



Let's talk about Resilience

- 01896 807000
- wellbeing.college@health-in-mind.org.uk
- www.wellbeingcollege.org.uk
- The Hive, Low Buckholmside, Galashiels, TD1 1RT

Exploring resilience and recovery in the Scottish Borders

Hello and welcome to the Wellbeing College.

Our aim at the College is to help you learn how to best take care of your mental wellbeing. We do that by providing learning opportunities where people can come together and explore resilience and positive mental health in the Scottish Borders.

My name is Annette Murray one of the personal tutors at the College and this course is called Let's talk about Resilience.

You can find out more about this and other courses at the College on our website: www.wellbeingcollege.org.uk

You can also make an appointment with a personal tutor to better understand how the College can help you and perhaps develop a personal learning plan.

Our website should have all the information you need about the College, who we are, what we do and how we can help you, but if you have any more questions please call us or send us an email.



Let's talk about Resilience

Course Purpose

- Have an understanding of what resilience is
 - Gain an appreciation of your own, existing resilience
 - Learn 3 key mindsets that improve resilience
 - Consider how to develop a more resilient mindset
-

In this course, we're considering the topic of resilience. The purpose of the course is to:

- Have an understanding of what resilience is
- Gain an appreciation of your own, existing resilience
- Learn 3 key mindsets that improve resilience
- Consider how to develop a more resilient mindset

We'll introduce some key mindsets which you may find helpful and wish to think about some more. Sources of further information will be provided at the end of the course if you wish to explore these ideas further.

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Let's talk about Resilience

What you'll need....

- Pen and paper 
- As few distractions as possible! 

Before we start, here's what you will need for this course.

- **A pen or pencil and paper or your favourite notebook for the activities.**

Whenever you see the pen symbol, it's time for you to do a short exercise - so listen to the instructions, pause the video for as long as you need to and then hit play when you are ready to start again.

Writing things down by hand can help us understand and remember ideas and makes it more likely that we achieve our goals, so I encourage you to do this.

You won't be asked to share what you write with anyone. You're just doing it for you, to get your thoughts down on paper.

- **You also may want to eliminate distractions for the next hr or so.** So, if you can, switch off the TV and your phone, put on headphones if that helps you concentrate, or do whatever helps you focus for a short while on you - because what matters most is your mental health.

Let's talk about Resilience Before we begin...

- Remember this is a general, introductory course
 - Mental health can be a sensitive subject – be kind to yourself
 - If you feel affected by any of the content in this video, remember you can pause or stop at any time
 - If you need help now visit:
www.wellbeingcollege.org.uk/resources/need_help_now
-

Before we begin, it's important to be clear that this is a general introductory course – we share broad themes and strategies that can help when it comes to understanding and improving mental health. We encourage you to think about how the ideas in this course can work for you.

We acknowledge that mental health can be a sensitive subject. Reflecting on our experiences can sometimes bring up difficult thoughts and feelings and that's normal. Be kind to yourself and go at your own pace.

If you feel affected by any of the content in this video, remember you can pause or stop at any time.

****If you feel you need more immediate help with your mental health and you're not sure where to go, please see the Need Help Now section of our website for details of services who can offer support.**

You can find this section at:

www.wellbeingcollege.org.uk/resources/need_help_now

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Let's talk about Resilience TED talk

'The three secrets of resilient people'

Dr Lucy Hone



https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_hone_the_three_secrets_of_resilient_people

Before undergoing this course, we recommend you view a short talk called 'The three secrets of resilient people' by Dr Lucy Hone. You'll hopefully have received a link to this talk when you registered for the course. Failing that a Google search of the title should quickly take you the clip on You Tube or the TED website. *


In summary, this talk serves as a good illustration of what resilience means in our day-to-day life, the fact that nobody escapes adversity and that there are mindsets that can really help with some of the hardest difficulties we can endure.

We'll come onto to consider the three main themes of this video in due course, but firstly let's take some time to think about the term "resilience".

***Links:**

https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_hone_the_three_secrets_of_resilient_people

<https://ideas.ted.com/sorrow-and-tragedy-will-happen-to-us-all-here-are-3-strategies-to-help-you-cope>

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What is Resilience?

