

think⁺

positive about
student mental health

Small Grant Scheme



Foreword

This resource has been developed to share the learning we have gained from the pilot of our Small Grant Scheme, and to celebrate the ingenuity of those who took part.

We were incredibly impressed by how far these proposals made the £250 grant awards stretch. From art work that can be showcased nationally, to wellbeing workshops and informative video clips, we were left wondering what kind of impact a more substantial grant could offer. The wide variety of topics staff and students highlighted as opportunities for development were very dependent on the support and services already available; often in ways that other funding could be found, or other resources were available to make projects possible.

Initially, we felt that from our perspective, it would be easier to open applications for the Small Grant Scheme in November/December, and for the money to be shared in February. We opened this for discussion at our Launch Event in July 2019 and the overwhelming consensus was that this timeline would be too late for anything useful to be achieved with the grants. Instead, we trialled opening the applications in October, with the money being awarded in November. Based on the feedback we have received thus far, we believe this to be the format we shall continue with in Year 2, October 2020. We are yet to receive feedback from all applicants; we will be asking everyone who applied to feed back on the application process as part of their Student Mental Health Agreement's End of Year Report in May. It was our intention that this process would require as little additional work for applicants to participate as possible. We will review our timeline for the 2020/2021 academic year in June.

When we spoke to prospective applicants on the phone, the potential barriers often highlighted were concerns around how those writing the proposals (often student officers) could gain access to a bank account in order to receive the funding. In practise, these concerns were not brought to our attention.

We really appreciated the support of our Scoring Panel. Reena Staves and Jessica Smith, Think Positive's Student Health Project Coordinators hosted Craig Smith from SAMH, Robert Stevenson from Scottish Recovery Network, Emma Nieminen from Nightline Association and Jack Ferguson from NUS Scotland to score each proposal based upon the quality and detail offered in their applications, and then reflect on each other's views before coming to an official consensus. This meeting was also attended in a non-voting capacity by Katie Gowing, Think Positive's Student Health Project Manager and Sophie Avery from the Scottish Government. When reflecting on the scoring guidelines, in Year 2, we will add the question "Would you feel comfortable funding this?" to capture the subjective element of the scoring that we managed to flesh out during the in-person conversation, but perhaps weren't offered the opportunity to reflect on within the current scoring guidelines.

What is it?

How was it created?

The Small Grant Scheme was an opportunity for the Think Positive Project to give something back to their participants, offering them the opportunity to take more ownership of where the future of student mental health in Scotland could lie, and the flexibility to try something new.

What was its purpose?

We wanted to launch a Small Grant Scheme to encourage participants within the Student Mental Health Agreements project to innovate and pilot new approaches by offering them the resources to do so.

Developing the scheme

We researched other small grant schemes; what was their criteria, how do they award their funds, how long does their scheme take from application to award, and what do they do with any remaining money. Following discussions with our funders, we chose not to require receipts from our awards, but an impact report on their initiative at the end of the year. We gathered feedback from the institutions signed up to the project on our suggested timeline for the award scheme at our Launch Event in May. They felt that our initial timeline of money awarded in February was too late to be useful; thus, we brought our timeline forward to be awarded in November.

Applications

We had fifteen institutions out of a potential twenty-two apply. In the weeks before the deadline, we rang around each institution who was eligible to see if there was any further information they needed before they could apply. This allowed us to iron out any concerns, and encourage anyone who felt uncertain about applying.

Awarding panel

The Awarding Panel was made up of six voting members: two members of staff from Think Positive, one member of staff from NUS Scotland, and three members of staff from external organisations: SAMH, Scottish Recovery Network and Nightline Association. Each panel member received the fifteen applications, a score sheet and our scoring guidelines. The panel sent back their scores, which were collated before an in-person discussion at NUS Scotland Offices. This meeting was also attended by one of our funders, and the Student Health Project Manager in a non-voting capacity.

