

### **A message from the Inclusion Team**

We are trying to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing so that the College is a community where everyone feels able to thrive. We want you to succeed and we want to help and support that. Positive mental health is about doing things that help keep us well and happy, or that help us feel better when things are tough. The Covid-19 pandemic has made things pretty tough for lots of us, but we want to reassure you we are here to support you to make the most of your time at College and be successful.

We offer 6-week programmes that run for an hour a session once a week on several topics including:

#### **1. Anxiety and Coping Strategies**

Coping skills help you tolerate, minimize, and deal with stressful situations in life. Managing your stress well can help you feel better physically and psychologically, and it can impact your ability to perform at your best.

For example, if you are struggling to complete a piece of homework that you do not understand, you might use avoidance as a way of coping and go out with friends to avoid completing the work. This in turn, can lead you to fall behind and affect your academic progress.

Our sessions will look to give you clear and easy to follow strategies to help cope with the anxiety and frustration you experience when you are challenged by difficult situations and to support you to make the right decisions around seeking help and sticking with things like challenging tasks.

#### **2. Anger Management**

We all feel angry at times – it's part of being human. Anger is a normal, healthy emotion, which we might experience if we feel attacked, deceived, frustrated, invalidated or unfairly treated. It isn't necessarily a 'bad' emotion; in fact, it can sometimes be useful.

Most people will experience episodes of anger which feel manageable and don't have a big impact on their lives. Learning healthy ways to recognise, express and deal with anger is important for our mental and physical health. Our sessions will help you develop these skills so that you are in control in those moments when you feel angry.

#### **3. Improving Self-Esteem**

When we have healthy self-esteem, we tend to feel positive about ourselves and about life in general. It makes us better able to deal with life's ups and downs. When our self-esteem is low, we tend to see ourselves and our life in a more negative and critical light.

As well as sessions on improving general self-esteem we also offer sessions about Grief and Bereavement, Friendship and Social Communication and Behaviour Management but also recognise some wellbeing concerns will not fit under these titles so we will always look to help and support whatever you may be dealing with.

We can offer a weekly opportunity for positive mentoring where we can look at identifying and managing emotions, looking at your triggers or help engaging with school. We also have Mentor Steve Uttley who comes in weekly.

We have a School nurse drop-in clinic on Monday lunchtimes in Student Services, where you can talk to our School nurse for confidential advice and support on issues such as sexual health and contraception, alcohol, smoking, self-harm, stress or eating worries.

We have a Wellbeing Practitioner who comes in once a week from Young Somerset who has been trained in *cognitive behavioural therapies* (CBT) for mild to moderate mental health difficulties. Wellbeing Practitioners support you to learn new tools to put into practice, to make changes in the here and now to help you to help yourself with your wellbeing.

As well as the support we offer in College we can also help point you in the direction of out of College support and resources if you would prefer. We can signpost you to websites or agencies that may be useful to improving your mental health or refer you for professional help such as counsellors or CAMHS. We do have a counsellor that comes into College once a week from the charity We Hear You that deal with issues to do with bereavement or the impact of illness. Over the next few months we have some general counselling available in College so please let us know if that support is needed.

We know that home can have an impact on College life, so we also refer and liaise with outside agencies who might work with your family like CAMHS, Social workers or family intervention workers who have specialist training to help families and individuals.

Finally, we would always highlight that you should not forget about self-care; it is incredibly important. Every single day try to get into the habit of doing those things that support your mental and physical wellbeing. This might be as simple as pausing to calm yourself and stop to listen to the birds or if you have had a particularly tough working week recharging with a 'lazy' weekend duvet day and some good tv might be the thing you need to prepare you for the next productive week. Always remember to keep well hydrated and drink lots of water, try to eat healthily, exercise regularly and ensure you get lots of the right sort of sleep. Take care of yourself.