Activity

- What does 'resilience' mean to you?
- Note down any words, phrases or images that come to mind
- E.g. complete the sentence: 'I feel resilient when.....'

Please take a few minutes to think about the word resilience and note down any words or images that come to mind.

It might help you to complete the sentence 'I feel resilient when...'

Pause the video while you note down your thoughts and click play when you're ready to move on.

There is no right or wrong answer here and everyone who completes this course will most likely say something slightly different, based on their experiences.

But here are some definitions which you may find helpful...

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What is Resilience?

The ability to...

...cope with adversity and push through challenges in the pursuit of opportunities.

Rick Hanson, author 'Resilient'

Firstly, this is a quote by Rick Hanson, author of the book Resilient.

He writes, resilience is the ability to:

‘..cope with adversity and push through challenges in the pursuit of opportunities.’

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What is Resilience?

A definition

Resilience is not just your ability to bounce back, but also your capacity to adapt in the face of challenging circumstances, whilst maintaining a stable mental wellbeing.

www.mind.org.uk

The mental health charity Mind, says:

‘Resilience is not just your ability to bounce back, but also your capacity to adapt in the face of challenging circumstances, whilst maintaining a stable mental wellbeing.’

What both these quotes have in common is that they describe resilience as something that helps us face and overcome challenges or difficulties in life.

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What is Resilience?

Have you ever experienced any of the following?

- Loss (of any kind)
- Personal rejection
- Long-term illness
- Persistent low mood
- Stress or anxiety
- Severe disappointment

If you've managed to view it, you may remember, at the start of their talk, Dr Lucy Hone described a variety of difficult events or situations and asked audience members to stand up if they'd ever experienced any of them. At the end of the list everyone in the room was on their feet. Let's try a similar exercise now.

Take a moment to consider if you've ever experience any of the following:

- **Loss (of any kind)** – including the death of someone close to you or the loss of a pet, or perhaps the loss of a career, a relationship, friendship or a treasured possession.
- **Personal rejection** - perhaps you didn't get that job you wanted or the personal invitation you hoped for.
- **Long-term illness** – perhaps you have a long-term illness, whether it affects your physical or mental health (or both). Even illnesses that are not serious and life threatening can still be debilitating when experienced over long periods.
- **Persistent low mood** – perhaps you've felt sad or low for several weeks or more?
- Have you ever experienced **stress or anxiety**?
- Or **severe disappointment** – when things haven't worked nearly as well as you hoped they would?

What is Resilience?

Have you recently experienced:

- Feelings of anxiety and overwhelm watching the news?
 - Fear of catching Covid-19 or passing it onto others?
 - Fear visiting the shops?
 - Loneliness and/or isolation?
 - Discomfort or fear wearing a face covering?
 - Anger, fear or upset at the behaviour of others?
-

Now, thinking about recent events and the time since you first heard of Covid-19 and became impacted by it.

Have you experienced:

- Feelings of anxiety and overwhelm watching the news?
- Fear of catching Covid-19 or passing it onto others?
- Fear visiting the shops or going about other daily activities?
- A sense of loneliness and/or isolation – whether you were around people or not?
- Discomfort or fear wearing a face covering?
- Anger, fear or upset at the behaviour of others?

If you can identify with any of the experiences I've just listed, you're most definitely not alone. As was pointed out in Dr Hone's talk, 'adversity doesn't discriminate' and none of us are immune to challenges.

What is Resilience?

Have you also recently experienced:

- Humour?
- Improved contact with friends and family?
- Support from neighbours or the wider community?
- Prioritising your health e.g. better diet and exercise?
- Learning to use technology?
- Enjoying greater peace and quiet?
- More time in nature?
- Exploring a new hobby – or re-discovering an old one?

However, like others, there are probably some other things you've experienced recently.

How about:

- Humour – perhaps recently you've been able, at times, to find things to laugh about or watched or listened to things that gave you some light relief?
- Perhaps you've had improved contact with friends and family?
- Or maybe you've had support from neighbours or the wider community?
- You may have decided to prioritise your health by trying to improve your diet or take more exercise.
- Have you learned to use technology that is new or unfamiliar to you? (I personally hadn't heard of Zoom before March 2020 but now I use it regularly).
- At times when we were asked to stay at home, did you perhaps experience - and even gain strength from - greater peace and quiet?
- Did you spend more time in nature and discover that it helps you relax?
- Have you explored a new hobby or interest – or re-discovered an old one?

