once again focused on two specific strands of learner support: (1) Resilience and Performance Interventions; and (2) Mindfulness and Well-Being Interventions. However, in Phase 2 several additional support programmes were offered to FE College staff, including: *Mental Health First Aider Training*; and *Social Prescribing Training*. In Phase 2, learner programmes (assessed in this evaluative report) were delivered by two external organisations: *Valleys Steps*; and *Platform 4YP*.

Each independent intervention programme provider presented a series of specific programme aims in accord with the nature of their work. These aims were utilised by the evaluative research team to construct appropriate measures (both qualitative and quantitative) to assess the nature and extent of the impact that each of their interventions made on associated key performance indicators for learners and/or staff. The aim of this report, therefore, is to present the findings of this evaluative research and thus feedback on the potential efficacy of each intervention programme.

It is important to note, while due consideration was given to the independent intervention programme providers' aims to identify appropriate psychometric measures to assess the efficacy of each programme, some caution is always necessary when interpreting the findings of such measures. This is due to the notion that the adopted validated measures may not be entirely nuanced in accord with the interventions themselves. Further, the sizes of the samples assessed may have impacted on the significance of the findings presented. Full justification for each measure is provided in the following sections of this report.

## APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION

The quantitative measurement process involved sampling learners who had participated in one of the intervention programmes as well as a matched sample of learners not participating in any programme who acted as a control group. In doing this, we have been able to: (a) detail the potential impact of the specific intervention programme on learners (e.g., how they developed from pre- to post-intervention) who took part; and (b) examine the magnitude of the impact on those taking part in comparison to learners who simply continued their daily college lives. Employing control groups allows for a more robust understanding that any differences that might occur are caused by the intervention programme and not by chance.

To collect data across the course of Phase 2 of this project (for all independent intervention providers) surveys were created that contained: introductory information about the nature of the survey; participant consent to participate; demographic information; and the battery of psychometric inventories designed to assess the efficacy of each individual programme (full copies of these surveys are available upon request). The platform JISC Online Surveys (JISCOS, <https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/>) was utilised to create and host the surveys and the data<sup>1</sup>. Participating learners, and those willing to act in the capacity as control group participants, were sent an electronic link to each survey prior to the start (between 1-2 weeks) and immediately post completion of the intervention. Results were then downloaded, data cleaned through Microsoft Excel, and analysed through the statistical analysis programme IBM SPSS version 26.

To explore participants' views of the programmes further, upon programme completion focus groups were conducted with learners (e.g., Platform 4YP's State of Mind programme) and participating staff (e.g., Social Prescribing programme), and post-participation surveys regarding the participants' experiences of the impact of the programme were administered. All focus groups were conducted online via either Microsoft Teams or Google Hangouts. Sessions were recorded and then transcribed in their entirety to ensure accuracy in data analysis. Transcripts were content analysed using an inductive process<sup>2</sup> to construct a thorough understanding of participant experiences.

Copies of all psychometric questionnaires are presented in Appendix A. Example copies of focus group guides are presented in Appendix B and C respectively.

---

<sup>1</sup> Data storage via JISCOS is compliant with GDPR (2018) regulations and the platform endorsed for research by the University of South Wales.

<sup>2</sup> Hsieh, H-F., & Shannon, S. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15, 1277-1288. Doi: 10.1177/1049732305276687

## STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is structured into seven main sections. Following this introduction is a summary of the key findings across the entire Building Resilient Communities in FE project Phase 2 so that the impact of the project can be explored at a glance. Next, the findings of the evaluation for each individual intervention provider are presented in four separate sections. In these sections, an introduction is offered that details the aims of the programme, the approaches to data collection (including the measures adopted with justification), the findings of the evaluation, and a summary analysis of the impact. Finally, some brief reflections are offered relating to the evaluation process.

## SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

1. All programmes (Everyday Mindfulness, Learner and Staff; Building Resilience; State of Mind) evaluated quantitatively, resulted in improvements to participant scores on the measures adopted, indicating some efficacy for the interventions. These improvements were, however, not always statistically significant for pre- to post-intervention measures, nor were they always statistically different between participating groups and control groups. Where significance was identified, it can be said with some certainty that the interventions had a positive and meaningful impact on the learners. Where significance was not found, examinations of the qualitative data and participant feedback indicates that all intervention programmes were largely well-received and appeared to positively impact those who engaged.
2. Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness (Learners) – paired-samples t-tests indicated statistically significant differences for participant scores on both measures of *mindfulness* and *well-being*. The effect sizes of this significance are considered large, suggesting that the intervention effect was large in magnitude. It can be suggested with some confidence that the intervention had a positive effect. These findings support the descriptive insights that indicate that participant scores improved to a greater extent than those in the control group.
3. Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness (Learners) – Participant feedback relating to the impact and efficacy of the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme appears particularly positive. Few participants responded negatively to evaluative questions, with *82% of participants indicating that they extremely enjoyed the programme*, and *71% of participants reporting that the programme had been extremely useful*. Findings constructed from the focus groups supported this feedback. Participants were clear and in general agreement that *the programme had a positive impact on a range of adaptive factors* (e.g., development of knowledge; improved well-being). They also indicated that they had been able to take a series of strategies away from the programme to support ongoing self-regulation. Some recommendations for improving the programme were also offered, mainly relating to the duration of the programme.

4. Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness (Staff) – paired-samples t-tests indicated *no statistically significant differences* for participant scores on both measures of mindfulness and well-being. While scores on both measures improved for both cohorts, more so than the control group, collectively these changes were not large enough to suggest with confidence that the intervention had a positive effect on the measures taken.
5. Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness (Staff) – participant qualitative and descriptive feedback was largely positive and in support of the quality and efficacy of the programme. Between the two cohorts assessed in this report 100% of participants reported enjoying the programme, and 80% and 100% respectively indicated that the programme was useful for them and that they would recommend the programme to other members of staff.
6. Valleys Steps Building Resilience – paired-samples t-tests indicated a *statistically significant difference for participant scores on the measure of resilience* and an almost statistically significant finding for perceived stress. The effect size of the resilience significance is considered moderate, suggesting that the intervention effect was medium in magnitude. It can be suggested with some confidence that the intervention had a *positive effect for improving resilience* and a *good effect for perceived stress*. These findings support the descriptive insights that indicate that participant scores improved to a greater extent than those in the control group.
7. Valleys Steps Building Resilience – Participant feedback relating to the impact and efficacy of the Building Resilience programme appears particularly positive. However, only 68% of participants indicated that they extremely enjoyed the programme, and 52% of participants reported that the programme had been extremely useful. Only 14% (4 out of 29 participants) indicated that they disliked the programme and did not find it useful. Findings constructed from the focus groups largely supported the positive feedback. Participants were clear and in general agreement that *the programme had a positive impact on a range of personal factors* (e.g., development of life skills; improved knowledge). They also indicated that they had been able to *take a series of strategies away from the programme* to support ongoing stress management. Some recommendations for improving the programme were also offered, mainly relating to the duration of the programme.
8. Mental Health First Aider Training (MHFAT) – Participant feedback relating to the impact and value of the MHFAT programme appears particularly positive. Indeed, 89% of participants indicated that they extremely enjoyed the programme, that the programme had been extremely useful, and that they would recommend the programme to others. Only 11% (1 out of 9 participants) appeared to have had a negative experience on the programme. Findings constructed from the survey indicated some participant agreement that *the programme had a positive impact on them*, as well as on their *knowledge and understanding of mental health, well-being, and related factors*. The participants also reported that the training would support them within their roles. One negative response appears to be associated with the interactions one participant had with the tutor.



9. Social Prescribing Training – Overall, it appears as though the Social Prescribing Training programme was well-received by those engaging in this evaluation. The training, while certain improvements were suggested, had a positive impact on the trainees and resulted in the development of new skills and strategies and/or the confirmation of existing approaches to supporting well-being and social prescribing.
10. Platform 4YP State of Mind – paired-samples t-tests indicated *statistically significant differences for participant scores only on measures of well-being and self-regulation*. The effect sizes of these outcomes are considered large and moderate respectively, suggesting that the intervention effect was of a moderate-large magnitude. It can be suggested with some confidence that the intervention had a positive effect for these two variables only. Descriptive statistics indicate, however, that participants reported improved scores for all variables (e.g., well-being; eudaimonic factors; self-esteem; and self-regulation) above those reported by the control group.
11. Platform 4YP State of Mind – Participant feedback relating to the impact and efficacy of the State of Mind programme appears particularly positive. Few participants responded negatively to the items, with *100% of participants indicating that they extremely enjoyed the programme*, and *43% of participants reporting that the programme had been extremely useful*. Many respondents provided a mid-score (3 - somewhat) to the question regarding “usefulness”. Findings constructed from the focus groups supported this feedback. Participants were clear and in general agreement that *the programme had a positive impact on a range of adaptive factors* (e.g., development of coping mechanisms; improved well-being). They also indicated that they had been able to take a series of wider factors away from the programme to support ongoing self-regulation.
12. Platform 4YP Peer Mentoring Training – Overall, it appears as though the Peer Mentoring Training programme was extremely well-received by those engaging in this evaluation. The training, while certain improvements were suggested, had a positive impact on the trainees and resulted in the development of new skills and strategies and/or the confirmation of existing approaches. Finally, all participants discussed their enjoyment of the programme, indicating that it had been extremely beneficial.

## VALLEYS STEPS

### INTRODUCTION TO VALLEYS STEPS

Valleys Steps provided two programmes for learners: (1) *Everyday Mindfulness*; and (2) *Building Resilience*. Valleys Steps also provided a 6-week *Staff Mindfulness* training programme to staff across colleges. Both learner and staff *Everyday Mindfulness* programmes were also delivered in Welsh. The findings of the Welsh cohorts have been translated and included in the final analysis here.

### EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS

#### EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS:

Designed to support individuals to become more self-aware and aware of their surroundings. The aim is to aid individuals to be more open to new experiences and focus their attention on what matters most to them. The programme also aims to improve concentration, focus, perceptions of control, and to reduce stress, with a view to enhancing overall well-being and mental health.

To assess the efficacy of both learner and staff versions of the Valleys Steps *Everyday Mindfulness* programme, the following constructs were measured: (a) **MINDFULNESS**; and (b) **WELL-BEING**. To assess these constructs, the following measures were used:

#### a. Mindfulness: Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)<sup>3</sup>

The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) is a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristic of mindfulness – *open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present*. Participants respond to a series of statements (e.g., “I find it difficult to stay focused on what’s happening in the present”) by indicating how frequently or infrequently they currently have each experience on a scale of almost always (1) to almost never (6). Scores for each item are summed for the final score. The scale shows strong psychometric properties and has been validated with college and community samples. Correlational, quasi-experimental, and laboratory studies have shown that the MAAS taps a unique quality of consciousness that is related to, and predictive of, a variety of self-regulation and well-being constructs. Van Dam et al. (2010)<sup>4</sup> reported Cronbach’s alpha for the MAAS

<sup>3</sup> Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 822-848. Doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822

<sup>4</sup> Van Dam, N., Earleywine, M., & Borders, A. (2010). Measuring mindfulness? An item response theory analysis of the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *49*, 805-810. Doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2010.07.020

of .88, with Araya-Vargasa et al. (2009) reporting the two-week test-retest reliability of the MAAS as 0.82.

#### **b. Well-Being: Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale (WEMWBS)**

The WEMWBS (NHS, 2006) has 14 statements which cover psychological functioning, cognitive evaluative dimensions, and affective-emotional aspects of well-being (covering hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives). For each statement participants tick the box that best describes their experience over the previous two weeks. The statements are all expressed positively – for example, “I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future.” The scale is scored by summing responses to each item. The responses, from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time), are aggregated to form the Index, which can range from 14 to 70. Tennant et al. (2007)<sup>5</sup> and Clarke et al. (2012)<sup>6</sup> reported Cronbach alpha coefficients for the WEMWBS between .87 and .91. Tennant et al. (2007) reported test-retest reliability of the WEMWBS at one week .83.

#### **c. Follow-up Learner Focus Groups**

Focus groups were conducted with a sample of learners. The focus groups were semi-structured in nature and facilitated by a focus group guide that contained a series of open-ended questions and/or topics for discussion, such as: “I’d like you to discuss what aspects of the Mindfulness Programme have been really beneficial for you”; “What are your views on what aspects of the Mindfulness Programme have not really been that useful?” The aim was to ensure that each focus group was presented with the same questions / topics for discussion while allowing the participants the flexibility to discuss issues that they deemed important. In total, two focus groups were conducted with learners from two separate colleges, each lasting 25 and 35 minutes. No follow-up interviews or focus groups were conducted with staff who had participated in the staff version of the Everyday Mindfulness Programme.

## **EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: PARTICIPANTS**

The participants listed in the tables below represent those who completed both pre- and post- intervention programme measures (participant responses were matched to allow for an assessment of development to be explored). Those who only completed either the pre- or the post- had to be removed from the final sample to allow for a true intervention effect to be assessed. Please note: no control group was sampled for the staff Everyday Mindfulness evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> Tennant, R., Hiller, L., Fishwick, R. et al. (2007). The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): Development and UK validation. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 5, 63. Doi: 10.1186/1477-7525-5-63

<sup>6</sup> Clarke, A., Friede, T., Putz, R. et al. (2011). Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): Validated for teenage school students in England and Scotland. A mixed methods assessment. *BMC Public Health*, 11, 487. Doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-11-487.

**Table 1.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Participants: Learners

|                 | Control<br>(Nov) | Intervention<br>Group (Nov) | Control<br>(Feb) | Intervention<br>Group (Feb) | Total     |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Female          | 4                | 8                           | 4                | 4                           | 20        |
| Male            | 6                | 2                           | 6                | 3                           | 17        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>10</b>        | <b>10</b>                   | <b>10</b>        | <b>7</b>                    | <b>37</b> |
| St. David's     | 10               | 4                           | 10               |                             | 24        |
| Merthyr Tydfil  |                  |                             |                  | 7                           | 7         |
| Bridgend        |                  | 5                           |                  |                             | 5         |
| Coleg-y-Cymoedd |                  | 1                           |                  |                             | 1         |
| Age (Mean)      | 16.5             | 17.4                        | 16.5             | 17.14                       |           |
| Age (SD)        | 0.53             | 1.07                        | 0.53             | 0.69                        |           |

Focus groups were conducted with 6 participants (Female = 4, Male = 6; age range 16-18 years,  $M_{years} = 17.13$ ;  $SD = 0.58$ ) from two different colleges (Coleg-y-Cymoedd and Bridgend College) who had undertaken the Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme.

**Table 2.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Participants: Staff

|                 | January 2022<br>Cohort | March 2022<br>Cohort (Welsh) | Total    |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| Female          | 5                      | 3                            | 8        |
| Male            |                        | 1                            | 1        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>5</b>               | <b>4</b>                     | <b>9</b> |
| St. David's     | 2                      |                              | 2        |
| Bridgend        | 3                      | 2                            | 5        |
| Coleg-y-Cymoedd |                        | 2                            | 2        |
| Age (Mean)      | 41.6                   | 41.5                         |          |
| Age (SD)        | 11.23                  | 8.85                         |          |

## EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: FINDINGS (LEARNERS)

### Descriptive Insights

Table 3 provides an insight into the mean scores reported by those learners who participated in the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme and the control group (broken down into *overall cohort*, *November 2021 cohort*, and *February 2022 cohort*) across both psychological variables measured.

