

## Wellbeing Walk

Not only can walking improve your overall well-being, physical activity releases endorphins which can boost your mood and reduce stress and anxiety. Even just being in the outdoors in green natural spaces is beneficial to your mental health. Taking a gentle stroll can help you clear your mind and collect your thoughts, especially at stressful or busy times!

The idea behind a Wellbeing Walk is simple: bring people together to explore the outdoors, get some fresh air and meet new people!

### Organising a Walk

1. Talk to your committee
2. Set a date and time and start/end point
3. Plan your route – try and maximise the time spent in green places!
4. Publicise your walk
  - Posters
  - Social media
  - Lecture shout outs
  - Mailing lists
5. On the day:
  - Arrive a little early and try to make it clear who you are and what you're there for so that people are easily able to find you
  - Set off on your walk and be sure to make an effort to talk to any new faces!
  - You may want to collect email addresses of attendees if they would like to find out about other upcoming events
6. Following the event: if you collected email addresses you may want to send an email (remember to Bcc the addresses) thanking people for attending and inviting them to any upcoming events.

### Boundaries

When putting on events such as these it is important to have a clear aim in mind and communicate this to all from the initial planning stages. As a Student Minds group, people are likely to associate you with an understanding and safe environment, in which case they may want to talk about their personal experiences, past and current.

**As a volunteer you are doing something fantastic and this shouldn't impinge upon the rest of your life. Students experiencing mental health difficulties can require a lot of**

We are kindly supported by Comic Relief, The Welton Foundation, UnLtd, The Matthew Elvidge Trust, The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, The James Wentworth-Stanley Memorial Fund and Student Hubs.

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**support; it is important that responsibility for this does not fall on *one* person. Offering further support can imply a promise that cannot be kept realistically.**

It is important that, as with all events, volunteers have a clear understanding of their role and the limitations of this to ensure that the walk is a positive experience for all. Volunteers are expected not to take on a supportive role for any event attendees. See the list below for points you might want to keep in mind and remind the team of before events.

- 1) If an individual tells you about difficulties they are currently experiencing**, don't feel you need to cut them off and stop the conversation but when you are able to it is important that you:
  - Acknowledge their feelings ("It sounds like a really difficult time for you")
  - Let them know the limitations you have within your role ("As a Student Minds volunteer I am unable to provide advice or support for you at this time")
  - Signpost to the services available ("You might find it useful to talk to your GP/ the counselling service/ the peer support group") and give further details of these. Some of our groups have put together a page on the support available so that in this situation, although they are unable to offer advice or support, they are able to let the individual know where they can go for further support.
  - Remember, it's not your responsibility to enter into a counselling relationship or to attempt to "fix" the person!
- 2) If someone asks to meet up outside the Student Minds event**, remember that you are not trained to provide support. Volunteers should not meet up with students\* to provide support.  
\* It is obviously a little different if the student happens to already be a friend...
- 3) If you are worried about someone, be proactive!** "It sounds like things are really tough right now, are you getting some support? Have you considered speaking to your GP?"

As a Student Minds volunteer running an event, you are like a first aider. Just as a first aider at a sports event might put a temporary sling on someone who had hurt their arm, you should provide encouragement so that the person you are talking to feels confident about seeking further help.



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