Perhaps you can identify with all of these things – or maybe none of them.

Perhaps there are other things you've done to help you get through - and that's what we're going to look at next.

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Recognising Resilience Activity

- How have you managed to stay well?
- Have you done anything new or different that's helped?

It can be difficult to recognise our own resilience. We don't always appreciate the things that we do to keep going in the face of adversity, so let's take some time to do that now.

Regardless of how you feel you have coped in response to Covid-19 - or with any of life's problems - the fact is you are still here.

So, please, take a moment to acknowledge yourself for that.

Take a moment to ask yourself – how have you managed to stay well? What have you done, or how have you thought about the situation to help yourself get through?

Have you done anything new or different that's helped?

If it helps, refer back to the examples on the previous slide to prompt some ideas.

Otherwise please pause the video again, note down your thoughts and press play in your own time.

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Recognising Resilience

Some thoughts

'Resilience isn't a personality trait
– it's something that we can all
take steps to achieve.'

www.mind.org.uk

I hope you found taking time to reflect on your resilience helpful. Being able to identify the things that help us cope with and overcome our challenges means we can build on this ability in the future.

You may appreciate this quote from the mental health charity Mind who say:

'Resilience isn't a personality trait – it's something that we can all take steps to achieve.'

Perhaps that's a quote worth keeping in mind - especially as we go through the rest of the course and look more closely at mindsets that can help us become more resilient.

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Let's talk about Resilience

3 Keys to Resilience

1. Accept adversity happens
2. Be careful what you focus on
3. Notice what does/doesn't help



'The three secrets of resilient people' Dr Lucy Hone

Let's think back to the TED talk that was mentioned at the start of this course and the 3 mindsets that, according to Dr Hone's research, are key to resilience.

1. The first mindset is - 'Accept adversity happens'
2. The second – 'Be careful what you focus on'
3. And the third – 'Notice what helps and what doesn't'

Let's explore each of these in turn before doing an activity to practice applying them in our lives.

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Let's talk about Resilience

3 Keys to Resilience

1. Accept adversity happens.
 - The parable of the mustard seed
 - We're not alone in our suffering



This first key to resilience - accept adversity happens - is about understanding that challenges happen in life and they happen to everyone.

This idea is similar in many ways to the parable of the mustard seed taught in Buddhism. In this story, a woman asks Buddha for a potion to bring a loved one back to life. He asks her to collect mustard seeds from a village not affected by death and he will make a potion to revive her loved one as she wishes. Of course, she comes home empty handed.

The point of this story is that we're not alone in our suffering.

Accepting adversity encourages us to realise that difficulties are inevitable in life. Instead of asking 'why is this happening to me?' which invariably makes us feel worse, Dr Hone suggests we can ask, 'why not me?' That way we don't have to feel that we, alone, are being singled out to suffer.

Despite how it may feel at times, challenges do affect everyone - and people can and do overcome them.

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Let's talk about Resilience

3 Keys to Resilience

2. Be aware of what you focus on.
 - Can you find the good?



This next key to resilience follows on from acceptance. Just because we accept our difficulties in life, it doesn't mean we have to focus on them and nothing else.

Being aware of what we focus on is about realising we have the power to choose where to put our attention.

You've probably heard of the expression 'Is the glass half empty or half full?' As you look at this image of the glass of water, you have a choice as to how you view it.

You can take the view that the glass is half empty (which suggests you're focussing on what you don't have or don't have enough of). Or you can have the more optimistic view that the glass is half full – and even be grateful for the fact you have a glass and some water, over nothing at all!

When we apply this attitude to our challenges, we're asking ourselves to find the good in a situation. Despite our circumstances, are there things we can be grateful for?

We tend to have 'negativity bias' in that it's natural for us humans to look out for threats as part of our survival instincts. Most of us don't need to learn how to do that as it comes to us naturally. However, that means we do need to train ourselves to purposefully search for the good.

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3 Keys to Resilience

Your grateful brain:

Dopamine

Serotonin



Oxytocin

There's some interesting neuroscience that might encourage you to do this. When we consciously practice gratitude, we release chemicals in the brain that make us feel good, such as dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin.