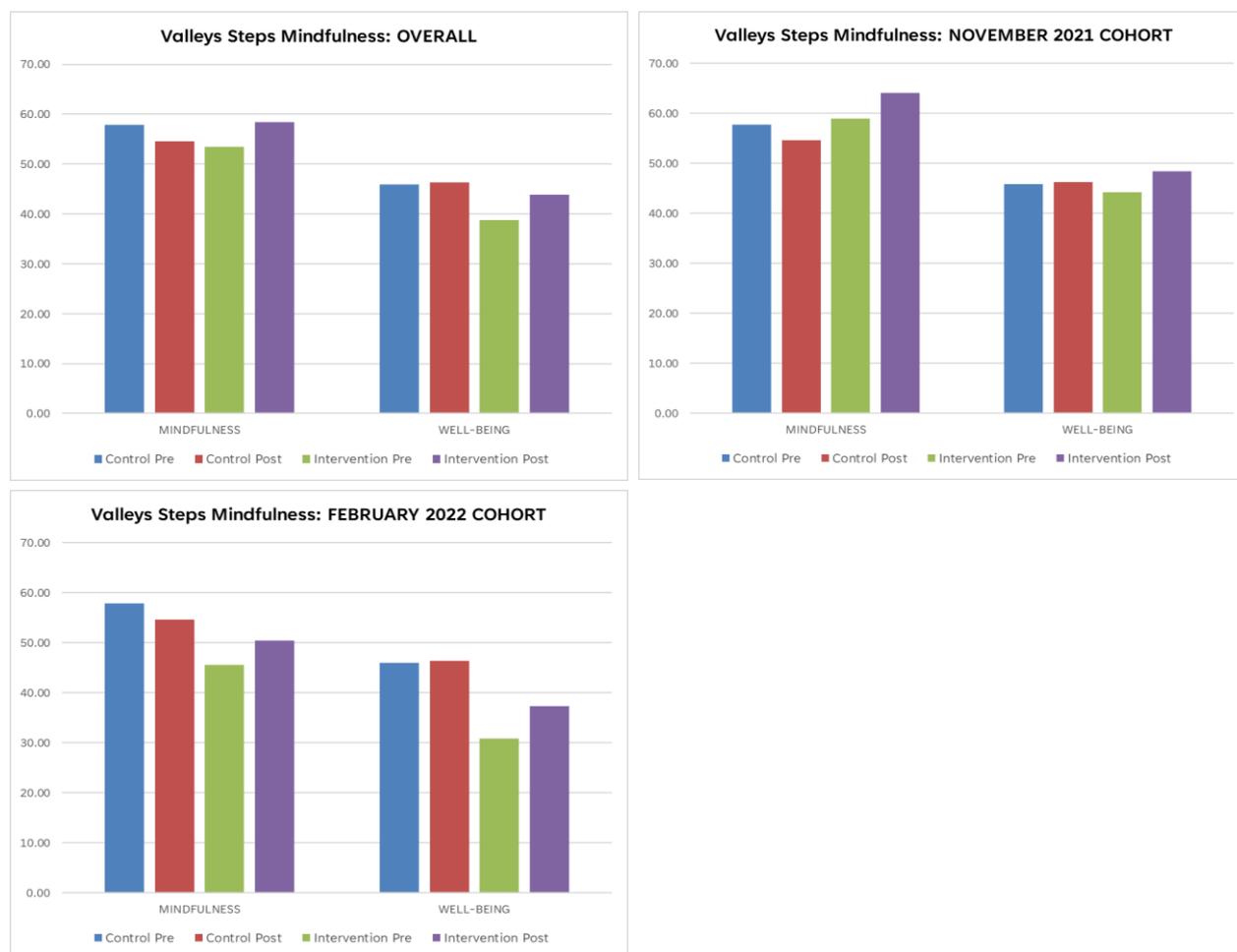
The final column difference pre-to-post provides a direct insight into the developments made by the cohort across the course of the intervention programme. In the instance of the measures adopted here, difference scores that *positive* indicate positive adaptations in the post-intervention measurement period.

**Table 3.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Learners

| <b>Valleys Steps: MINDFULNESS OVERALL COHORT</b> |                    |                     |             |                           |                          |             |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
|  | <b>Control</b>     |                     |             | <b>Intervention group</b> |                          |             |
|  | <b>Control Pre</b> | <b>Control Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> | <b>Intervention Pre</b>   | <b>Intervention Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> |
| <b>Mindfulness</b>                               | 57.80              | 54.60               | <b>-3.2</b> | 53.47                     | 58.47                    | <b>5</b>    |
| <b>Well-being</b>                                | 45.90              | 46.30               | <b>0.40</b> | 38.71                     | 43.82                    | <b>5.11</b> |
| <b>NOVEMBER 2021 COHORT</b>                      |                    |                     |             |                           |                          |             |
|  | <b>Control</b>     |                     |             | <b>Intervention group</b> |                          |             |
|  | <b>Control Pre</b> | <b>Control Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> | <b>Intervention Pre</b>   | <b>Intervention Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> |
| <b>Mindfulness</b>                               | 57.80              | 54.60               | <b>-3.2</b> | 59.00                     | 64.10                    | <b>5.10</b> |
| <b>Well-being</b>                                | 45.90              | 46.30               | <b>0.40</b> | 44.20                     | 48.40                    | <b>4.2</b>  |
| <b>FEBRUARY 2022 COHORT</b>                      |                    |                     |             |                           |                          |             |
|  | <b>Control</b>     |                     |             | <b>Intervention group</b> |                          |             |
|  | <b>Control Pre</b> | <b>Control Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> | <b>Intervention Pre</b>   | <b>Intervention Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> |
| <b>Mindfulness</b>                               | 57.80              | 54.60               | <b>-3.2</b> | 45.57                     | 50.43                    | <b>4.86</b> |
| <b>Well-being</b>                                | 45.90              | 46.30               | <b>0.40</b> | 30.86                     | 37.28                    | <b>6.42</b> |

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the mean changes for the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme for both variable scores as a function of pre-to-post and control vs. intervention groups. Visible differences (pre- to post- and between control and participant groups) are identified above and beyond the significant differences (see Table 4).

**Figure 1.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Learners



## EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: Descriptive Insights Summary

Reviewing the descriptive findings of the quantitative measures adopted to assess the impact of the Everyday Mindfulness programme on learners, it appears that **the programme had a positive effect on participants' mindfulness and their well-being** above and beyond any developments experienced by the control group. Such findings were highlighted in both cohorts and overall.

### Statistical Insights

To assess whether the scores for mindfulness and well-being reported after the Everyday Mindfulness programme were significantly different from those reported prior to the programme, *paired-samples t-tests* were conducted on the overall sample only (this is due to the small sample sizes in each individual cohort).

The findings of these tests may provide some indication as to the significance of the improvements made by participating learners. Additionally, to see whether the differences experienced by participating learners were significantly different to those reported by the

control group a *Multivariate Analysis of Variance* (MANOVA) was conducted. The findings of these tests give some insight into the potential impact and value of the intervention (see Table 4).

**Table 4.** Paired Sample t-Tests for Everyday Mindfulness: Learners

| Variable    | Group        | <i>T</i> | <i>P</i>    | ** <i>p</i> < .01#<br>* <i>p</i> < .05 | Effect Size |
|-------------|--------------|----------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Mindfulness | Control      | .382     | .711        | -                                      | -           |
|             | Intervention | -2.53    | <b>.022</b> | *                                      | <b>.39</b>  |
| Well-Being  | Control      | -.156    | .880        | -                                      | -           |
|             | Intervention | -3.21    | <b>.005</b> | **                                     | <b>.28</b>  |

# This indicates a 99.9% probability of a true difference (denoted by\*\*) or a 95% probability of a true difference (denoted by \*).

The follow-up MANOVA demonstrated no significant differences between the intervention and control group's pre- and post-scores.

### EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: Statistical Insights Summary

The paired-samples *t*-tests indicated statistically significant differences for participant scores on both measures of mindfulness and well-being. The effect sizes of this significance are considered large, suggesting that the intervention effect was of a large magnitude. While the follow-up MANOVA proved insignificant, compared to the control group, it can be suggested with some confidence that the intervention had a positive effect. These findings support the descriptive insights.

### Participant Feedback & Review

During the post-intervention data collection phase participants were asked to rate their experiences of the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme as well as the impact that the programme had on them (scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = very much so / a lot).

Table 5 presents the statements against which participants rated their experiences, the mean (SD) score from the cohort and the percentage of the sample who responded negatively (e.g., scored the statement as either 1 or 2) or positively (e.g., scored the statement as either 4 or 5) to each statement.

**Table 5.** Everyday Mindfulness Learner Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment ( $n = 17$ )

| Item  | November 2021 Cohort |                            |                            | February 2022 Cohort |                            |                            |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | Mean (SD)            | % Positive Responses (4-5) | % Negative Responses (1-2) | Mean (SD)            | % Positive Responses (4-5) | % Negative Responses (1-2) |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme was useful   | <b>4.5</b><br>(1.8)  | 80%                        | 10%                        | <b>4.0</b><br>(1.3)  | 57%                        | 14%                        |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme helped me to learn about how my thoughts and feelings influence my actions | <b>4.0</b><br>(1.7)  | 70%                        | 20%                        | <b>4.0</b><br>(1.5)  | 71%                        | 14%                        |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme helped me to learn about my thoughts and feelings                          | <b>3.7</b><br>(1.6)  | 70%                        | 20%                        | <b>3.4</b><br>(1.1)  | 71%                        | 14%                        |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme had a positive influence on how I feel about myself                        | <b>4.4</b><br>(1.3)  | 80%                        | 20%                        | <b>4.0</b><br>(1.3)  | 57%                        | 14%                        |
| I have enjoyed participating in the Everyday Mindfulness programme  | <b>4.3</b><br>(1.3)  | 80%                        | 10%                        | <b>4.1</b><br>(1.5)  | 86%                        | 14%                        |

Participants were also asked to provide more open-ended insights into what had been particularly beneficial for them as a result of participating in the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme (e.g., “Based on your experiences of participating in the Valleys Steps Mindfulness programme, what has been really beneficial for you [what has happened as a result of you participating in the programme]?”) as well as what they thought could be improved (e.g., “Based on your experiences of participating in the Valleys Steps Mindfulness programme, what could be improved so that the programme might have a more positive impact on you?”).

Only 3 of the 17 responding participants (learners) provided open-ended feedback regarding their views of the Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness programme. Feedback regarding the benefits (+) and areas for improvement (-) are presented below:



## BENEFITS – EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: Participant Feedback

1. I learned that I should spend more time working on my mind and that's been really important for me.
2. The programme got me thinking about things that I had not thought about previously and it's helped me be more aware of my thoughts and feelings.
3. The mindfulness programme was really good because it gave us specific ways that we could use to improve the way we think about things in our lives.

## IMPROVEMENTS – EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: Participant Feedback

1. The sessions should be a little longer as it felt rushed trying to get everything done in an hour.
2. I liked the sessions, but some were better than others. I liked the practical activities so more of those would be good
3. I would have liked to spend more time on some of the activities as they were good, but I would have liked to understand more about how they work.

### Participant Focus Groups

The findings presented below were constructed from the inductive analysis of the focus group transcripts ( $n = 2$ ). The quotes provided are taken directly from the transcripts of the focus group recordings and have been presented as they are thought to best represent the thoughts of the participants.

Across both focus groups participants largely highlighted that they had enjoyed the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme. Some participants suggested that the programme was “new and unexpected” and “relaxing and calming”. However, others indicated that while they were initially enthusiastic for the programme that their enthusiasm decreased as the programme commenced. One participant suggested that this was because, “Six weeks felt too long, it felt like they [tutors] were repeating themselves too much”, and another acknowledged, “An hour per session felt a little long, I think they could have done things quicker.” These views were not shared by everyone, however, demonstrating the need to, “Tailor the delivery of the programme to meet the needs of individual groups.”

Participants did highlight several benefits of the programme, detailing that it had: (a) helped them to **develop their understanding of their well-being**; (b) resulted in them **developing a range of strategies** and ideas about how to manage their affective and psychological states; (c) encouraged them to **feel a sense of belonging** within their particular groups; and (d) helped the **development of self-awareness**. For example:

“Instead of letting it [stress] build up and build up, I found the strategies like the breathing exercises and taking time out to be really useful ... these were things I got out of the Valleys Steps programme.”

In response to which aspects of the programme the participants found most useful, they discussed the value of the practical activities. For example:

“The physical activities that we did were the best part. They were really engaging, got us to think about things in a different way, and helped us to interact with the tutor and the other students.”

“The strategies we learnt were great for helping me to manage the way that I think and feel more positively. I’d not done anything like this before and so this was useful.”

Other participants highlighted how the interactive nature of the sessions had helped them to develop confidence to talk to others and in front of other learners about their own experiences. Participants suggested that this interaction helped them to start “trusting” each other, specifically, “Working with the same people each week and talking about our experiences helped us to trust each other.”

In relation to the delivery mechanisms, participants in both focus groups advocated the online approach to delivery. Participants highlighted that this method provided a safe space in which they felt more confident in sharing and interacting with others. For example:

“I really liked that it [programme] was online. I don’t think I would have said as much if we were in a room together, I would be too shy. Having it online meant that I felt more willing to share my views and how I was thinking.”

“I think it's [programme] delivered in a really calm manner and they [tutors] gave really, really interesting and positive strategies to use and so it was delivered at that nice level.”

Additionally, participants in both focus groups highlighted that the tutors supporting the programme were “patient”, “lovely”, and “knowledgeable”, which helped their level of engagement. Some participants did highlight that at times the tutors were “a little too leading, they took up a lot of time in the discussions”, whereas another participant suggested, “I didn’t like the amount of silence there was at times, I just wanted the tutor to talk.” Such feedback highlights the desire for such programmes to be individually tailored to the group’s needs.

Finally, while both focus groups commented on some areas for development (e.g., management of length of the programme), participants indicated that they would recommend the programme to other learners. For example:

“I think that there are improvements that could be made but I have liked the programme and think I’ve learnt a lot and so yeah, I would recommend it to others. I would also do another course if it was a little shorter.”

“I don’t think that it’s really changed what I do, but I do feel like I’ve learnt strategies so if I do need them in the future, I think I would be able to use them. So, it [programme] might be beneficial for others too.”

## EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: Participant Feedback

Participant feedback relating to the impact and efficacy of the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme appears particularly positive. Indeed, few participants responded negatively to the items, with **82% of participants indicating that they extremely enjoyed the programme**, and **71% of participants reporting that the programme had been extremely useful**.

Findings constructed from the focus groups supported this feedback. Participants were clear and in general agreement that **the programme had a positive impact on a range of adaptive factors** (e.g., development of knowledge; improved well-being). They also indicated that they had been able to **take a series of strategies away from the programme** to support ongoing self-regulation. Some recommendations for improving the programme were also offered, mainly relating to the duration of the programme.

## EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: FINDINGS (STAFF)

### Descriptive Insights

Table 6 provides an insight into the mean scores reported by those members of staff who participated in the Everyday Mindfulness Staff programme (broken down into *overall cohort*, *January 2022 cohort*, and *March 2022 [Welsh] cohort*) across both psychological variables measured.

The final column difference pre-to-post provides a direct insight into the developments made by the cohort across the course of the intervention programme. In the instance of the measures adopted here, difference scores that *positive* indicate positive adaptations in the post-intervention measurement period.

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the mean changes for the Everyday Mindfulness Staff programme for both variable scores as a function of pre-to-post. Visible differences (pre- to post-) are identified above and beyond the significant differences (see Table 7).

### EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS STAFF: Descriptive Insights Summary

Reviewing the descriptive findings of the quantitative measures adopted to assess the impact of the Everyday Mindfulness programme on staff, it appears that **the programme had a positive effect on participants' mindfulness and their well-being**. Such findings were highlighted in both cohorts and overall.