**Challenging
barriers to
support**

**Creating
safe
spaces**

**Targeting
specific
groups**

**Reduce
stigma**

**Self-
care**

**Service
promotion**

Inclusion

**Meeting
students
where
they are**

**Links between
physical and
mental health**

**Creating
community**

Key themes

In this section, we'll delve a little deeper into the projects that were successful in receiving funding. We'll first consider the idea, then explore its intended impact before moving on to the projected timeline and costs. Of the 15 applications that were submitted, 3 colleges and 7 universities were awarded the grant. The institutions that were awarded funding were:

**Abertay
University**

**City of
Glasgow
College**

**Open
University
in
Scotland**

**Fife
College**

**University of
the West
of Scotland**

**Strathclyde
University**

**Glasgow
Caledonian
University**

**University of
the Highlands
and Islands**

**Ayrshire
College**

**Royal
Conservatoire
of Scotland**

Case studies

City of Glasgow College

Idea

City of Glasgow College Students' Association will deliver a six-week block of activities to support students to develop skills in a variety of self-care practises. These will include Mindfulness, Art Therapy, Yoga, Journaling, Nutrition and Pampering. They will offer 20 places per session to empower and educate their students, and this work will go on to inform other campaigns promoted to the wider student body, such as their "12 Days of Wellness" campaign during the festive period.

Impact

To empower and educate City of Glasgow College students.

Time-line

Week 1 – Mindfulness Workshop: £30 to buy a Headspace subscription through Anxiety UK
Week 2 – Art Therapy Session: £20 for art supplies such as colouring-in pens
Week 3 – Introduction to Yoga: £60 to supply a yoga instructor
Week 4 – Mindful Journaling: £40 for journals to give to students
Week 5 – You Are What You Eat: £50 for ingredients and instructors time
Week 6 – Self-Care Pamper: Make It Yourself: £50 for ingredients that will be used to make face masks

Cost

£250

Open University in Scotland

Idea

To pilot a previously successful Open University campaign. To create “Well Boxed” packages to promote the feeling of being part of a community and show someone cares for them. These boxes would contain tea bags, seeds, colouring books, pencils, practical resources and other materials from external MH charities.

Impact

To target those students who have declared experiencing mental ill health, as well as those who live in remote and rural areas. To increase sense of community and combat loneliness.

Cost

£250 = 150 boxes. Open University in Scotland will match fund the postage.

Idea

To buy 135 brightly coloured lanyards that state “MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IS HERE, JUST ASK”. These would be worn by staff members, students, advice centre advisors and wellbeing team members who have all completed their Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid training. They would then signpost those asking for further support.

Impact

To achieve more visibility around campus through this campaign, those wearing the lanyards will feedback each week how many people have approached them and what services they asked for. This will guide the right resources being in the right place at the right time for the students who need them.

Cost

135 lanyards (£1.78 each) and £8.50 delivery = £250.

Glasgow

Caledonian University

Idea

Fife will create five one-minute videos which promote the practical approaches to mindfulness, and will feature the FCSA mascots to be used as a conversation started on campus. These videos will include short tutorials in breathing exercises, coping with stress, dealing with anxiety, desktop yoga, and other relaxation techniques. Displayed on digital screens around campus, these videos will provide students with tools and techniques to help them better manage their mental health. The videos will also contain messages which highlight further resources students can access if they feel they need extra support, eg. Fife College's support services and/or external agencies.

Impact

To provide students with tools and techniques that they can try to help them better manage their mental health.

Cost

£1000. Fife College Student Association has agreed to fund the remaining cost of the project.

Fife College

University of the West of Scotland

Idea

UWS will run an art workshop for international students in collaboration with local artists. Each student will be asked to consider the factors which might have impacted their mental health whilst at University of West of Scotland, their perceptions of the university's support services, any barriers which might prevent them from accessing support, any non-clinical interventions which have enhanced their mental health and any suggestions they have to further improve the support UWS offers.

The final art pieces (2 large canvases) will influence the way in which mental health and wellbeing services are being designed and delivered within the university, and work towards challenging the barriers to help-seeking which may exist for international students. These art pieces will be exhibited on campus, and at the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival to increase awareness and disseminate the findings from this under-researched area.

Impact

To influence the way mental health and wellbeing services are being designed and delivered at the university. To work towards challenging the barriers to help-seeking which may exist for international students.

To exhibit the artwork created (2 large canvases) at the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival to increase awareness and disseminate their findings from this under-researched area.

Cost

£150 - 3 hour Workshop
£50 - 2 Large Canvases
£50 - 2 x Jumbo acrylic

Abertay University

Idea

Abertay will be organising wellbeing and self-care workshops which will provide students with a safe place to voice their frustrations and talk openly about their mental health with their peers. These workshops will rotate on a monthly basis. Although these sessions shall be led by the students' association and have a mental health first aider present at each event, Abertay is keen that all everyone will participate in the sessions as equals practising self-care together. The chosen themes to trial include "Painting for Self-Love", Future-Self Journaling, Clay Modelling, Aromatherapy and Mindfulness.