The simple act of *searching* for something good increases the level of these chemicals. *Finding* something good increases these levels further - and they increase further still when we *share* what we are grateful for with others.

Also, our minds can't focus on negative and positive information at the same time, so focussing on the positive will naturally reduce the amount of negativity we let in because we simply don't have room for it in our minds.

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3 Keys to Resilience

1. Be aware of what you think about.
2. Be aware of what you focus on.
 - Can you find the good?
 - Can you focus on what you can control?



Another way to think about this is to try and focus on what you can control.

Many problems, especially global issues like covid-19 or climate change, can feel overwhelming to us and cause enormous anxiety. Rather than take responsibility for the whole problem, resilient people will focus on what they can directly control.

This isn't world events, the weather, the economy or other people for example, but our own actions and attitudes.

It's also not about dismissing negative feelings or always pretending that everything is fine. It's about finding a more balanced perspective, rather than focussing *just* on the negative.

We'll look at an everyday example of this later in the course.

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Let's talk about Resilience

3 Keys to Resilience

3. Notice what helps – and what doesn't.

- Is the way I'm thinking and acting helping me or harming me?
- What could I do instead?



Finally, let's consider the 3rd secret of resilient people: Notice what helps and what doesn't.

This is really about self-awareness. As Dr Hone explains in the talk, we might ask ourselves:

'Is the way I'm thinking and acting helping me or harming me, (for example):


- ...in my bid to get that job or voluntary opportunity?'
- ...to feel optimistic about the future?'
- ...to recover from a period of depression?'


It's a powerful question to ask when we want to reflect on how we are responding to a challenge.

If you notice that what you're doing is not helping, perhaps ask 'what could I do instead?'

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3 keys to resilience in practice

Activity 



Steve is stuck in traffic on his way to the airport. What might they be thinking?

Perhaps Steve is:

- worried about missing the flight
- frustrated - doesn't know what's caused the delay or how long it will last
- annoyed about not taking another route
- concerned about leaving you waiting

Now let's try applying these 3 mind-sets to an everyday situation. One we're probably all too familiar with.

Let's imagine the driver in the silver car, is called Steve. They're on their way to meet you at the airport so you can catch a flight together, but they get stuck in traffic.

This is an ideal example of a situation where Steve can't really do anything, in that they can't solve the problem of the traffic and make it magically move again.

For this activity we're going to assume Steve's quite stressed about the situation. Let's consider Steve's initial reactions. What might they be thinking or feeling right now?

Take a moment to write down as many things as you can think of, pausing the video if you need to.


Perhaps Steve is:


- Worried about missing the flight.
- Frustrated by not knowing what's caused the delay nor how long it will last.
- Annoyed about not taking another route.
- Concerned about leaving you waiting.

You may've come up with other suggestions. Afterall, most of us are familiar with these situations and not usually terribly happy about them.

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3 keys to resilience in practice

Activity 



How might the 3 keys to resilience, help Steve?

1. Accept adversity happens
 - e.g. other drivers are in the same situation
2. Be careful what you focus on
 - e.g. listen to the radio, think about other plans
3. Notice what helps/doesn't help
 - e.g. don't dwell on frustrations, relax instead

Now let's imagine you've listened to Steve vent these frustrations and more.

Keeping in mind the 3 keys to resilience you've just learned - accept adversity happens, be careful what you focus on and notice what does or doesn't help - what might you say to Steve that could help?

Again, pause the video and take some time to think about this.

- When it comes to accepting adversity, we might reassure Steve that all other drivers are in the same situation and possibly feeling equally frustrated. The traffic isn't bad because Steve decided to leave 10 minutes late or take this road, it's just one of those things in life. There is nothing anyone can really do.
- This brings us onto the next point. Accepting that Steve can't help what is causing the delay, we could suggest other things to focus on by way of distraction such as listening to the radio or considering alternative travel plans should the flight be missed.
- Finally, we might encourage Steve not to dwell on his frustrations about why the traffic is bad if that only makes those feelings worse. Instead, we could encourage them to focus on whatever helps them relax like breathing deeply or reminding themselves that the traffic will eventually pass.