**Table 6.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Staff

| Valleys Steps: STAFF MINDFULNESS OVERALL COHORT |                    |                   |      |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|------|
|   | Intervention Group |                   | Diff |
|   | Intervention Pre   | Intervention Post |      |
| Mindfulness                                     | 50.44              | 52.67             | 2.22 |
| Well-being                                      | 47.11              | 48.22             | 1.11 |

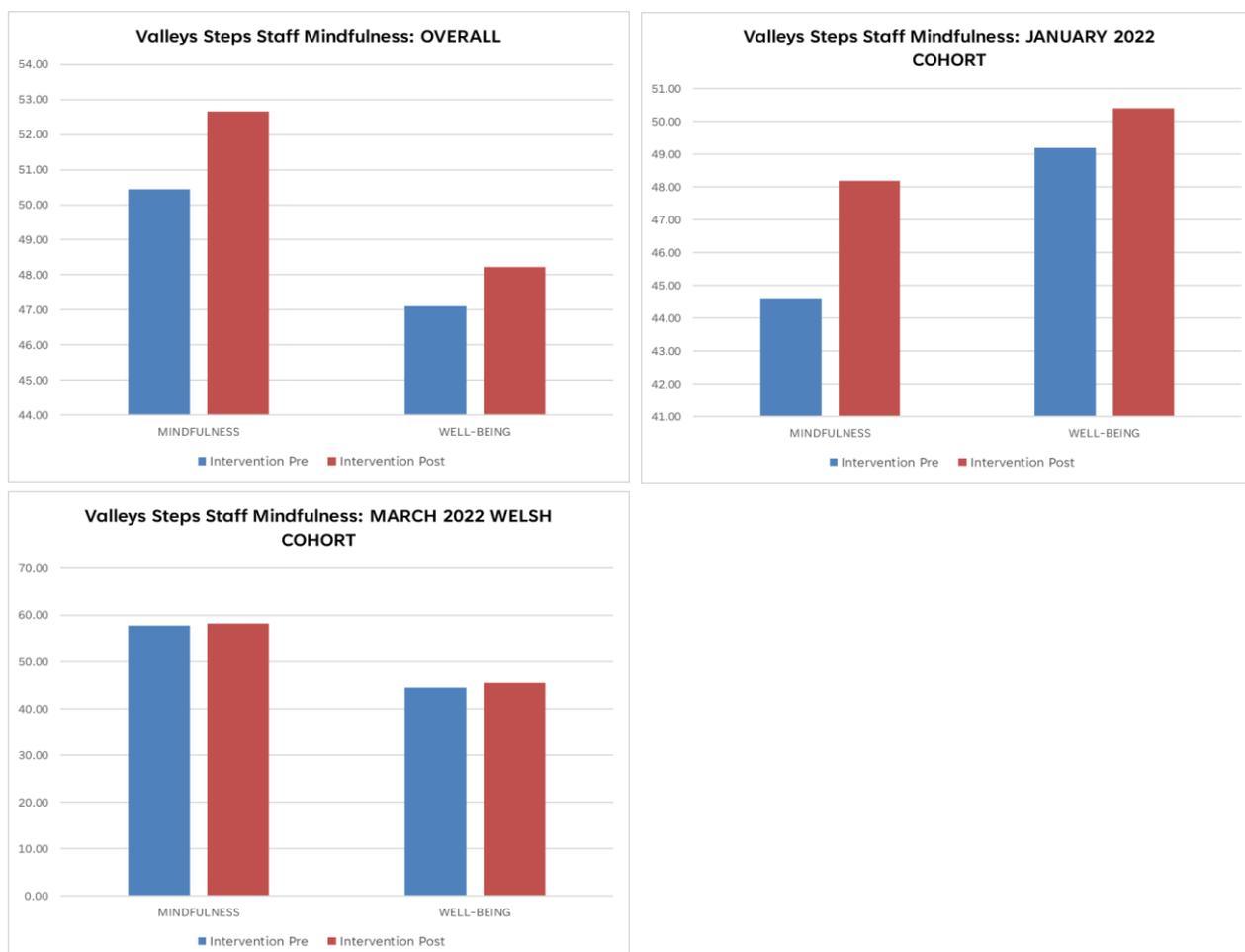
  

| Valleys Steps: STAFF MINDFULNESS JANUARY 2022 COHORT |                    |                   |      |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|------|
|  | Intervention Group |                   | Diff |
|  | Intervention Pre   | Intervention Post |      |
| Mindfulness  | 44.60              | 48.20             | 3.6  |
| Well-being   | 49.20              | 50.40             | 1.2  |

| Valleys Steps: STAFF MINDFULNESS MARCH [WELSH] 2022 COHORT |                    |                   |      |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|------|
|  | Intervention Group |                   | Diff |
|  | Intervention Pre   | Intervention Post |      |
| Mindfulness  | 57.75              | 58.25             | 0.5  |
| Well-being   | 44.50              | 45.50             | 1    |

**Figure 2.** Valleys Steps Everyday Mindfulness Descriptive Findings: Staff



## Statistical Insights

To assess whether the scores for mindfulness and well-being reported after the Staff Everyday Mindfulness programme were significantly different from those reported prior to the programme, *paired-samples t-tests* were conducted on the overall sample only (this is due to the small sample sizes in each individual cohort; see Table 7). The findings of these tests may provide some indication as to the significance of the improvements made by participating members of staff. As no control group was employed for the Staff version of this programme, no follow-up MANOVA was conducted.

**Table 7.** Paired Sample t-Tests for Everyday Mindfulness: Staff

| Variable    | Group        | <i>T</i> | <i>P</i> | ** <i>p</i> < .01#<br>* <i>p</i> < .05 | Effect Size |
|-------------|--------------|----------|----------|--|-------------|
| Mindfulness | Intervention | -.367    | .723     | -                                      | -           |
| Well-Being  | Intervention | -.287    | .781     | -                                      | -           |

# This indicates a 99.9% probability of a true difference (denoted by\*\*) or a 95% probability of a true difference (denoted by \*).

## EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS STAFF: Statistical Insights Summary

The paired-samples *t-tests* indicated no statistically significant differences for participant scores on both measures of mindfulness and well-being. While scores on both measures improved for both cohorts, collectively these changes were not large enough to suggest with confidence that the intervention had a positive effect on the measures taken. Given the size of the sample, the participant feedback might be more useful.

## Participant Feedback & Review

During the post-intervention data collection phase participants were asked to rate their experiences of the Everyday Mindfulness Staff programme as well as the impact that the programme had on them (scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = very much so / a lot).

Table 8 presents the statements against which participants rated their experiences, the *mean* (*SD*) score from the cohort and the percentage of the sample who responded negatively (e.g., scored the statement as either 1 or 2) or positively (e.g., scored the statement as either 4 or 5) to each statement.

**Table 8.** Everyday Mindfulness Staff Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment ( $n = 9$ )

| Item  | January 2022 Cohort  |                            |                            | March 2022 Cohort [Welsh] |                            |                            |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | Mean (SD)            | % Positive Responses (4-5) | % Negative Responses (1-2) | Mean                      | % Positive Responses (4-5) | % Negative Responses (1-2) |
| I have enjoyed participating in the Everyday Mindfulness programme              | <b>4.5</b><br>(0.6)  | 100%                       | -                          | <b>4.8</b><br>(0.4)       | 100%                       | -                          |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme was useful                                   | <b>4.3</b><br>(0.9)  | 80%                        | -                          | <b>4.8</b><br>(0.4)       | 100%                       | -                          |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme will influence my daily work                 | <b>4.5</b><br>(0.6)  | 100%                       | -                          | <b>4.0</b><br>(1.0)       | 60%                        | -                          |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme will benefit my interactions with learners   | <b>3.75</b><br>(0.9) | 50%                        | -                          | <b>3.4</b><br>(0.9)       | 20%                        | -                          |
| The Everyday Mindfulness programme will benefit my interactions with colleagues | <b>4.5</b><br>(0.6)  | 100%                       | -                          | <b>4.0</b><br>(1.0)       | 60%                        | -                          |
| I would recommend the Everyday Mindfulness programme to colleagues/others       | <b>4.0</b><br>(0.8)  | 80%                        | -                          | <b>4.8</b><br>(0.4)       | 100%                       | -                          |

Participants were also asked to provide more open-ended insights into what had been particularly beneficial for them as a result of participating in the Everyday Mindfulness Staff programme.

A total of 7 of the 9 responding participants (staff) provided open-ended feedback regarding their views of the Valleys Steps Staff Everyday Mindfulness programme. Feedback regarding each aspect of the requested insights is provided below:

### Which aspects of the programme did you find most beneficial / impactful?

1. Practical activities and background thinking.
2. Breathing exercises.
3. The practices and sharing the experiences of the practices with others as its very hard and helps to know others feel the same.
4. Body scan and guided meditation.
5. Learning about mindfulness and the positive impact it can have on your health. The guided meditations were insightful and something that I feel I will continue to practice in the future.
6. Learning new things and new ways of looking at how we can help ourselves through the programme, I found the whole programme very beneficial, and I am incorporating into my daily life. Albeit slowly but learning something new will need to keep being repeated.
7. Conversations and talking about mindfulness.

### Which aspects of the programme did you find least beneficial / impactful?

1. Some of the activities like how pictures make you feel. Probably too many pictures.
2. Time of the course - found it hard to practice during lunchtime with many distractions.
3. In theory, doing the course at lunchtime is a good idea. However, I found it hard to join at the start of the session and experienced many interruptions and wish I had opted for one that takes place later in the day.
4. If I were to comment here it would be that the course is too short. However, we have access to weekly guided meditation on the Valleys steps website.

### What positive impact has the programme had on you (or will have)?

1. Remember the importance of breathing and how it has a good effect.
2. Hopefully with lots of practice when I become more mindful, it'll teach me to slow down a bit, and not to do too many things and take on too much by simply.
3. I will try to remember to practice my meditation each day.
4. I have another coping strategy in my mental health toolbox. If I feel myself becoming overwhelmed, I have taken myself to a quiet place to take a few breaths and bring myself to the task at hand.
5. Being mindful and bring attention on purpose to everyday, small activities in life.

### What would you change / improve about the programme?

1. Reaching out to a wider audience - perhaps more discussion (e.g., about people's experiences when using mindfulness).
2. It might be more useful in person.
3. just the time of the day I would probably change for later in the day or evening when at home and not distracted by work.
4. More history and talks about mindfulness and less meditation. I think one meditation is enough, and then give it as homework.

### **Anything else you would like to add about the value of the programme?**

- 1.** I enjoyed the course very much. I really appreciate the opportunity to do such training through the medium of Welsh. It is important for Welsh speakers to feel at home in situations that deal with emotions. The two tutors were great!
- 2.** Information about links to other mindfulness resources was useful.
- 3.** The programme has made me reflect on the place mindfulness has in my life and where during the day I can regularly build it into my routine. I understand its benefits and have experienced the benefits for myself.
- 4.** Another value of the programme was that it was great signposting to the Valley Steps website which I have visited regularly to access the guided meditations available. I have had a keen interest in mindfulness for many years, this has helped me with my practice, and I also have a keen interest in teaching mindfulness/using mindfulness with students.
- 5.** I valued the programme and have signed up for two more to continue my practice on this journey. xxx is a very informative and good coach.
- 6.** I think it's a great starting point for beginners who have no insight to mindfulness. But more information would be beneficial so that they understand the benefits more clearly.



## BUILDING RESILIENCE

**BUILDING RESILIENCE:**

A learner only programme, which aims to support individuals to build a toolbox of skills to help them cope with life, bounce back from challenges, feel good, and work towards their goals. The programme focused on building individuals' confidence, their ability to deal with uncertainty, their willingness to reach out, solve problems, think more flexibly, develop helpful habits, and take care of themselves.

To assess the efficacy of the Valleys Steps Building Resilience programme for learners, the following constructs were measured: (a) **PERCEIVED STRESS**; and (b) **RESILIENCE**. To assess these constructs, the following measures were used:

**a. Stress: Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)<sup>7</sup>**

The PSS (Cohen & Williamson, 1988) is the most widely used instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful (e.g., the extent to which one perceives aspects of one's life as uncontrollable, unpredictable, and overloading). Participants are asked to respond to each of 10-items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (very often), indicating how often they have felt or thought a certain way within the past month (e.g., "How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?"). Scores range from 0 to 40 with higher composite scores indicative of greater perceived stress. Roberti, Harrington, and Storch (2006)<sup>8</sup> and Reis, Hino, and Rodriguez-Añez (2010)<sup>9</sup> reported Cronbach alpha coefficients for the PSS between .87 and .89. Reis, Hino, and Rodriguez-Añez (2010) reported test-retest reliability of the PSS at one week .86.

**b. Resilience: Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)<sup>10</sup>**

The BRS (Smith et al., 2008) was designed as an outcome measure to assess the ability to bounce back or recover from stress. The measure consists of 6-items (e.g., "I have had a hard time making it through stressful events") against which respondents are asked: "Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements by using the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree." The final score is presented as a *mean* of the six individual item scores.

<sup>7</sup> Cohen, S., & Williamson, G. (1988). Perceived stress in a probability sample of the United States. *The Social Psychology of Health*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

<sup>8</sup> Roberti, J., Harrington, L., & Storch, E. (2006). Further psychometric support for the 10-item version of the Perceived Stress Scale. *Journal of College Counselling*, 9, 135-147. Doi: 10.1002/j.2161-1882.2006.tb00100

<sup>9</sup> Reis, R., Hino, A., & Rodriguez-Añez, C. (2010). Perceived stress scale: Reliability and validity study in Brazil. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 15, 107-114. Doi: 10.1177/1359105309346343

<sup>10</sup> Smith, B., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The brief resilience scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioural Medicine*, 15, 194-200. Doi: 10.1080/10705500802222972

Windle, Bennett, and Noyes' (2011)<sup>11</sup> analysis of resilience measures indicated the BRS as highly recommended, even though the measure focuses on personal agency of an individual to 'bounce back' rather than individual resources and assets that might be present or missing. Smith et al. (2008) reported Cronbach's alpha from .80 to .91 over four samples and test-retest reliability scores of .69.

### c. Follow-up Learner Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with a sample of learners. The focus groups were semi-structured in nature and facilitated by a focus group guide containing a series of open-ended questions and/or topics for discussion, such as: "I'd like you to discuss what aspects of the Building Resilience Programme have been really beneficial for you"; "I want us to discuss the way that the Building Resilience programme has made you think about dealing with difficult thoughts?" The aim was to ensure that each focus group was presented with the same questions / topics for discussion while allowing the participants the flexibility to discuss issues that they deemed important. In total, two focus groups were conducted with learners from two separate colleges, each lasting 20 and 40 minutes.

## BUILDING RESILIENCE: PARTICIPANTS

The participants listed in Table 9 represent those who completed both pre- and post-intervention programme measures (participant responses were matched to allow for an assessment of development to be explored). Those who only completed either the pre- or the post- were removed from the final sample.

**Table 9.** Valleys Steps Building Resilience Participants

|                   | Control<br>(Nov) | Intervention<br>Group (Nov) | Control<br>(Feb) | Intervention<br>Group (Feb) | Total     |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Female            | 3                | 4                           | 3                | 9                           | 19        |
| Male              |                  |                             | 5                | 16                          | 21        |
| Prefer not to say |                  |                             | 1                |                             | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>3</b>         | <b>4</b>                    | <b>9</b>         | <b>25</b>                   | <b>41</b> |
| St. David's       |                  |                             |                  | 2                           | 2         |
| Merthyr Tydfil    | 3                | 4                           |                  |                             | 7         |
| Bridgend          |                  |                             |                  | 23                          | 23        |
| Coleg-y-Cymoedd   |                  |                             | 9                |                             | 9         |
| Age (Mean)        | 18               | 25                          | 18.22            | 17.77                       |           |
| Age (SD)          | 0                | 10.03                       | 1.79             | 1.48                        |           |

<sup>11</sup> Windle, G., Bennett, K.M., & Noyes, J. (2011). A methodological review of resilience measurement scales. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 9. Doi: 10.1186/1477-7525-9-8

Focus groups were conducted with 5 participants (Female = 3, Male = 2; age range 17-23 years,  $M_{years} = 18.21$ ;  $SD = 1.38$ ) from two different colleges (Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend College) who had undertaken the Valleys Steps Building Resilience programme.