Abertay believe these sessions will build their students' peer support networks and offer them strategies to support themselves. This could also be utilised for students who might be on the waiting list for counselling.

Cost

Craft supplies:

£225.50 (total)

£12 = 12.5kg of air-drying modelling clay

£100 = painting supplies (mini canvas, paint, brushes)

£35 = branded paper pens

£78.50 = 15 recycled A5 notebooks

Catering:

£70 (juices, healthy snacks, hot drinks)

Abertay will utilise £50 of their "campaign budget" to fund the remaining costs of this project.

Idea

The Students' Association highlighted that the two exam periods during the academic year (December and April/May) are the most difficult times for students to leave the library to access support during their revision periods. With their £250 grant money, Strathclyde's Student Association will offer coffee and croissant mornings in the library during these two exam periods. These mornings, run by student reps, wellbeing staff, library staff and sport centre staff working collaboratively, will inject a small amount of positivity into their students' days, and offer students

Impact

To inject a small amount of positivity into students' day and to offer students an opportunity to voice any stresses or worries and signpost them as necessary.

Cost

Approx. £68 500 Croissants (50 croissants a day over 10 days)
Approx. £16 1 jar of coffee
Approx. £6 3kg bag of sugar
Approx. £10 500 teabags
Approx. £5 3 litres of milk

**Strathclyde
University**

Idea

RCS will host a Wellbeing Week, during which they shall launch their Student Mental Health Agreement. Within this Week, they will also host a Wellbeing Fair, a Resilience Workshop, a free Yoga session and a Chatty Table. RCS believe this Week will give their students the tools and techniques to handle the stressors raised around assessments, and a wider awareness of their Student Mental Health Agreement.

Impact

To give students the tools and techniques to handle the stressors around assessments, to promote the Student Mental Health Agreement work, and to ensure it is accessible to all students.

Cost

- Table hire for wellbeing fair: £130
- Yoga instructor payment: £45
- British Sign Language translation of the new Student Mental Health Agreement: £75

Total = £250 Think Positive's grant would be match funded by their £300 mental health liberations officers' fund for this year.

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

University of the Highlands and Islands

Idea

HISA will make short film clips of different students talking about mental illhealth, specifically highlighting mental health concerns such as Dissociative Identity Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Schizophrenia etc, rather than anxiety and depression. HISA aim to destigmatise some of the mental illnesses that are thought of as particularly negatively due to media exposure and normalise the discussion of such illnesses by showing that people with these conditions are people just like everyone else.

Impact

To destigmatise some of the mental illnesses that are thought of particularly negatively due to media exposure. This would help to normalise talk of such illnesses and to show that individuals with these conditions are people just like everyone else and that the people with the conditions matter just as much as people with depression and anxiety.

Cost

Cost:

£50 – Travel

£50 – Equipment Hire

£50 – Social Media Marketing

£100 – Local Marketing

Ayrshire College

Idea

To expand their “Wear It On Your Sleeve” campaign, Ayrshire College will spend their £250 grant money on bright pink hoodies for their team of staff champions. Bright pink was chosen deliberately for the champions to allow the champions to stand out, and encourage students to take an interest in what the hoodies represent. The Champions also carry a supply of information cards to hand out to students. This campaign will encourage students, with an emphasis on male students, and staff at Ayrshire College to have an open dialogue about their own experiences of mental health and encourage them to seek help if they are struggling.

Impact

To encourage students, particularly male students and staff at Ayrshire College to have open dialogue about their own experiences of mental health and encourage them to seek help if they are struggling.

Cost

£195 on 13 hoodies, with the remainder of the grant to be spent on printing information cards. The Student Association have already allocated £600 to this project.

We will share further insights into the pilot of our Small Grant Scheme in June 2020, when we shall also announce the dates for our 2020-2021 applications. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the work referenced in this resource further, please do not hesitate to get in touch at thinkpositive@nus-scotland.org.uk

Think Positive would like to thank everyone involved in this pilot process, and especially to our applicants for making the process so worthwhile. We are so excited to see what we can all achieve next!



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