Of course, this is just an example, but I hope you can see how these mindsets could be applied in everyday situations.

3 keys to resilience in practice

Activity

- Perhaps there's a small challenge you're facing right now.
 - Could you use the 3 keys to resilience to think differently about it?
 - *E.g. how might you accept adversity happens, be careful what you focus on, notice what helps/doesn't help?*
-

Perhaps there is a small challenge or frustration you 're facing right now.
Could you use the 3 keys to resilience to think differently about it?

Pause the video and take some time to think about that too, if you need to.



Developing Resilience Activity

'Resilience isn't a personality trait – it's something that we can all take steps to achieve.'

- How can we develop a more resilient mindset?
- How have you learned to think differently about life's challenges?

www.mind.org.uk

So far in the course, we've looked at what we mean by the term resilience, you paused to acknowledge your own resilience, including how you responded in the face of covid-19. And you've just learned 3 key mindsets that can improve your resilience further.

Let's remind ourselves of a quote from earlier. **'Resilience isn't a personality trait – it's something that we can all take steps to achieve.'**

Resilience is not a static quality but one we can continue to develop throughout our lives and as we have seen, much of our resilience comes from our mindset. How then, can we develop a more resilient mindset?

For a moment, think of all the ways in which you've learned to think differently about your problems or circumstances in a way that is helpful to you. How did you learn to think differently about these challenges?

Perhaps you have your own philosophies in life, similar to one of the three ideas we've just looked at, that help you get through. Where did you learn them or how did you develop them?

Take some time to think about this and note down your answers.

Developing Resilience

Some ideas

- Be aware of our mindset - be prepared to challenge it
 - Be open to different perspectives (e.g. listen to others, read or journal)
 - Stay curious
 - Take baby steps – think differently around something small at first
-

Here are some ideas for developing a more resilient mindset:

- Firstly, be aware of your own mindset and be prepared to challenge it.
- Try to remain open to different perspectives (for example by listening to others/reading from different sources on a subject or writing in a journal).
- Stay curious. If you hear of an approach or idea that works for someone, consider how it might work for you?
- Take baby steps – think differently around something small rather than issues that seem insurmountable and notice attitudes that help.

Whether you thought of ideas like this or came up with something different, the important thing is to be aware of what works for you and build on it.



Let's talk about Resilience

Some thoughts

- Its common to experience adversity
 - We all have the capacity to overcome difficulties
 - We can develop our resilience
-

As we've seen today, remember that:

- It's common to experience adversity.
- We have a proven ability to overcome difficulties.
- We can also develop our resilience (we've *all* been resilient before and can adapt that resilience in new circumstances).

Let's talk about Resilience Course Summary

You now have:

- A greater understanding of what resilience is
- Gained an appreciation of your own, existing resilience
- Learned 3 key mindsets that improve resilience
- Considered how to develop a more resilient mindset

As we come to the end of the course, let's recap what we've covered today:

- You now have a better understanding of what resilience is by considering what the term means to you - as well as reflecting on some definitions provided by others.
- You've gained an appreciation of your own, existing resilience by taking time to think of all the many ways you've had to adapt to the challenges posed by the pandemic.
- You've learned three key mindsets that improve resilience:
 1. Firstly, by accepting adversity happens to everyone and that we are rarely alone in our suffering.
 2. Secondly, by being careful what you focus on and allowing space for the good in any circumstance.
 3. And thirdly, by taking time to pay attention to what does or doesn't help during difficult times.
- Finally, you've also considered how to develop a more resilient mindset by being open to change and willing to learn from others.

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Let's talk about Resilience Gratitude Practice

- What one thing are you grateful for today?

As a final activity for the course, remember the science we learned about gratitude: that searching for things to be grateful for can increase our sense of wellbeing.

Take a moment now to think about ONE thing you are grateful for today?

Note it down and consider sharing it with someone else.

The more we practice recognising gratitude the more we might, in the words of Dr Lucy Hone - 'make room for the good'.

Let's talk about Resilience

Final thoughts

'We all have moments in life — when the path we thought we were taking veers off into some terrible direction that we never anticipated and certainly didn't want...


...Know that struggle is part of life, don't let your attention get fixated exclusively on the negative, and consider if the way you are thinking and acting is helping you or harming you.'

