

# Public Mental Health Programme Leeds City Council

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# Mental Health is made in Communities

Mental health is forged in:

- the **connections** we make
- the **lives** we lead
- the **people** who are around us
- the **environments** we live in

**Social approaches to mental distress** can tackle some of the major factors – such as isolation or exclusion – that are known to play a role in poor mental health

This is especially the case when projects **build capacity within communities** to promote mental health or generate social change to create better conditions for people to live in



# Leeds Public Mental Health Programme

## Reduce risk factors and increase protective factors



- Promote and commission early intervention and prevention programmes
- Embed protective factors across settings
- Tackle known risk-factors (e.g. social isolation)

## Reduce inequalities stigma and discrimination



- Address unequal access and outcomes for marginalised groups
- Use lived-experience voices to challenge stigma
- Foster inclusive environments in which mental health is talked about freely

## Prevent suicide and minimise harm



- Deliver targeted suicide prevention and postvention programmes
- Monitor and respond to real-time surveillance
- Promote compassionate responses to suicide and self-harm



# Being You Leeds – A Public Mental Health Approach



- Good social relationships and engagement in community life necessary for good mental health
- Evidence shows delivering community-based approaches, rooted in strong mental health skills, will improve mental health outcomes
- Being You Leeds is a preventative mental health & wellbeing approach
- Primary aim - address mental health inequalities and achieve the vision that **Leeds is a Mentally Healthy City for everyone**
- Public Health funded 5+3 year contract
- Lead provider, 6 delivery partners and 2 training providers

## Being You Leeds Approach



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# Outcomes

Measured using SWEMWEBS: academically validated and reliable (widely used)

- A statistically significant **positive change** seen in the groups' wellbeing
- Groups **attracted people** with low wellbeing (32%) and moderate wellbeing (58%)
- Positive changes were seen in people **across the board** – people who started with low, moderate or high wellbeing
- 32% of attendees saw a **meaningful positive change** in their wellbeing



"I will not lecture you - I will listen to you and I'll respect your path and your choices"

Mandy, Unfolding January 2023

# UNFOLDING

A six week course for informal and formal volunteers in direct contact with their clients.



- Self-care and personal resilience
- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- Empowering others - conversations that create change:
- Healthy boundaries; saying "no"
- Embedding wellbeing in your organisation



**Intended outcome is improving mental wellbeing and resilience in the volunteer workforce, and improving their capacity to help others while avoiding burnout**



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# Impact



## IMPROVING PERSONAL MENTAL WELLBEING AND SELF-CARE

'I've learnt that self-care is mandatory otherwise we'll not be able to help others - it is NOT selfish.'



## SUPPORTING OTHERS

'I will not lecture you - I will listen to you and I'll respect your path and your choices'



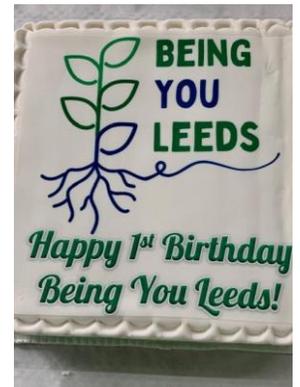
## SETTING BOUNDARIES

'Saying No can strengthen me physically, spiritually and in every way really'

'I enjoyed learning to say No & stop saying sorry and listen - because 'No is a full sentence'. (8 women mentioned this quote)

# Success factors for making these happen?

- **Strong leadership support**
  - Director of Public Health/Consultant in Public Health
  - Political support (Cabinet Lead for Public Health)
  - CEO Leeds City Council wanted innovative projects as part of the post-pandemic response
- **Public Health Grant** – identifying grant funding for Public Mental Health interventions
- **Making the case** – evidence base and demonstrating impact



# Reflections on the Mentally Healthier Councils Framework

- Supports us to further **embed mental health promotion**, prevention, and early intervention into local policies and services
- **Benchmarks** our current programmes of work within public health and wider local authority departments – what are our potential gaps?
- Implementing a mentally healthier councils framework **shows leadership** in promoting mental health as a priority issue

## To make stronger:

- More emphasis on prevention and early interventions and costed evidence based on what works, e.g. workplace wellbeing initiatives, befriending and suicide prevention
  - for potential investment to build capacity in communities
- Clear call for action around a local authority's role in tackling racism, poverty, discrimination and stigma and the impacts on poor mental health





**FEEL FREE TO  
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