## BUILDING RESILIENCE: FINDINGS

### Descriptive Insights

Table 10 provides an insight into the mean scores reported by those learners who participated in the Building Resilience programme and the control group (broken down into *overall cohort*, *November 2021 cohort*, and *February 2022 cohort*) across both psychological variables measured.

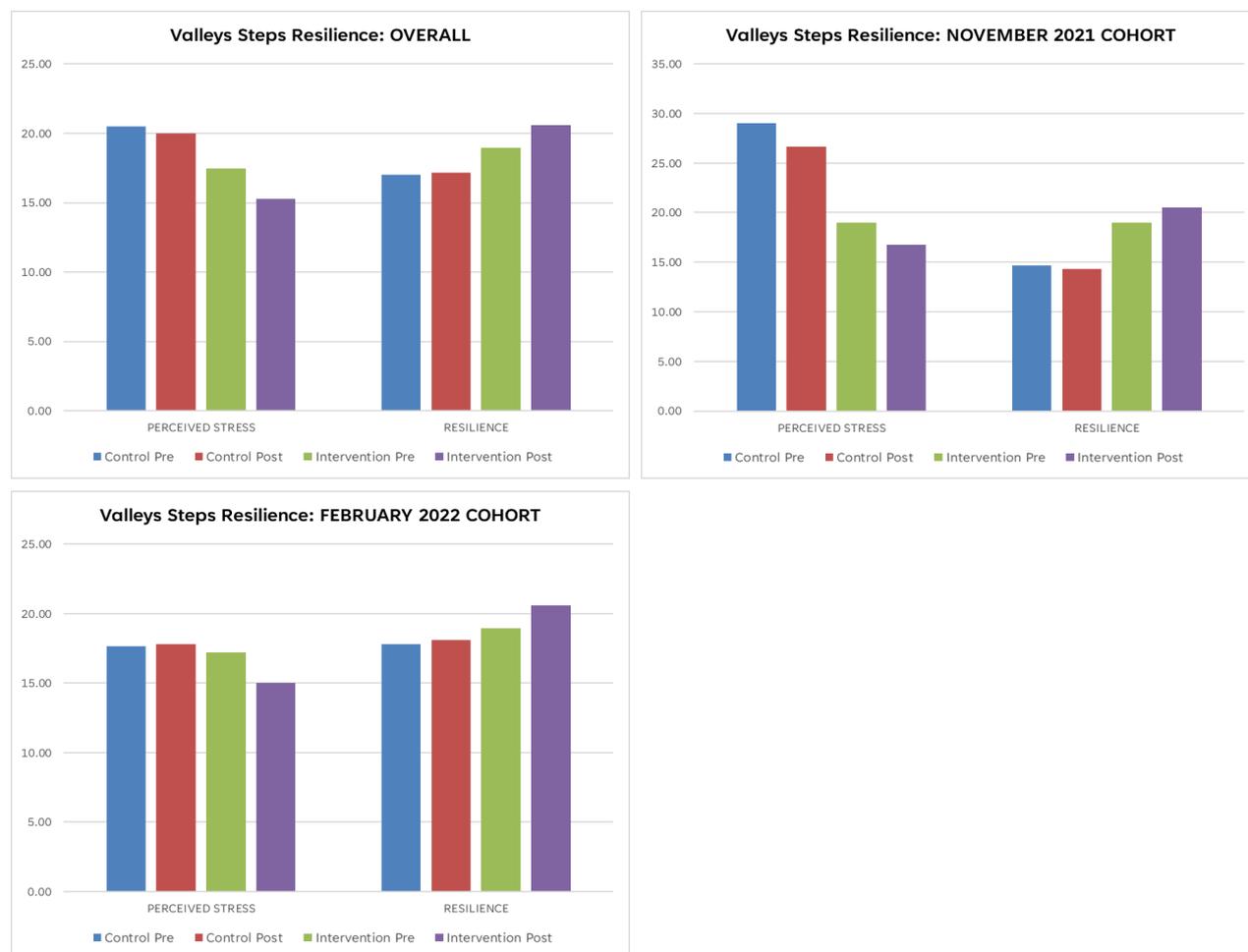
The final column difference pre-to-post provides a direct insight into the developments made by the cohort across the course of the intervention programme. In the instance of the measures adopted here, difference scores that *negative adaptations to perceived stress* and *positive adaptations to resilience* indicate positive adaptations in the post-intervention measurement period.

**Table 10.** Valleys Steps Building Resilience Descriptive Findings

| Valleys Steps: BUILDING RESILIENCE OVERALL COHORT |             |              |       |                    |                   |       |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|
|   | Control     |              |       | Intervention group |                   |       |
|   | Control Pre | Control Post | Diff  | Intervention Pre   | Intervention Post | Diff  |
| Perceived Stress                                  | 20.50       | 20.00        | -0.5  | 17.45              | 15.28             | -2.17 |
| Resilience  | 17.00       | 17.17        | 0.17  | 18.97              | 20.59             | 1.62  |
| NOVEMBER 2021 COHORT                              |             |              |       |                    |                   |       |
|   | Control     |              |       | Intervention group |                   |       |
|   | Control Pre | Control Post | Diff  | Intervention Pre   | Intervention Post | Diff  |
| Perceived Stress                                  | 29.00       | 26.67        | -2.33 | 19.00              | 16.75             | -2.25 |
| Resilience  | 14.67       | 14.33        | -0.34 | 19.00              | 20.50             | 1.5   |
| FEBRUARY 2022 COHORT                              |             |              |       |                    |                   |       |
|   | Control     |              |       | Intervention group |                   |       |
|   | Control Pre | Control Post | Diff  | Intervention Pre   | Intervention Post | Diff  |
| Perceived Stress                                  | 17.67       | 17.79        | 0.12  | 17.20              | 15.04             | -2.16 |
| Resilience  | 17.79       | 18.11        | 0.32  | 18.96              | 20.60             | 1.64  |

Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the mean changes for the Building Resilience programme for both variable scores as a function of pre-to-post and control vs. intervention groups. Visible differences (pre- to post- and between control and participant groups) are identified above and beyond the significant differences (see Table 11).

**Figure 3. Valleys Steps Building Resilience Descriptive Findings**



## BUILDING RESILIENCE: Descriptive Insights Summary

Reviewing the descriptive findings of the quantitative measures adopted to assess the impact of the Building Resilience programme on learners, it appears that **the programme had a positive effect on reducing participants' perceived stress and improving their resilience** above and beyond any developments experienced by the control group. Such findings were highlighted overall, and in both cohorts (other than perceived stress in the November cohort).

### Statistical Insights

To assess whether the scores for perceived stress and resilience reported after the Building Resilience programme were significantly different from those reported prior to the

programme, *paired-samples t-tests* were conducted on the overall sample only (this is due to the small sample sizes in each individual cohort).

The findings of these tests may provide some indication as to the significance of the improvements made by participating learners. Additionally, to see whether the differences experienced by participating learners were significantly different to those reported by the control group a MANOVA was conducted. The findings of these tests give some insight into the potential impact and value of the intervention (see Table 11).

**Table 11.** Paired Sample t-Tests for Building Resilience

| Variable         | Group        | T     | P           | ** $p < .01$ <sup>#</sup><br>* $p < .05$ | Effect Size |
|------------------|--------------|-------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Perceived Stress | Control      | .761  | .463        | -  | -           |
|                  | Intervention | 1.948 | .062        | -  | -           |
| Resilience       | Control      | -.321 | .754        | -  | -           |
|                  | Intervention | -1.71 | <b>.049</b> | *  | <b>.09</b>  |

# This indicates a 99.9% probability of a true difference (denoted by\*\*) or a 95% probability of a true difference (denoted by \*).

The follow-up MANOVA demonstrated no significant differences between the intervention and control group’s pre- and post-scores.

### BUILDING RESILIENCE: Statistical Insights Summary

The paired-samples *t-tests* indicated a statistically significant difference for participant scores on the measure of resilience and an almost statistically significant finding for perceived stress. The effect size of the resilience significance is considered moderate, suggesting that the intervention effect was of a medium magnitude. While the follow-up MANOVA proved insignificant, compared to the control group, it can be suggested with some confidence that the intervention had a positive effect for improving resilience and a good effect for perceived stress. These findings support the descriptive insights.

### Participant Feedback & Review

During the post-intervention data collection phase participants were asked to rate their experiences of the Building Resilience programme as well as the impact that the programme had on them (scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = very much so / a lot).

Table 12 presents the statements against which participants rated their experiences, the mean (SD) score from the cohort and the percentage of the sample who responded negatively (e.g., scored the statement as either 1 or 2) or positively (e.g., scored the statement as either 4 or 5) to each statement.

**Table 12.** Building Resilience Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment ( $n = 29$ )

| Item  | November 2021 Cohort |                            |                            | February 2022 Cohort |                            |                            |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | Mean (SD)            | % Positive Responses (4-5) | % Negative Responses (1-2) | Mean (SD)            | % Positive Responses (4-5) | % Negative Responses (1-2) |
| The Building Resilience programme was useful  | <b>4.5</b><br>(0.6)  | 100%                       | -                          | <b>3.44</b><br>(1.3) | 44%                        | 16%                        |
| The Building Resilience programme helped me to become aware of those things that might cause me to feel stressed / negative | <b>4.0</b><br>(0.8)  | 75%                        | -                          | <b>3.8</b><br>(1.3)  | 68%                        | 12%                        |
| The Building Resilience programme helped me to learn how to control/manage your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours          | <b>4.0</b><br>(0.0)  | 100%                       | -                          | <b>3.4</b><br>(1.2)  | 40%                        | 12%                        |
| The Building Resilience programme had a positive influence on my well-being   | <b>4.5</b><br>(0.6)  | 100%                       | -                          | <b>3.6</b><br>(1.3)  | 52%                        | 12%                        |
| I have enjoyed participating in the Building Resilience programme   | <b>4.5</b><br>(0.6)  | 100%                       | -                          | <b>3.8</b><br>(1.5)  | 52%                        | 16%                        |

Participants were also asked to provide more open-ended insights into what had been particularly beneficial for them as a result of participating in the Everyday Mindfulness Learner programme (e.g., “Based on your experiences of participating in the Valleys Steps Building Resilience programme, what has been really beneficial for you [what has happened as a result of you participating in the programme]?”) as well as what they thought could be improved (e.g., “Based on your experiences of participating in the Valleys Steps Building Resilience programme, what could be improved so that the programme might have a more positive impact on you?”).

12 of the 29 responding participants (learners) provided open-ended feedback regarding their views of the Valleys Steps Building Resilience programme. Feedback regarding the benefits (+) and areas for improvement (-) are presented below:

## BENEFITS – BUILDING RESILIENCE: Participant Feedback

1. I've been doing the activities and they have been fun and answering questions which has made me more confident.
2. I'm starting to notice things about myself and others that I need to change or leave as they affect me. I write lists of what I need to do so I don't stress and forget.
3. I've been able to think more clearly.
4. Self-care and less stressed [as a result of the programme].
5. Its [the programme] helped me to be calmer.
6. Its [the programme] helped me to relax more.
7. I have more concentration [as a result of the programme].
8. Its [the programme] helped me to feel relaxed and calm and I also relax more at home now.

## IMPROVEMENTS – BUILDING RESILIENCE: Participant Feedback

1. Maybe make it a 2-hour thing as the endings of all PowerPoints were rushed through and not really discussed in as much detail as the rest in the beginning of the session.
2. More activities.
3. I feel like it [programme] needs to be focus less on comedy and more focused on what will help me.
4. I enjoyed the class, but would rather it be a shorter lesson.

### Participant Focus Groups

The findings presented below were constructed from the inductive analysis of the focus group transcripts ( $n = 2$ ). The quotes provided are taken directly from the transcripts of the focus group recordings and have been presented as they are thought to best represent the thoughts of the participants.

Across both focus groups participants highlighted a range of benefits experienced as a result of their participation. These generally focused on: (a) improving their **knowledge and understanding of resilience, stress, anxiety, and coping**; (b) understanding **strategies for dealing with stress**; and (c) developing wider **life skills** (e.g., confidence; communication). Participants indicated, “I feel like I know what is meant by being resilient now”, and, “Its [the programme] really helped me to talk more about those things that stress me out”, and:

“I think I've become more self-aware of those things that get to me and cause me to stress out. The activities we've done like speaking to others and relaxation things have been great at helping me manage those things.”

Participants discussed how, as a result of the programme, they had experienced less stress, and felt more able to manage themselves through difficult moments. For example, one participant revealed, “I definitely feel less stressed, less stressed out than before”, whereas another stated, “Yeah I'm more confident that I've got strategies to deal with stress now that I didn't before”.

Factors of the programme that were thought to facilitate these positive outcomes related to: the size of the groupings (e.g., “the small groups were great because I felt more confident to talk”); the environment (e.g., “I didn’t feel like I’d be judge so that helped me to get involved”); collaboration (e.g., “I learned a lot from the other students”); and practical activities (e.g., “the practical strategies, the activities we did really helped me”). Further, participants commented positively on the tutors of the programme, stating:

“xxx [tutor] treated everyone equally. She joined in and gave us good examples and linked them to the things that she does. I liked that because you felt welcomed and a part of the group.”

“With xxx [tutor] you get to be real, and they give you a chance to communicate with everyone in the group. xxx’s really knowledgeable and helpful and I think that helped me to learn more.”

In response to *what aspects of the programme could be improved*, participants discussed the duration of the programme and of each session. Some participants indicated that shorter sessions would be more beneficial, whereas others stated that they would prefer longer sessions to give them more time to interact. For example, one participant reported, “I think it could be shorter, sharper sessions with a chance to practice things in our own time”, conversely another participant stated, “More time ... this would allow us to make sense of things, it’d [programme] feel less rushed, and we could cover more things.” Other participants suggested that “nothing needs changing”, indicating that they were happy overall with the content and delivery of the programme.

Finally, all participants responded positively when asked if they would recommend the programme to other learners. Participants suggested, “People will definitely benefit from this [programme] so why not!”, and, “I would recommend it [programme], there were no negatives for me.”

## BUILDING RESILIENCE: Participant Feedback

Participant feedback relating to the impact and efficacy of the Building Resilience programme appears largely supportive of the programme. Indeed, **68% of participants indicated that they extremely enjoyed the programme**, and **52% of participants reported that the programme had been extremely useful**. 14% (4 out of 29 participants), however, indicated that they disliked the programme and did not find it useful.

Findings constructed from the focus groups largely supported the positive feedback. Participants were clear and in general agreement that **the programme had a positive impact on a range of personal factors** (e.g., development of life skills; improved knowledge). They also indicated that they had been able to **take a series of strategies away from the programme** to support ongoing stress management. Some recommendations for improving the programme were also offered, mainly relating to the duration of the programme.



## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER TRAINING (MHFAT)

### INTRODUCTION TO MHFAT

#### MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER TRAINING:

MHFAT is a two-day course designed to train individuals as a Mental Health First Aider. The course aims to give individuals: (a) an in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect well-being; (b) practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues; (c) confidence to step in, reassure, and support a person in distress; (d) enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening; and (e) knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support.

To assess the utility of this programme for the participating staff, a post-programme survey was sent to participants that asked for feedback on their experiences of the MHFAT programme as well as asking them to rate the potential impact that the programme had on them.

### MHFAT: PARTICIPANTS

Table 13 presents an overview of the participants who completed the MHFAT and subsequently submitted responses to the post-programme survey.

