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# Case Study on Impact on Student Well-being *United Kingdom*

## Overview

This case study is only one example of a single strategy suggested as part of a much wider range of ideas to encourage students to develop their resilience. The mood tracker resource has been used with Batley Girls' High School students who have found the adjustment to secondary school challenging. The mood tracker enables the students to illustrate the way they are feeling through colours.

## Aims

To encourage Year 8 students to try a range of well-being strategies over the course of a year, that would hopefully help them to express their feelings as a form of communication, develop resilience and improve their mental health.

## Methods

The mood tracker enables the students to illustrate the way they are feeling through colours. The students recorded their mood on a daily basis and evaluated their change in mood at the end of the week.

## Findings

The students as a cohort had mixed feelings about recording their mood on a daily basis mainly because they did not remember to record the mood every day and then could not remember how they had felt at the end of the week.

The strategy was also adopted by the pastoral and wellbeing team when working with students on a one to one basis. They had a positive result when meeting the student on a daily basis.

## Conclusions

When students complete the activity on a daily basis they are able to monitor their mood and become self aware of the triggers that may be causing the change of mood. The students are able to try different strategies to change a negative mood into a positive which then helps to keep a positive attitude for the remainder of the week.



## Context

The context of this case study is of an all-girls high school in Northern England. The school is a state comprehensive of around 1200 students ranging from age 11 - 18.

Although the school is all girls it has a range of abilities and backgrounds that are typical of any English comprehensive school. However, there is a slightly higher proportion of students from a disadvantaged background and many students whose first language is not English. This does mean that any strategies for mental health needed to be accessible for these students, so could not be too complex or too expensive.

There was a gap in the curriculum in terms of personal development which is now statutory and is a part of the basic curriculum in England. An understanding of mental health issues that have been piloted in this project have assisted in advancing the PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, Economic) curriculum.

## Nature of the problem, nationally and regionally

It was already felt before the Covid pandemic that the students needed an opportunity to discuss mental health issues. This became much more desirable after the pandemic as anxiety was a problem for a reasonably large number of students who were struggling to return to ordinary life after the pandemic.

Although the PSHE curriculum did cover mental health issues the availability of time in the curriculum to discuss mental health was quite small and it was felt that students were not being given the toolkit to be able to try to deal with any problems.

Whilst the anxiety and lack of resilience was a national issue, it related to our setting with a school of girls as they are particularly negatively affected by social media, so any attempts to improve mental health would clearly benefit them in the long term.

## Implementation in the case study students.

A series of lessons around Character Development and Well Being were set up that included a range of different activities to try to improve resilience. The lessons also introduced students to a range of different strategies that they may find helpful in relation to their own mental health.

All students across the school completed these sessions in the school year 2021/22 during their form time once a week. This involved over 1200 students and 200 staff. The case study assessed one year group of around 230 students and 20 staff, but the tasks were completed by the whole school. This was also trialled with a small cohort of students that found it difficult to access mainstream school and had poor attendance. This would be 10 students from a range of year groups.

This case study is looking at the strategy of the mood tracker which enables Year 8 students to illustrate the way they are feeling through colours.



## Aims and methods of the case-study

Our aim for this case study was to understand what caused Student A to behave in a poor manner and to teach her the skills she needed to communicate with her peers to form friendship groups.

We used the mood tracker method to see if we could see when the student was feeling sad or angry during the week. At the end of the week, she would have a one to one session with a trusted adult and discuss the cause of the mood changes. Strategies were discussed on how the student could change her actions which would have a positive impact on her mood.

The colours gradually over time changed from being angry and frustrated to happy and calm. The students' behaviour and attendance also improved.

## Findings from the case-study

Student A has particularly benefited from using the mood tracking technique as she was able to express her mood without having to verbally communicate. As a team, we were able to see a pattern in the students' mood and identify the possible triggers. We have then been able to offer appropriate support and teach strategies that have allowed the student to better integrate in school and form friendship groups. The student now attends school regularly.

Selection of examples taken from the students journal have been shown below:



We now use emotion fans with our students with additional needs and who have wellbeing concerns. The emotion fans enable learners to make a quick assessment of their mood and use a combination of fans to help explain why they feel in a certain way.



## Conclusions

We have found a strategy that enables non-verbal learners and learners who find it difficult to cope with their emotions to express how they are feeling and enable us to offer support.

We now use emotion fans with our students with additional needs and who have wellbeing concerns. The emotion fans enable learners to make a quick assessment of their mood and use a combination of fans to help explain why they feel in a certain way.