Dr Lucy Hone

And it's some final thoughts from Dr Hone's talk that I would like to finish with, as they capture much of what we've looked at today:

'We all have moments in life — when the path we thought we were taking veers off into some terrible direction that we never anticipated and certainly didn't want...

...Know that struggle is part of life, don't let your attention get fixated exclusively on the negative, and consider if the way you are thinking and acting is helping you or harming you.'



Continue Learning
Useful websites

Mind:

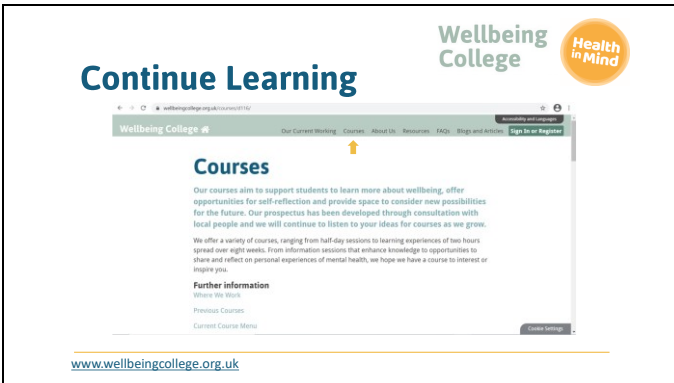
- <https://www.mind.org.uk>

Rick Hanson:

- <https://www.rickhanson.net>

If you would like to explore the concept of resilience further there are some useful resources you might want to consider:

There is the website of the mental health charity mind. www.mind.org.uk that has accessible information on a variety of mental health topics, including resilience. You may also wish to look at the resources on the website of Rick Hanson who wrote the book Resilient amongst others and co-hosts the podcast Being Well.



Continue Learning

Wellbeing College # Courses

Our courses aim to support students to learn more about wellbeing, offer opportunities for self-reflection and provide space to consider new possibilities for the future. Our prospectus has been developed through consultation with local people and we will continue to listen to your ideas for courses as we grow.

We offer a variety of courses, ranging from half-day sessions to learning experiences of two hours spread over eight weeks. From information sessions that enhance knowledge to opportunities to share and reflect on personal experiences of mental health, we hope we have a course to interest or inspire you.

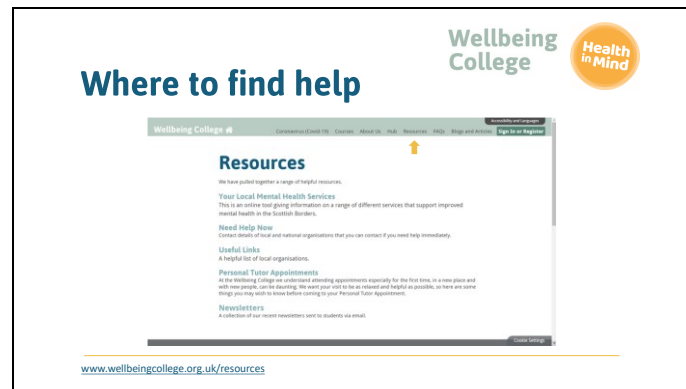
Further information
Where We Work
Previous Courses
Current Course Menu

www.wellbeingcollege.org.uk

You're also invited to continue your learning at the Wellbeing College.

Please look at our website www.wellbeingcollege.org.uk where you can register for more courses, including a live version of Let's talk about resilience, where you could review this course under the guidance of our personal tutors and also learn from other students.

You may also enjoy our other self-study courses such as 'What is mental health recovery?'



Remember, if, after this course, you feel you need additional support with your mental health, please see the 'resources' page of our website for sources of help and useful links.

You can find this section at www.wellbeingcollege.org.uk/resources



You can also contact us to request an appointment with a personal tutor to find out more about the College and perhaps develop a personal learning plan.

If you're not already on our email list, please sign up to receive our newsletter so we can stay in touch.

We'd also really love your feedback on this course, we'll send you an email soon to ask you what you thought of it so please do let us know.



Thank you

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Exploring resilience and recovery in the Scottish Borders

Thank you again for taking the time to work through this course today - and for being willing to learn more about your mental health.

We look forward to learning with you again soon.