**Table 13.** MHFAT Participants

| Participant Group ( <i>n</i> = 9)      |   |        |   |                     |
|--|---|--------|---|---------------------|
| College                                |   | Gender |   | Age                 |
| Bridgend College                       | 2 | Female | 6 | Range = 27-60 years |
| Coleg Gwent                            | 3 | Male   | 3 | Mean = 42.3         |
| Cardiff and Vale College               | 2 |        |   | SD = 10.4           |
| St David's Catholic Sixth Form College | 2 |        |   |                     |

### MHFAT: FINDINGS

#### Participant Feedback & Review

Following the training programme, the participants were asked to rate their experiences of the MHFAT as well as the impact that the programme had on them (scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = very much so / a lot).

Table 14 presents the statements against which participants rated their experiences, the mean (SD) score from the cohort and the percentage of the sample who responded negatively (e.g., scored the statement as either 1 or 2) or positively (e.g., scored the statement as either 4 or 5) to each statement.

**Table 14.** MHFAT Participant Evaluation (*n* = 9)

| Item   | Mean (SD) | % Positive Responses (4-5) | % Negative Responses (1-2) |
|--|-----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| To what extent have you enjoyed the programme?   | 4.4 (1.3) | 89%                        | 11%                        |
| To what extent have you found the programme useful?  | 4.6 (1.0) | 89%                        | 11%                        |
| To what extent will the programme influence your daily work?   | 4.1 (1.1) | 78%                        | 11%                        |
| To what extent has the programme benefitted your understanding of mental health?   | 4.0 (1.3) | 78%                        | 11%                        |
| To what extent has the programme influenced how confident you are in addressing mental health issues with others (learners and/or colleagues)? | 4.2 (1.4) | 78%                        | 11%                        |
| How well has the programme prepared you to instruct others to become mental health first aiders?   | 4.1 (1.1) | 78%                        | 11%                        |
| To what extent would you recommend the Mental Health First Aider Instructor Training for others?   | 4.6 (1.0) | 89%                        | 11%                        |

Participants were also asked to provide more open-ended insights into what had been particularly beneficial for them as a result of completing the MHFAT. Feedback regarding each aspect of the requested insights is provided below:

**Which aspects of the training did you find most beneficial / impactful?**

1. General understanding of the topics.
2. The diverse subjects we were coached in, plus the 'first aid' specific emphasis of the training. The Instructors/Facilitators were excellent.
3. This course gave me the confidence to lead a session around Mental Health having thoroughly discussed each area of MH. The trainers were very engaging and kept everyone on track with the training.
4. I felt that the training was helpful for people with no knowledge of mental health and wellbeing experience. From that perspective it was useful to have the group, providing discussions and information for people to feel more confident to understand and address wellbeing and mental health concerns.

5. Enjoyed the fast pace and mix of independent pre learning. The talk about psychosis will stay with me.
6. All of it. I had a refresher on my MHFA training as well as learning how to become a instructor.
7. The group discussion and reference material were excellent. The research tasks were stretching, and the assessment was a real challenge.
8. I thought the delivery was very interesting and enjoyable. The input on lived experience was particularly good.
9. Session delivery test, it was really good to work together with other instructors to use the knowledge we have gained in a safe space.

#### **Which aspects of the training did you find least beneficial / impactful?**

1. Very intense training. A lot to think about.
2. On the development day, I found there was just too much to listen to.
3. I worry that the element of safeguarding was not addressed. We are dealing with vulnerable members of our society and the only advice given was to follow your organisation's safeguarding procedures. This was brought up in the case study where a young boy stops attending youth club, you can smell alcohol, he says he doesn't want to talk about it because he has found a permanent way out. I addressed the safety aspect and how guardians need to be informed and a safety plan addressed. This was challenged by the instructor saying that the student did not want his parents informed and that I would be preventing the young person from coming to me again. The following day I brought this scenario up again and how I had been thinking about it and the instructor said I had to follow my organisation's procedures. The following day the instructor brought this up and said that he had a document based on safeguarding young people and substance use and, in this document, it states that parents only need to be informed if they are injecting and they brought the UN convention and how young people have a right to confidentiality. Ultimately, safeguarding and preserving life over rules these procedures and guidance but that was not made clear. I worry that there was no emphasis to pass the concerns to a safeguarding officer or the importance of a safety plan.
4. Being on the computer for long stretches of the day, although they did give us breaks.

#### **What impact has the training had on you?**

1. Much more knowledgeable on the subject.
2. I feel very prepared to address mental health crisis situations in an informed and compassionate manner.
3. I am looking forward to facilitating my first session of Mental Health First Aid.
4. Mixed feelings. On the one hand I am pleased that there is more knowledge and information being shared and the confidence to talk but on the other hand I worry about the safety element.
5. I feel like I understand more of the experience of someone with mental health needs.
6. Made me confident to deliver MHFA to others.

7. It's allowed me to engage with my current role in a far more confident manner.

**How has the training changed the way in which you think about mental health?**

1. Rather than changing the way I think about Mental Health, the training has given me greater understanding of causes and symptoms.
2. I do think I have a good attitude towards mental health and how we all need to look after it. However, this course has given me much more information around the different types of mental health illnesses and how as a society we can stereotype certain mental health illnesses.
3. It hasn't, but I fear that there is a dilution of risk for suicidal, self-harm, and substance use.
4. That it impacts the whole person, their health, well-being, and ability to work/learn. It doesn't define who they are
5. I have always worked within mental health, so it hasn't changed the way i think but it has made me more determined to try to change other people's perceptions on mental health and stigma.
6. Yes, particularly covering eating disorders, psychosis, and substance misuse. Challenging misconceptions and preconceptions. Had some idea about depression and anxiety before course.
7. I was already working in and knowledgeable about mental health so really just reinforced aspects.
8. The main focus came from the substance use program and how there is a difference between substance use and problematic use.

**How has the training influenced the way you see educating other Mental Health First Aiders?**

1. It has given me confidence in presenting the training to those who have a longer experience of working in Mental health situations.
2. I believe everyone needs to have a basic understanding of mental health and how to approach someone who needs support with their mental health or is in a crisis.
3. It is important to share the message and to have a better understanding, build confidence to address Mental health first aid. I had that opinion before, and I maintain the same opinion.
4. I am excited to get going and to train lots of people so they feel more confident in assisting people at crisis or to be able to just talk to people who may need it.
5. Very important post in post-COVID society and in the college setting. The college needs to train more tutors and teachers in this very important subject. Early intervention is key.
6. I think the main thing it has taught me is that I need to encourage empathy and emphasise that we all have mental health as well as physical health and can experience mental ill health at different times in our lives in the same way we can be physically ill. Also, that a diagnosis is not what makes one mentally ill.

### What would you change / improve about the training?

1. Provision of pre-course reading about what is involved in attaining and keeping the licence.
2. I felt that one of the trainers was unprofessional, when introducing myself I was called a 'trailblazer' with a tone. The same trainer I felt was unprofessional at times to the point of swearing on the last day of training. I would suggest that the trainers require professional standards training. There is a fine balance to bringing personal circumstances, personal opinion, and relaxed language into a training session that you expect standards to be upheld.
3. I would have liked to have completed the MHFA course before the instructor course. I would have benefited from going through the same structure as we are expected to deliver with breaks in between and time to reflect.
4. The course was great. Very informative. Just more time to complete the pre-course activities.
5. More information in advance about the structure and expectations – this may have been sent to my organisation, but I didn't receive it and had to rush to complete the online modules in time.

### MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER TRAINING: Participant Feedback

Participant feedback relating to the impact and value of the MHFAT programme appears particularly positive. Indeed, **89% of participants indicated that they extremely enjoyed the programme, that the programme had been extremely useful, and that they would recommend the programme to others.** Only 11% (1 out of 9 participants) appeared to have had a negative experience on the programme.

Findings constructed from the survey largely supported the positive feedback. Participants were clear and in general agreement that **the programme had a positive impact on them, as well as on their knowledge and understanding of mental health, well-being, and related factors.** The participants also reported that the training would support them within their roles. One negative response appears to be associated with the interactions one participant had with the tutor.

## SOCIAL PRESCRIBING TRAINING

### INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

#### SOCIAL PRESCRIBING TRAINING:

Social Prescribing Training aims to introduce the foundational knowledge and skills needed to work in social prescribing, including: (a) contextual elements, such as the political and legislative background, what social prescribing is and how it works; (b) theoretical elements, such as understanding health behaviours and behaviour change; and (c) applied elements, such as professional conduct, motivational interviewing, and solution-focused approaches.

To assess the utility of this programme for the participating staff, post-programme focus groups were conducted. The focus groups were semi-structured in nature and facilitated by a focus group guide containing a series of open-ended questions and/or topics for discussion, such as: “How has the training influenced the way that you act in your job?”; “Overall, how would you rate your experience of the training?” The aim was to ensure that each focus group was presented with the same questions / topics for discussion while allowing the participants the flexibility to discuss issues that they deemed important. In total, two focus groups were conducted with members of staff from three separate colleges, each lasting approximately 45 minutes.

### SOCIAL PRESCRIBING: PARTICIPANTS

Table 15 presents an overview of the participants who completed the Social Prescribing Training and subsequently engaged in one of two focus groups.

**Table 15.** Social Prescribing Participants

| Participant Group (n = 7) |   |        |   |                     |
|---------------------------|---|--------|---|---------------------|
| College                   |   | Gender |   | Age                 |
| Bridgend College          | 4 | Female | 7 | Range = 26-58 years |
| Coleg-y-Cymoedd           | 1 | Male   | 0 | Mean = 38.7         |
| Cardiff and Vale College  | 2 |        |   | SD = 9.7            |

## SOCIAL PRESCRIBING: FINDINGS

### Participant Focus Groups

The findings presented below were constructed from the inductive analysis of the focus group transcripts ( $n = 2$ ). The quotes provided are taken directly from the transcripts of the focus group recordings and have been presented as they are thought to best represent the thoughts of the participants.

In considering their motivation to engage in the Social Prescribing Training, participants in both focus groups expressed similar views. Specifically, participants indicated that they were referred by their managers (e.g., “My line manager thought that it would be good for me, so I signed up”), saw the training as a chance for professional development (e.g., “Given my role it seemed like a good course to take to upskill in the social prescribing area”), and considered the training as key to ongoing developments in their roles, for example:

“The information I could take from the social prescribing course, I thought it could really help and it really did. We had the brand-new well-being strategy that I had been part of writing and so I saw the training as something that could help us to really bring that strategy to life as an operation.”

Many of the focus group participants suggested that they knew little about the training or social prescribing prior to signing-up for the course but felt as though the initial apprehension that this caused was soon allayed by the introduction to the programme, “I didn’t know much about it [training] before the course but I soon realised how important social prescribing is in relation to managing well-being support and resources”.

With regards to the logistics and delivery of the programme, the participants in both focus groups highlighted several benefits and areas for improvement. With regards to the benefits, participants discussed the value of the course running alongside their working hours, giving them the opportunity to build the training into their workday, “The course ran alongside my working hours which gave me the opportunity to engage fully in the programme”. Further, participants discussed the quality of the training providers, indicating, “They [tutors] were really engaging and informative”, and, “The tutors were really good and were able to help me understand how to apply principles on a daily basis”.

In terms of the areas of improvement, participants in both focus groups, suggested the potential of running the course in the mornings rather than the afternoons. While this was proposed as it suits some of the participants’ working preferences, it was also acknowledged that greater focus could be afforded to the training in the morning as there would be fewer distractions in the work environment at this time. For example, “I don’t think the afternoon sessions work because you’re so caught up in your day already”, and:

“I did struggle with it [training] being in the afternoon. I think that just because I'm morning person and my attention is very heightened in the morning. So, I think it was quite a struggle for me to be able to do it in the afternoon each week.”

Similarly, participants discussed the duration of each section and the online delivery format as potential areas for improvement:

“I feel like it [session duration] was a long time to concentrate online, and perhaps if it were in person, it would have been easier. I found it quite challenging in the afternoon as well, because I'd have already had a busy morning.”

Indeed, another participant discussed, “Face-to-face and in an environment away from the workplace, I think that would have been a really nice because it gives us an actual physical break away from work” – such suggestions were suggested as a way of making the training more interactive and more relaxed, allowing for additional engagement from the participants. Linked to duration, participants in one of the focus groups suggested that the period of time that the training took (5 months) was perhaps too long and needed to be shortened:

“Five months was a long period of time over the course and like 3 hours a session is quite a hefty amount, particularly in the afternoon. Just trying to stay engaged online for three hours is quite a challenge.”

Finally, in relation to potential programme developments, participants discussed potentially: reducing the amount of PowerPoint information presented to trainees (e.g., “There could be fewer PowerPoints to read because again I get quite overwhelmed”); the introduction of homework activities (e.g., “If we were given things to do, that would have benefitted us for the next session. Just keep that engagement flowing”); and tailoring each course to the audience (e.g., “I think the course could be taken up a level for those who know more about social prescribing”).

During the focus groups, participants were asked to discuss the things that they had enjoyed the most about the training programme and what influence the programme had on them and their work. In response to these questions, participants discussed a range of beneficial outcomes. Participants acknowledged that one of the positives of the training was the opportunity that it afforded them to listen to other trainees' experiences, roles, and approaches to support well-being in others. At times, participants discussed how the sharing of ideas was a particular benefit of the training, and linked to this, some experienced the benefit of social support through the sessions:

“I loved listening. I found it really, really interesting to hear what other people were doing, what was working. Well, we almost did a bit of a supervision session at times where people were saying, you know, the pressure and whatever that was coming in and everyone was going, ‘Yeah, we understand that that's our life at the moment’.”

“I took a number of ideas from others [trainees] because of the successes that they suggested they had with them. Things such as well-being packs, which have worked well at one college.”



“It was really nice to meet people with similar job roles, who shared similar experiences, so you learnt as much from them as the training programme. It was great to be able to share and listen with them in a supportive way.”

Linked to this, participants in one focus group discussed the benefit of being given the opportunity during the training programme to engage in self-reflection, “It felt like a lot of the course was self-reflection, and I really liked that because it got us to consider what we do.” Such self-reflection was thought to help the participants to confirm and corroborate what they currently do in relation to well-being support and social prescribing. For example, “It was good just to be able to put a label on the things you’re already doing”, and:

“It’s almost putting a label on what you already do. You’re like, ‘Oh yeah, we already do that and that and that fits under social prescribing’. Like bit of a nice pat on the back - it’s sort of confidence boost that. Yeah, you are already doing it, but we just didn’t realise that we were doing it perhaps.”

“It was really nice to just kind of reflect and be like, ‘Oh my gosh, OK, so this is what I’m doing this what have been doing and it has worked’, which was really lovely ... confirmation that I’m actually doing an alright job.”

Finally, participants reported that, as a result of the training programme, they had developed their knowledge of social prescribing and better understood how to apply related principles. For example, one participant indicated, “I’ve [now] got a better understanding of the referral process”, and, “A positive referral process takes the pressure off of the individual welfare/well-being officer.” Other participants highlighted the benefits of specific aspects of interpersonal skill development, such as motivational interviewing:

“My favourite part of the course was motivational interviewing and that we did have a little go. Of course, it was remotely, and that was a little bit challenging, but I found that motivational interviewing was something I could use directly in my job. So, I went straight from that session and tried some of the techniques.”

## **SOCIAL PRESCRIBING TRAINING: Participant Feedback**

Overall, it appears as though the Social Prescribing Training programme was well-received by those engaging in this evaluation. The training, while certain improvements were suggested, had a positive impact on the trainees and resulted in the development of new skills and strategies and/or the confirmation of existing approaches.

## PLATFORM 4YP

### INTRODUCTION TO PLATFORM 4YP

Platform 4YP provided two programmes for learners: (1) *State of Mind*; and (2) *Peer Mentoring*. Platform 4YP also provided a *Compassionate Leadership* training programme for staff across colleges (this was not assessed in this evaluation – see [Reflections](#)).

### STATE OF MIND

#### STATE OF MIND:

Platform 4YP State of Mind is a learner focused programme that teaches a combination of skills and strategies to support young people’s mental health and well-being. Further, the programme aims to develop young people’s ability to self-regulate and manage emotions, enhance self-esteem, and reduce feeling of isolation.

To assess the efficacy of the State of Mind programme, the following constructs were measured: (a) **WELL-BEING**; (b) **PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING** (to include factors related to basic psychological needs related to the programme aims); (c) **SELF-REGULATION**; and (d) **SELF-ESTEEM**. To assess these constructs, the following measures were used:

#### a. Well-Being: Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale (WEMWBS)

The WEMWBS (NHS, 2006) has 14 statements which cover psychological functioning, cognitive evaluative dimensions, and affective-emotional aspects of well-being (covering hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives). For each statement participants tick the box that best describes their experience over the previous two weeks. The statements are all expressed positively – for example, “I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future.” The scale is scored by summing responses to each item. The responses, from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time), are aggregated to form the Index, which can range from 14 to 70. Tennant et al. (2007)<sup>12</sup> and Clarke et al. (2012)<sup>13</sup> reported Cronbach alpha coefficients for the WEMWBS between .87 and .91. Tennant et al. (2007) reported test-retest reliability of the WEMWBS at one week .83.

<sup>12</sup> Tennant, R., Hiller, L., Fishwick, R. et al. (2007). The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): Development and UK validation. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 5, 63. Doi: 10.1186/1477-7525-5-63

<sup>13</sup> Clarke, A., Friede, T., Putz, R. et al. (2011). Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): Validated for teenage school students in England and Scotland. A mixed methods assessment. *BMC Public Health*, 11, 487. Doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-11-487.

### b. Psychological Well-Being Scale – short form (PWBS)<sup>14</sup>

The PWBS has 18 items, which combined give an insight into an individual’s psychological well-being (e.g., eudaimonia). The PWBS has six subscales: *autonomy*; *mastery*; *personal growth*; *positive relations with others*; *purpose in life*; and *self-acceptance*, allowing for an analysis of individual factors that may influence and predict overall psychological well-being. Participants respond to each item using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree). The scale is scored by summing responses to each item (total) and summing the three items relating to each sub-scale for factor insights. Fernandes et al., (2010)<sup>15</sup> reported Cronbach alpha coefficients for each sub-scale between .36 and .51.

### c. Self-Regulation: Short Form Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SSRQ)<sup>16</sup>

The SSRQ (Carey et al., 2004) is a 31-item scale that was designed to assess self-regulation skills across the seven processes of self-regulation. Items include positive worded statements (e.g., “I have personal standards and try to live up to them”, and, “I am able to accomplish goals I set for myself”) and negative worded statements (e.g., “I have trouble making plans to help me reach my goals”, and, “I tend to keep doing the same thing even when it doesn’t work”) to manage socially desirable responding. Previous research indicates that the SSRQ has a single factor that represents overall self-regulation capacity. Items are scored on a 5-point scale from 1 – *strongly disagree* to 5 – *strongly agree* with the sum of all items providing the overall score for self-regulation. Neal and Carey (2005)<sup>17</sup> reported Cronbach alpha coefficients for the SSRQ between .84 and .86.

### d. Self-Esteem: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)<sup>18</sup>

The RSES (Rosenberg, 1965) is the most widely used measure of self-esteem as it appears to consistently generate reliable scores that have predictive validity. The RSES is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The items are both positively and negatively worded to reduce the likelihood of socially desirable responding (e.g., “I feel that I have a number of good qualities”, and “I wish I could have more respect for myself”). All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Cronbach alpha coefficients for scores for the RSES have been reported to be between .80 and .90

<sup>14</sup> Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 719–727. Doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719

<sup>15</sup> Fernandes, H., Vasconcelos-Raposo, J., & Teixeira, C. (2010). Preliminary analysis of the psychometric properties of Ryff’s Scales of Psychological Well-Being in Portuguese adolescents. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 13, 1032-1043.

<sup>16</sup> Carey, K., Neal, D., & Collins, S. (2004). A psychometric analysis of the self-regulation questionnaire. *Addictive Behaviors*, 29, 253–260. Doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2003.08.001

<sup>17</sup> Neal, D., & Carey, K. (2005). A follow-up psychometric analysis of the Self-Regulation Questionnaire. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviours*, 19, 414-422. Doi: 10.1037/0893-164X.19.4.414

<sup>18</sup> Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

(Heatherton & Wyland, 2003<sup>19</sup>). Ackerman and Donnellan (2013)<sup>20</sup> conducted a two-week test-retest study and found a reliability coefficient of .80.

#### e. Follow-up Learner Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with a sample of learners. The focus groups were semi-structured in nature and facilitated by a focus group guide that contained a series of open-ended questions and/or topics for discussion, such as: “I’d like you to discuss what aspects of the State of Mind Programme have been really beneficial for you”; “What are your views on what aspects of the State of Mind Programme have not really been that useful?” The aim was to ensure that each focus group was presented with the same questions / topics for discussion while allowing the participants the flexibility to discuss issues that they deemed important. In total, three focus groups were conducted with learners from two separate colleges, each lasting between 20 and 40 minutes.

## STATE OF MIND: PARTICIPANTS

The participants listed in the table below represent those who completed both pre- and post- intervention programme measures (participant responses were matched to allow for an assessment of development to be explored).

**Table 16.** State of Mind Participants

|                   | Control<br>(Oct) | Intervention<br>Group (Oct) | Control<br>(Jan) | Intervention<br>Group (Jan) | Total     |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Female            | 9                | 27                          | 4                | 8                           | 48        |
| Male              |                  | 2                           |                  | 7                           | 9         |
| Gender Diverse    |                  | 1                           |                  | 2                           | 3         |
| Prefer not to say | 1                |                             |                  |                             | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>10</b>        | <b>30</b>                   | <b>4</b>         | <b>17</b>                   | <b>61</b> |
| Cardiff and Vale  |                  |                             |                  | 13                          | 13        |
| Merthyr Tydfil    |                  |                             | 4                | 4                           | 8         |
| Bridgend          |                  | 15                          |                  |                             | 15        |
| Coleg-y-Cymoedd   | 10               | 15                          |                  |                             | 25        |
| Age (Mean)        | 17.7             | 18.76                       | 16.5             | 18.18                       |           |
| Age (SD)          | 2                | 3.38                        | 0.57             | 2.83                        |           |

<sup>19</sup> Heatherton, T. F., & Wyland, C. L. (2003). Assessing self-esteem. In S. J. Lopez and C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Positive psychological assessment: A handbook of models and measures* (pp. 219-233). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

<sup>20</sup> Ackerman, R. A., & Donnellan, M. B. (2013). Evaluating self-report measures of narcissistic entitlement. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 35, 460-474.

Focus groups were conducted with 10 participants (Female = 7, Male = 3; age range 16-22 years,  $M_{years} = 18.5$ ;  $SD = 2.0$ ) from two different colleges (Cardiff and Vale and Merthyr Tydfil) who had undertaken the State of Mind programme.

## STATE OF MIND: FINDINGS

### Descriptive Insights

Table 17 provides an insight into the mean scores reported by those learners who participated in the State of Mind programme and the control group (broken down into *overall cohort*, *October 2021 cohort*, and *January 2022 cohort*) across all psychological variables measured. The final column difference pre-to-post provides a direct insight into the developments made by the cohort across the course of the intervention programme. In the instance of the measures adopted here, difference scores that *positive* indicate positive adaptations in the post-intervention measurement period.

Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the mean changes for the State of Mind programme for all variable scores as a function of pre-to-post and control vs. intervention groups. Visible differences (pre- to post- and between control and participant groups) are identified above and beyond the significant differences (see Table 18).

### STATE OF MIND: Descriptive Insights Summary

Reviewing the descriptive findings of the quantitative measures adopted to assess the impact of the State of Mind programme on learners, it appears that **the programme had a positive effect on participants' well-being (including eudaimonic factors), self-regulation, and self-esteem** above and beyond any developments experienced by the control group. Such findings were highlighted in both cohorts and overall.

**Table 17.** State of Mind Descriptive Findings

| <b>Platform 4YP: STATE OF MIND OVERALL COHORT</b> |                    |                     |              |                           |                          |             |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
|   | <b>Control</b>     |                     |              | <b>Intervention group</b> |                          |             |
|   | <b>Control Pre</b> | <b>Control Post</b> | <b>Diff</b>  | <b>Intervention Pre</b>   | <b>Intervention Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> |
| <b>Well-being</b>                                 | 45.93              | 45.57               | <b>-0.04</b> | 40.57                     | 44.36                    | <b>3.79</b> |
| <b>Psych well-being</b>                           | 86.50              | 84.86               | <b>-1.64</b> | 76.51                     | 79.02                    | <b>2.51</b> |
| <i>Autonomy*</i>                                  | 13.36              | 13.21               | <b>-0.14</b> | 13.77                     | 14.34                    | <b>0.57</b> |
| <i>Mastery*</i>                                   | 13.29              | 12.64               | <b>-0.64</b> | 11.60                     | 11.77                    | <b>0.17</b> |
| <i>Personal Growth*</i>                           | 16.36              | 16.07               | <b>-0.29</b> | 14.68                     | 15.43                    | <b>0.75</b> |
| <i>Relationships*</i>                             | 14.43              | 14.57               | <b>-0.14</b> | 12.36                     | 13.00                    | <b>0.64</b> |
| <i>Purpose*</i>                                   | 14.57              | 14.50               | <b>-0.07</b> | 12.55                     | 12.04                    | <b>0.51</b> |
| <i>Self-Acceptance*</i>                           | 14.50              | 13.86               | <b>-0.64</b> | 11.55                     | 12.45                    | <b>0.89</b> |
| <b>Self-Esteem</b>                                | 14.50              | 13.86               | <b>-0.64</b> | 11.55                     | 12.45                    | <b>0.89</b> |
| <b>Self-Regulation</b>                            | 25.79              | 25.14               | <b>-0.64</b> | 23.19                     | 24.23                    | <b>1.04</b> |

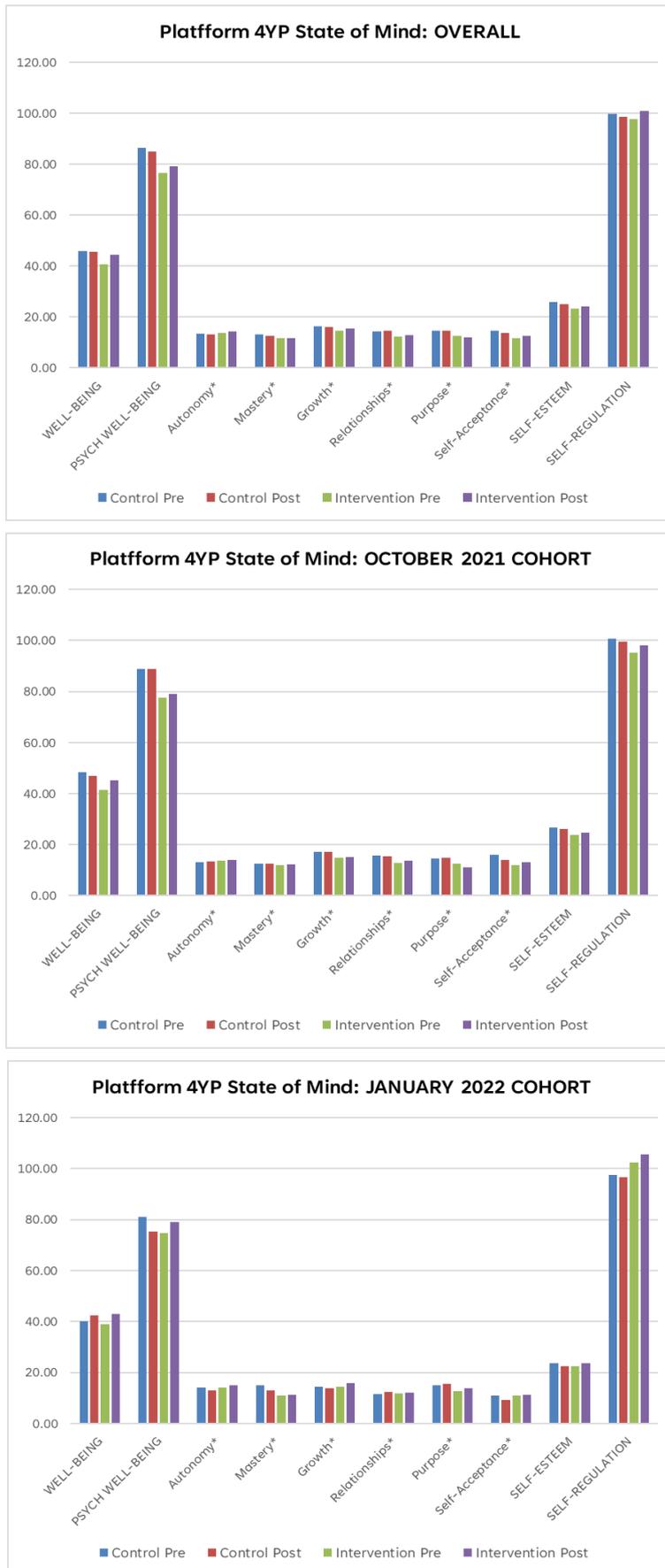
| <b>Platform 4YP: STATE OF MIND OCTOBER 2021 COHORT</b> |                    |                     |              |                         |                          |              |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|  | <b>Control Pre</b> | <b>Control Post</b> | <b>Diff</b>  | <b>Intervention Pre</b> | <b>Intervention Post</b> | <b>Diff</b>  |
| <b>Well-being</b>                                      | 48.30              | 46.90               | <b>-1.4</b>  | 41.53                   | 45.10                    | <b>3.57</b>  |
| <b>Psych well-being</b>                                | 88.70              | 88.70               | <b>0</b>     | 77.47                   | 79.00                    | <b>1.53</b>  |
| <i>Autonomy*</i>                                       | 13.10              | 13.30               | <b>0.20</b>  | 13.53                   | 14.00                    | <b>0.47</b>  |
| <i>Mastery*</i>  | 12.60              | 12.50               | <b>-0.10</b> | 12.00                   | 12.13                    | <b>0.13</b>  |
| <i>Personal Growth*</i>                                | 17.10              | 17.00               | <b>-0.10</b> | 14.87                   | 15.13                    | <b>0.27</b>  |
| <i>Relationships*</i>                                  | 15.60              | 15.50               | <b>-0.10</b> | 12.73                   | 13.57                    | <b>0.83</b>  |
| <i>Purpose*</i>  | 14.40              | 14.70               | <b>0.30</b>  | 12.47                   | 11.10                    | <b>-1.37</b> |
| <i>Self-Acceptance*</i>                                | 15.90              | 14.00               | <b>-1.9</b>  | 11.87                   | 13.07                    | <b>1.2</b>   |
| <b>Self-Esteem</b>                                     | 15.90              | 14.00               | <b>-1.9</b>  | 11.87                   | 13.07                    | <b>1.2</b>   |
| <b>Self-Regulation</b>                                 | 26.70              | 26.20               | <b>-0.5</b>  | 23.63                   | 24.57                    | <b>0.93</b>  |

| <b>Platform 4YP: STATE OF MIND JANUARY 2022 COHORT</b> |                    |                     |              |                         |                          |             |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
|  | <b>Control Pre</b> | <b>Control Post</b> | <b>Diff</b>  | <b>Intervention Pre</b> | <b>Intervention Post</b> | <b>Diff</b> |
| <b>Well-being</b>                                      | 40.00              | 42.25               | <b>2.25</b>  | 38.88                   | 43.06                    | <b>4.18</b> |
| <b>Psych well-being</b>                                | 81.00              | 75.25               | <b>-5.75</b> | 74.82                   | 79.06                    | <b>4.24</b> |
| <i>Autonomy*</i>                                       | 14.00              | 13.00               | <b>-1</b>    | 14.18                   | 14.94                    | <b>0.76</b> |
| <i>Mastery*</i>  | 15.00              | 13.00               | <b>-2</b>    | 10.88                   | 11.12                    | <b>0.24</b> |
| <i>Personal Growth*</i>                                | 14.50              | 13.75               | <b>-0.75</b> | 14.35                   | 15.94                    | <b>1.59</b> |
| <i>Relationships*</i>                                  | 11.50              | 12.25               | <b>0.75</b>  | 11.71                   | 12.00                    | <b>0.29</b> |
| <i>Purpose*</i>  | 15.00              | 15.70               | <b>0.69</b>  | 12.71                   | 13.71                    | <b>1</b>    |
| <i>Self-Acceptance*</i>                                | 11.00              | 9.25                | <b>-1.75</b> | 11.00                   | 11.35                    | <b>0.35</b> |
| <b>Self-Esteem</b>                                     | 11.00              | 9.25                | <b>-1.75</b> | 11.00                   | 11.35                    | <b>0.35</b> |
| <b>Self-Regulation</b>                                 | 23.50              | 22.50               | <b>-1</b>    | 22.41                   | 23.65                    | <b>1.24</b> |

\*Denotes sub-scales of the PWBS

Figure 4. State of Mind Descriptive Findings



## Statistical Insights

To assess whether the scores for the psychological variables reported after the State of Mind programme were significantly different from those reported prior to the programme, *paired-samples t-tests* were conducted on the overall sample only (this is due to the small sample sizes in each individual cohort).

The findings of these tests may provide some indication as to the significance of the improvements made by participating learners. Additionally, to see whether the differences experienced by participating learners were significantly different to those reported by the control group a *Multivariate Analysis of Variance* (MANOVA) was conducted. The findings of these tests give some insight into the potential impact and value of the intervention (see Table 18).

**Table 18.** Paired Sample t-Tests for State of Mind

| Variable                 | Group        | T      | P           | ** p < .01#<br>* p < .05 | Effect Size |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Well-Being               | Control      | .170   | .867        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -3.006 | <b>.004</b> | <b>**</b>                | <b>.16</b>  |
| Psych Well-Being         | Control      | .428   | .676        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -1.227 | .226        | -                        | -           |
| <i>Autonomy</i> #        | Control      | .102   | .920        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -1.011 | .317        | -                        | -           |
| <i>Mastery</i> #         | Control      | .667   | .517        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -.285  | .777        | -                        | -           |
| <i>Personal Growth</i> # | Control      | .272   | .790        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -1.620 | .112        | -                        | -           |
| <i>Relationships</i> #   | Control      | -.109  | .915        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -1.321 | .193        | -                        | -           |
| <i>Purpose</i> #         | Control      | .074   | .942        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | .848   | .401        | -                        | -           |
| <i>Self-Acceptance</i> * | Control      | .929   | .370        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -1.539 | .131        | -                        | -           |
| Self-Esteem              | Control      | .537   | .601        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -1.141 | .260        | -                        | -           |
| Self-Regulation          | Control      | .413   | .686        | -                        | -           |
|                          | Intervention | -1.819 | <b>.050</b> | <b>*</b>                 | <b>.07</b>  |

# This indicates a 99.9% probability of a true difference (denoted by \*\*) or a 95% probability of a true difference (denoted by \*).

#Denotes sub-scales of the PWBS

The follow-up MANOVA demonstrated no significant differences between the intervention and control group's pre- and post-scores.



## STATE OF MIND: Statistical Insights Summary

The paired-samples *t*-tests indicated statistically significant differences for participant scores only on measures of well-being and self-regulation. The effect sizes of these significance are considered large and moderate respectively, suggesting that the intervention effect was of a moderate-large magnitude. While the follow-up MANOVA proved insignificant, compared to the control group, it can be suggested with some confidence that the intervention had a positive effect for these two variables only.

### Participant Feedback & Review

During the post-intervention data collection phase participants were asked to rate their experiences of the State of Mind programme as well as the impact that the programme had on them (scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = very much so / a lot). Table 19 presents the statements against which participants rated their experiences, the mean (*SD*) score from the cohort and the percentage of the sample who responded negatively (e.g., scored the statement as either 1 or 2) or positively (e.g., scored the statement as either 4 or 5) to each statement.

**Table 19.** State of Mind Programme Post-Intervention Participant Assessment (*n* = 47)

| Item  | October 2021 Cohort   |                                  |                                  | January 2022 Cohort |                                  |                                  |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|   | Mean<br>( <i>SD</i> ) | % Positive<br>Responses<br>(4-5) | % Negative<br>Responses<br>(1-2) | Mean                | % Positive<br>Responses<br>(4-5) | % Negative<br>Responses<br>(1-2) |
| State of Mind was useful  | 3.5<br>(0.9)          | 30%                              | 3%                               | 3.9<br>(0.8)        | 65%                              | -                                |
| State of Mind has helped me to become aware of what well-being is           | 3.8<br>(0.4)          | 80%                              | -                                | 4.2<br>(0.4)        | 100%                             | -                                |
| State of Mind helped me to learn how to make sense of my current well-being | 3.8<br>(1.0)          | 80%                              | 20%                              | 4.4<br>(0.5)        | 100%                             | -                                |
| State of Mind had a positive influence on my well-being                     | 3.4<br>(0.5)          | 40%                              | -                                | 4.0<br>(0.6)        | 82%                              | -                                |
| I have enjoyed participating in State of Mind                               | 4.6<br>(0.5)          | 100%                             | -                                | 4.4<br>(0.5)        | 100%                             | -                                |

Participants were also asked to provide more open-ended insights into what had been particularly beneficial for them as a result of participating in the State of Mind programme (e.g., “Based on your experiences of participating in the State of Mind programme, what

has been really beneficial for you [what has happened as a result of you participating in the programme]?”) as well as what they thought could be improved (e.g., “Based on your experiences of participating in the State of Mind programme, what could be improved so that the programme might have a more positive impact on you?”).

Only 10 of the 47 responding participants provided open-ended feedback regarding their views of the State of Mind programme. Feedback regarding the benefits (+) and areas for improvement (-) are presented below:

### **BENEFITS – STATE OF MIND: Participant Feedback**

1. Learning of new and easy coping techniques and how to identify good relationships and how to stay connected to those people.
2. Understanding mindfulness.
3. It [programme] helped me with some well-being problems I’m currently going through.
4. Improved understanding of well-being and mental health issues.
5. Meeting people who understand what it’s like to have issues with well-being.
6. It [programme] has helped me become more aware of certain issues and how to deal with them generally for myself and others.
7. I have learnt how to control my emotions more.
8. Gaining awareness of myself and my mindset. Also, how to act around others, respecting boundaries.
9. Helped me realise to be mindful of my well-being and other peoples’.
10. I have become more aware of my mental health.

### **IMPROVEMENTS – STATE OF MIND: Participant Feedback**

1. Longer sessions to be able to go more in depth on topics.
2. Longer sessions perhaps, more detailed and more games as we played a game for one session, and it was memorable.
3. For the programme to be in person.
4. Maybe more of a range of people and ages and more interactive to come out of comfort zone.
5. More sessions so we could get through more.
6. Focus more on how we communicate about well-being and mental health with others.

### **Participant Focus Groups**

The findings presented below were constructed from the inductive analysis of the focus group transcripts ( $n = 3$ ). The quotes provided are taken directly from the transcripts of the focus group recordings and have been presented as they are thought to best represent the thoughts of the participants.

Overall, participants within the three focus groups reported generally positive experiences of the State of Mind programme. However, within one of the focus groups, some of the participants' responses regarding the impact of the programme were a little muted. Having said this, these participants still reported beneficial outcomes from the programme. Specifically, participants discussed: (a) improving their **knowledge of, and ability to manage**, their **well-being** and factors related to mental health; (b) becoming **more confident**, particularly in communicating with others; and (c) the **development of a range of self-regulation and coping strategies**. Specifically, participants across the focus groups discussed how the programme helped them to meet other people from whom they received support, and to whom they gave support, which helped to improve their ability to communication. For example, "Just knowing that other people were going through the same stuff and we could all talk together and help each other was really good", and, "Talking to other people was really useful because I haven't got much confidence to talk to other people, but this got better on the course", and, "When I came to the course it was really hard for me to talk to people so that was my main task and I got better."

In relation to developing their understanding of, and ability to manage, well-being and mental health related factors, participants reported, "It's [programme] helped me to cope more with my mental health ... to calm my nerves if I'm anxious", and:

"My understanding of well-being developed really well, because I can now talk to people and listen to other people about what they're going through ... I feel like I can give others advice [about well-being]."

"I think I have a better understanding of well-being in like how to cope etcetera. But I think at the same time, for a 10-week course it wasn't as beneficial as it could have been because I feel like it could have been more information and more in depth."

In relation to the final quote, several participants discussed potential developments to the State of Mind programme based on their experiences. For example, some participants discussed the potential benefits of: having one-to-one sessions with the tutor (e.g., "Having one-to-ones with xxx [tutor] it would help to discuss things in more depth"); altering the timings of the sessions to suit personal circumstances (e.g., "The school run normally starts at around 3pm and so it's always a rush to engage"); and having more resources (e.g., "More information and resources would really help so that we could have other things to take away, or access things online"). Other participants discussed the issue within their group of the lack of engagement by the participants:

"I think engagement was an issue because many people didn't talk. Some people are shy and as there was only three of us, it harder for all of us to contribute because everyone feels more exposed in smaller groups."

Finally, participants in one group discussed a further recommended development to the programme related to encouraging more applied practice:

"We learned breathing techniques in one session and then also mindfulness, we learned about that. But we never actually put anything into practice ... we only went over things in a short amount of time."

When asked to discuss the delivery and logistics of the State of Mind programme, participants in all focus groups commented that the tutor(s) had been excellent in supporting their engagement, learning, and development. Specifically, participants indicated that their tutor was “fun”, “made us all feel comfortable”, and “made everything enjoyable”. Further, one participant described:

“I think she [tutor] was really good. She really had proper personality, engaged with us, and was really kind. You could tell that she had a passion for what she taught and was in tune with us. That helped me engage more and feel more confident in speaking and wanting to improve myself.”

Participants also discussed the benefits of the activities undertaken during the programme, with many suggesting that these had really helped them to develop. For example, participants highlighted, “I think because we were doing activities as well that helped [engagement]. So, we weren't just talking about stuff, we were also doing activities as well”, and, “The activity where if we felt stressed out we could do something else really helped”, and:

“When I'm feeling anxious, he's [tutor] taught me to move myself away from the situation where I'm feeling anxious and just try to distract myself by doing something else. That activity has worked for me.”

Finally, almost all of the focus group participants actively acknowledged that they would recommend the programme for other learners, for example:

“I think that it [programme] would be really good for other learners because it shows them that they're not the only ones that's going through things that other people might be going through the same thing. So, they can talk to people and develop strategies to help them cope better.”

## STATE OF MIND: Participant Feedback

Participant feedback relating to the impact and efficacy of the State of Mind programme appears particularly positive. Indeed, few participants responded negatively to the items, with **100% of participants indicating that they extremely enjoyed the programme**, and **43% of participants reporting that the programme had been extremely useful**. Many respondents provided a mid-score (3 - somewhat) to the question regarding “usefulness”.

Findings constructed from the focus groups supported this feedback. Participants were clear and in general agreement that **the programme had a positive impact on a range of adaptive factors** (e.g., development of coping mechanisms; improved well-being). They also indicated that they had been able to **take a series of wider factors away from the programme** to support ongoing self-regulation. Some recommendations for improving the programme were also offered.

## PEER MENTORING PROGRAMME

### PEER MENTORING PROGRAMME:

The Peer Mentoring programme aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to help others and make a positive difference in their college and community. The programme is Level 1 accredited and focuses on training individuals to help others with mental health and well-being issues.

To assess the utility of this programme for the participating learners, post-programme focus groups were conducted. The focus groups were semi-structured in nature and facilitated by a focus group guide containing a series of open-ended questions and/or topics for discussion, such as: “How has the training influenced your knowledge of mentoring?”; “What influence has the programme on how confident you are in mentoring others?” The aim was to ensure that each focus group was presented with the same questions / topics for discussion while allowing the participants the flexibility to discuss issues that they deemed important. In total, five focus groups were conducted with learners from two separate colleges, each lasting approximately 50 minutes.

## PEER MENTORING: PARTICIPANTS

Table 20 presents an overview of the participants who completed the Peer Mentoring Training and subsequently engaged in one of five focus groups.

**Table 20.** Peer Mentoring Participants

| Participant Group ( <i>n</i> = 15) |    |        |    |                         |
|------------------------------------|----|--------|----|-------------------------|
| College                            |    | Gender |    | Age                     |
| Cardiff and Vale College           | 11 | Female | 4  | Range = 17-30 years     |
| Coleg-y-Cymoedd                    | 4  | Male   | 11 | Mean = 20.8<br>SD = 3.1 |

## PEER MENTORING: FINDINGS

### Participant Focus Groups

The findings presented below were constructed from the inductive analysis of the focus group transcripts (*n* = 5). The quotes provided are taken directly from the transcripts of the

focus group recordings and have been presented as they are thought to best represent the thoughts of the participants.

Across the five focus groups, all participants indicated how much they had enjoyed the Peer Mentoring Training and how beneficial it had been to them. As a result, all participants acknowledged that they would recommend the programme to other learners. One participant discussed:

“I’ve found it so enjoyable, and it’s really helped me to learn about the role of a peer-mentor and how I might help others that it’s [training] gonna be important for lots of other learners, so I would definitely recommend it.”

Regarding recommending the training programme, one participant did, however, suggest caution, indicating that “it should only be recommended to those truly interested in peer-mentoring” because the role requires “proper engagement and learnings so that you can help people and if you’re not fully in then it’s not worth it.”

The positive views regarding the Peer Mentoring Training programme were linked directly to several benefits and adaptations experienced as a result of completing the course. First, participants highlighted that the positive environment created by the tutors of the training programme enabled the learners to build their own social support networks with each other. For example, “A stand out thing for me was that I made friends with everyone who was on it [training], and we were all in touch now talking about mentoring”, and, “We’re all still in touch now and I’d say it built up my confidence to just meet new people and talk about things with new people as well.” Participants indicated that these social developments allowed them to share ideas, discuss their own situations and personal lives, and feel as though they belonged to a wider group, “I felt like a part of the group and that encouraged me to talk more and build new relationships and get new ideas.”

Second, participants detailed several benefits associated with becoming more knowledgeable about peer mentoring and how to engage in effective and safe peer mentoring practice. Regarding learning about the role, participants outlined, for example:

“It became clear that it [peer mentoring] is about supporting people that are potentially struggling and just helping them and advising them and just supporting them and just being there for them if you know if they need you.”

“We learnt about what you should and shouldn’t do as a peer mentor; you can give support; you can help make them feel better and try to help them feel like they are not on their own. But you should also not discriminate. You shouldn’t judge you shouldn’t raise your voice.”

Linked to understanding and developing the skills required for the role, the participants detailed how they had developed a better understanding of: how to adapt their communication to suit the people they are talking with; the importance of equity, care, and being person-centred; how to develop and maintain boundaries in relationships; gaining entry; and learning how to “be present” by managing their own emotions. For example, participants stated:

“The best thing that I took from that [training] was learning and understanding how you can talk to different people and adapt yourself to different people ... if you're talking to someone who's clearly upset then you're not just going to speak to them like very abrupt and demanding. You soften yourself down and come to their level, give them time, and be patient with them.”

“I really enjoyed learning about equity and how to treat people as individuals. A few things were common sense like not to judge people but talking about how you do this really helped me to think about what I normally do. Everyone's human at the end of the day.”

“One thing that stands out that I've taken from it [training] is you have to keep your professional boundaries; you have to keep your personal life separate to protect yourself and the person you might be supporting.”

“I've got a lot of issues, but it's [training] helped me to understand how to put my issues to the side and kind of neutralize them so that I can focus on who I'm supporting.”

Alongside these benefits and learnings, participants were encouraged to discuss the adaptations they had experienced as a result of completing the training programme. Participants suggested that they: can now better adapt to the needs of different individuals (e.g., “Before the programme I used the same tone for everybody and now I know how to adjust myself”); have become more confident (e.g., “I think it's [training] given me more confidence to actually help someone in more depth rather than sugar coat things”); are better listeners (e.g., “I feel like I'm a lot calmer now. I listen more and listen more calmly, which helps I think”); and have a greater sense of self-worth:

“Knowing that I could possibly help someone get through something or help someone in the sense of understanding them as a result of this course makes me feel like I'm worth something. I just like building bonds and making bridges with people.”

“Now that I've done this [training], I feel like I can do more than just listen. Not so much resolve things because I don't know how to do those sorts of things, not like a therapist, but it's about making things clearer and that makes me feel good about myself.”

When questioned about the factors that facilitated such positive outcomes and adaptations, the participants were keen to discuss the impact of the tutors on their experiences of the training programme. Participants reported:

“I can see they [tutors] took a lot of care with the course itself. It was a very open environment, very welcoming, and everyone else that joined in as well was very nice.”

“I love xxx [tutor]. She's super sweet. So, she made it [training] really fun and easy for us to pick it up really quickly. xxx was the biggest impact because she's so nice and so friendly and really supportive. Just her being her made me feel comfortable to be in that class and it made it easier for me to.

Another participant indicated, “It was the two who taught us [that made a big impact]. They were more impactful than actual lesson because it was a nice way of teaching.”

Further, participants highlighted that the tutors were willing and able to build positive working relationships with the learners to the extent that the learners felt cared for within the training process.

Finally, participants were asked to discuss the difficulties that they might have experienced with the training programme and any potential improvements they would like to see made to the programme. Importantly, many of the participants indicated no difficulties and reported that no changes to the programme were needed. However, other participants reported difficulties associated with the assessment work linked to the programme. Specifically, in terms of written and presentation tasks, participants highlighted, “It [written work] was just a bit difficult to understand how much writing they really wanted and what the standard should be”, and, “I wrote a piece on discrimination, but wasn’t sure if it was right ... I found it a bit worrying”, and, “I suppose the most challenging thing for me was probably doing the presentation, which I wasn’t really expecting.” In relation to potential improvements, participants suggested: (a) improving the facilities in which the training was delivered; (b) extending the duration of the programme to encourage more content and more depth; (c) conducting the training out of term time to help learners focus solely on the training; (d) better promotion of the benefits of the training around all colleges; and (e) tutors sharing more personal experiences in order to bring some of the content and strategies to life. For example, “I’ll say a different classroom to start with because classroom was very cold, the blinds were broken as well, it just wasn’t inviting”, and, “I’m just being picky now, but one thing that I would change is the colour of the pack. It was outlined in blue and maybe half should be in pink.” Further:

“I think the course should be five or six weeks so we could cover questions in more depth. So, I think if it was a bit longer, we could split the content out evenly, because rather than being bombarded with so much information and having to remember it to then scribble it down on paper we’d have more time to engage better.

### **PEER MENTOR TRAINING: Participant Feedback**

Overall, it appears as though the Peer Mentoring Training programme was extremely well-received by those engaging in this evaluation. The training, while certain improvements were suggested, had a positive impact on the trainees and resulted in the development of new skills and strategies and/or the confirmation of existing approaches. Finally, all participants discussed their enjoyment of the programme, indicating that it had been extremely beneficial.



## REFLECTIONS ON DATA COLLECTION & PROJECT EVALUATION

In constructing this evaluation report and conducting the evaluative research, the research team have highlighted three key issues for consideration when: (a) designing and evaluating future interventions of this nature; and (b) when considering the findings presented in this report.

First, the **impact of COVID-19**. With the ongoing personal, social, and professional disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the associated physical and mental health issues that have emerged, it is recognised that many FE courses are having to make up significant ground to account for time lost. Additionally, increased monitoring of learners has ensued. These occurrences have made it increasingly difficult to access participants (qualitative elements) and ensure commitment from learners to engage in pre- to post-measures (quantitative elements). Indeed, almost 30 learners across the programmes reported in this evaluation only completed one of the measures (pre- or post), which invalidated their participation in the evaluation. Linked to this, while we consistently attempted to recruit participants (staff) to participate in focus groups about their experiences of the Platform 4YP Compassionate Leadership training, we were ultimately unsuccessful, meaning that this programme was not evaluated in Phase 2. A consequence of the lack of sufficient sample sizes, particularly for the quantitative measures, makes it difficult to identify the real changes and benefits experienced by participants through rigorous statistical analysis. The descriptive data (*means*) gives an indication that improvements are being made following programme engagement, but the extent of these improvements, and ensuring that the improvements occur as a direct result of the programme itself, can only be identified through statistical analyses.

Second, **duplication of assessment**. Throughout this project the independent programme providers have also collected data from the participants in attempts to evaluate the impact of their work. This is clearly appropriate and a fundamental part of the work of intervention providers. However, this also meant that participants were being asked to complete multiple measures from different sources (including the research team involved in this evaluation report). A level of “assessment fatigue” may have, therefore, been experienced by learners to the extent that they lost the motivation to engage in the evaluation processes.

### Recommendations:

1. To reduce assessment fatigue across the entire sample, it would be beneficial to engage several learners and members of staff in in-depth case studies of their experiences of the programmes in which they participate, and the impact of these programmes on them during, immediately after, and in follow-up.
2. Remote focus groups are difficult mechanisms for collecting high quality data. Moving these to in- person or replacing them entirely with online surveys may be more beneficial.

3. Greater collaboration between the evaluation team and the independent programme provider to coordinate evaluation activities is required to remove duplication. Prior to the commencement of any programme the teams should meet to discuss the collection and sharing of appropriate information, with the evaluation team taking the lead on the measures and collecting data to ensure objectivity.
4. Similar findings have been achieved and reported across Phases 1 and 2 of the Building Resilient Communities in FE project. It is recommended that different forms of data are collected in Phase 3 and different approaches to evaluation are embraced to augment and triangulate the types of information available to provide a more holistic evidence base regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of the programmes delivered to learners and staff.

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A COPY OF MEASURES

#### Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale

|  | 1 - None of the Time     | 2 - Rarely               | 3 - Some of the Time     | 4 - Often                | 5 - All of the Time      |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I've been feeling optimistic about the future      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling useful                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling relaxed                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling interested in other people       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've had energy to spare                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been dealing with problems well               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been thinking clearly                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling good about myself                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling close to other people            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling confident                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been able to make up my own mind about things | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling loved                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been interested in new things                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've been feeling cheerful                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### Brief Resilience Scale

|  | 1 - Strongly disagree    | 2 - Disagree             | 3 - Neutral              | 4 - Agree                | 5 - Strongly agree       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have had a hard time making it through stressful events                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| It is hard for me to get back to feeling good when something bad happens | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I usually come through difficult times with little trouble               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

|   | 1 - Strongly disagree    | 2 - Disagree             | 3 - Agree                | 4 - Strongly agree       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| On the whole, I am satisfied with myself                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At times I think I am no good at all                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I feel that I have a number of good qualities                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to do things as well as most other people                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I feel I do not have much to be proud of                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I certainly feel useless at times   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I wish I could have more respect for myself                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I take a positive attitude toward myself                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Self-Regulation Scale (Short Form)

|   | 1 - Strongly disagree    | 2 - Disagree             | 3 - Uncertain / Unsure   | 4 - Agree                | 5 - Strongly agree       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I usually keep track of my progress towards my goals.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have trouble making up my mind about things.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I get easily distracted from my plans.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I don't notice the effects of my actions until it is too late.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to accomplish goals I set for myself.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I put off making decisions.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| It's hard for me to notice when I've "had enough" (alcohol, food, sweets).              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If I wanted to change, I am confident that I could do it.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When it comes to deciding about a change, I feel overwhelmed by the choices.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have trouble following through with things once I've made up my mind to do something. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I don't seem to learn from my mistakes.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I can stick to a plan that's working well.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I usually only have to make a mistake one time in order to learn from it.               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have personal standards, and try to live up to them.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| As soon as I see a problem or challenge, I start looking for all possible solutions.    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have a hard time setting goals for myself.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have a lot of willpower.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When I'm trying to change something, I pay a lot of attention to how I'm doing.         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have trouble making plans to help me reach my goals.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to resist temptation.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I set goals for myself and keep track of my progress.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Most of the time I don't pay attention to what I'm doing.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I tend to keep doing the same thing, even when it doesn't work.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I can usually find several different possibilities when I want to change something.     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once I have a goal, I can usually plan how to reach it.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If I make a resolution to change something, I pay a lot of attention to how I'm doing.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Often I don't notice what I'm doing until someone calls it to my attention.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I usually think before I act.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I learn from my mistakes.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I know how I want to be.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I give up quickly.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

|  | 1 - Almost always        | 2 - Very frequently      | 3 - Somewhat frequently  | 4 - Somewhat infrequently | 5 - Very infrequently    | 6 - Almost never         |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I could be experiencing some emotion and not be aware of it until some-time later.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I do not tend to notice feeling tense or uncomfortable until it really grabs my attention.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I travel to places on "automatic pilot" and then wonder why I went there.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I find myself preoccupied with thinking about the future or the past.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I find myself doing things without paying attention.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I snack without being aware that I'm eating.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Perceived Stress Scale

|   | 0 - Never                | 1 - Almost Never         | 2 - Sometimes            | 3 - Fairly Often         | 4 - Very Often           |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you felt that things were going your way?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you felt that you were on top of things?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Psychological Well-Being Scale

|  | 1 =<br>strongly<br>agree | 2 =<br>somewhat<br>agree | 3 = a little<br>agree    | 4 = neither<br>agree or<br>disagree | 5 = a little<br>disagree | 6 =<br>somewhat<br>disagree | 7 =<br>strongly<br>disagree. |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| I like most parts of my personality.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| The demands of everyday life often get me down.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |

## APPENDIX B

### EXAMPLE FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

#### Valleys Steps Mindfulness Evaluation Focus Groups (Post 6 Week Intervention)

#### Participant Details

Participating College:

| Number | Gender | Age | Course |
|--------|--------|-----|--------|
| 1      |        |     |        |
| 2      |        |     |        |
| 3      |        |     |        |
| 4      |        |     |        |
| 5      |        |     |        |
| 6      |        |     |        |

#### Background Information

---

The Valleys Steps Mindfulness Programme:

#### **Everyday mindfulness: Managing your mind**

Mindfulness involves: becoming more aware of ourselves and our surroundings, being open to new experiences, and focusing our attention on what matters to us.

How can Mindfulness help you?

Join us on this 6-week mindfulness course to learn more about how mindfulness can help us improve concentration, focus, feel more in control and reduce stress. Practising mindfulness has lots of benefits for wellbeing and mental health

**Over the 6-week period the learners have been given one-hour support sessions via MSTeams and a series of downloadable resources (handouts)**

#### Focus Group Aim

---

- To discuss the learners' experiences of undertaking the 6-week Valleys Steps Mindfulness programme.
- To explore the general impact of the programme on the learners.
- To explore specific impacts based on the aims of the programme.

## Instructions

---

- Introduce yourself – who you are, who you work for, what your role is (independent evaluator of the Programme).
- **Start by informing them of the nature and purpose/aims of the focus groups – make sure they're clear about why they're there.**
- Remind the participants of how the data will be used – to construct an anonymised report that details the effectiveness of the Valleys Steps Mindfulness programme
- Remind them that their participation is confidential and that they will be anonymised
- Request for detail and honesty in their answers
- Remind them that they can ask for clarification whenever needed
- Inform them that the Focus Group is built on their discussion – you'll pose a series of questions or topics for discussion and then it's up to them to share their experiences so there are no right or wrong answers
- Remind them that the Focus Group is being recorded so that a transcript can be developed so that we can ensure that we accurately represent their experiences.

## Things to Consider

---

- The participants might not understand some of the terms you use so be prepared to re-word the questions / terms if required.
- I'm not sure how the participants have engaged in the programme and all of the things that they've been doing so you'll need to be a little reactive to their level of understanding and their responses.
- The number questions below are the main questions and the lettered questions are the probes. Can you make sure you use all of these but be aware that you can be flexible in terms of how and when these are asked.

## Main Questions

---

1. To start with, I'd like you to give me an overview of what you've been doing on the Valleys Steps Mindfulness programme for the last 6 weeks ...
  - a. What's really stood out for you?
  - b. What's been most memorable?
  - c. What have you really enjoyed about the Programme?
  - d. How did you find the online sessions that have been delivered to you by the Valleys Steps team?
2. Thank you for those insights, so, now I'd like you to discuss what aspects of the Programme have been really beneficial for you
  - a. How?
  - b. Why?
  - c. What's changed as a result?



3. OK, building on this, what are your views on what aspects of the Programme have not really been that useful?
  - a. Why?
  - b. What could be changed to improve the Programme?
  
4. Thank you for your insights so far ... I want us to discuss the way that the Valleys Steps Mindfulness programme has made you think about, or influenced the following things (**deal with one at a time but be aware that they may have discussed these things already**):
  - a. Your levels of stress
  - b. Your overall well-being
  - c. How well you're able to focus and concentrate on things
  - d. How aware you've become of your thoughts and feelings
  
5. Is there anything else that we could discuss in relation to your experiences on the Valleys Steps Mindfulness programme and how it has affected you?
  - a. Would you recommend the programme to others?
  - b. Would you attend a further 6-week programme based on your experiences?

**OK, so that's the end of the focus group. I really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts. You've given me some really useful insights. Please take care of yourselves.**

---

**FINISH**

## APPENDIX B (continued)

### EXAMPLE FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

#### Social Prescribing Training Review

##### Interview Guide

| Number | Gender | Age | College |
|--------|--------|-----|---------|
| 1      |        |     |         |
| 2      |        |     |         |
| 3      |        |     |         |
| 4      |        |     |         |
| 5      |        |     |         |
| 6      |        |     |         |

#### Instructions

- Remind participant of the purpose of the interview
- Remind participant of reasons for recording the interview
- Remind participants of their rights
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Ask participants for questions before the interview begins

#### Main Questions

1. To start, can you please tell me why you decided to participate in this training.
  - a. What attracted you to this programme?
2. What was the best/most memorable part about the programme?
  - a. Why? Examples
3. What were the key learning outcomes of the programme for you personally?
  - a. Why? Examples
  - b. What was new / novel in the training that you found particularly beneficial
4. How have these things influenced the way that you think and act in your job?
  - a. What impact has the training had on you?
  - b. How will the training impact your learners?
  - c. How will the training impact those you work with?
5. What aspects of the training could be improved?

- a. How would such changes impact the quality of the training?
  - b. Did these aspects impact your experience of the training?
6. Overall, how would you rate your experience on the training programme?
- a. Why? Examples
7. Would you recommend the training to others?
- a. Why?
8. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experiences on the training programme?

**Methodological Rigour:**

- 1) How do you think that the focus group went?
- 2) Do you feel as though you were led or influenced in any way whilst answering the questions?
- 3) Were you able to tell your full story?
- 4) Do we miss anything out? Is there anything else you'd like to feedback?

---

**FINISH**