

## CASE STUDY

# Hashtag Me

*Real support for real emotions.*



Loughborough  
University

The #Me course consists of small student peer groups who meet weekly for one hour over 12 weeks. Each peer group is led by two fellow students who receive training. The initiative is for students, designed by students and is entirely peer led. Student Brand Ambassadors are appointed to help with the logistics and delivery as well as a Student University Coordinator to oversee the course and act as a central point of contact.

#Me is more than a provider of wellbeing support but also aids students to establish a routine that consistently helps them to be better organized and more focused, thus less stressed and more productive in their academic work. By improving the mental wellbeing and emotional resilience of all students through regular interaction and practical resources they are equipped to achieve their goals, aspirations and maximise their experience at university and throughout life.

## **THE IMPACT OF #ME**

The 12-week course is currently offered on a University wide scale to all students, including UK/EU and International, Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Postgraduate Research at both the Loughborough and London Campus. **1,222 students have been involved** to date. (145 peer groups)

**99.92% would recommend**

### **2018/2019**

#### **Semester Two**

- 60 students across eight peer groups.
- Offered solely in the School of Business and Economics.

### **2019/2020**

#### **Semester One**

- 184 students across 20 peer groups.
- One Brand Ambassador.
- Offered to the School of Business and Economics, School of Social Sciences and Humanities and to the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences.

#### **Semester Two**

- 277 students across 32 peer groups.
- Four Brand Ambassadors.
- Offered to all UG and PG students at the Loughborough Campus.

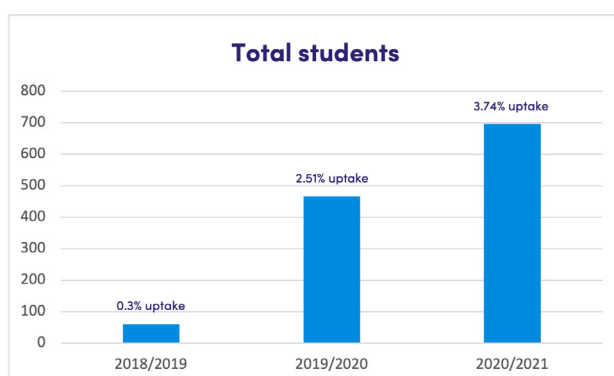
### **2020/2021**

#### **Semester One**

- 407 students across 49 peer groups.
- Four Brand Ambassadors.
- Offered to all UG and PG students at the Loughborough and London Campus.

#### **Semester Two**

- 282 students across 36 peer groups.
- Three Brand Ambassadors.
- Offered to all UG and PG students at the Loughborough and London Campus.



**3.7% uptake of Loughborough University students in 2020/2021**

## **PRE & POST COURSE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Prior to the 12-week courses, students completed the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD – RISC 10), a 10 item self-report scale that assesses psychological resilience and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. These same 44 questions were asked again in the final #Me Meeting as a way to anonymously evaluate the resilience and wellbeing of students as well as the effectiveness of the #Me course in certain areas. **In both academic years, on average, 100% of students saw an improvement in each of these areas.** Some of these overall average improvements are mentioned below.

### **Equipping and empowering students**

#Me aims to equip and empower students, particularly through promoting and implementing positive coping strategies. The questionnaire results attest to students having ‘developed some reliable ways to deal with the personal stress of challenging events at University’ (30.7% ↑) as well as ‘some reliable ways to relax when under pressure with my University studies’ (33% ↑).

### **Building long-term supportive communities**

Another goal of #Me is to build long-term supportive communities of like-minded peers and the data show that students feel they now ‘have a strong and reliable network of supportive students at University’ (30.6% ↑). Students have become more self-aware and equipped to ‘handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger’ (28.3% ↑).

### **Improving mood and productivity**

Through sharing their experiences and overcoming challenges together during the 12-week course, students are now ‘able to change my mood at University when I need to’ (26.7% ↑) and work productively during exam season as ‘when under pressure, can stay focused and think clearly’ (28.8% ↑).

### **Developing emotional resilience**

The data also reflects the way in which students have developed emotional resilience as they are ‘not easily discouraged by failure’ (26.2% ↑) and believe that ‘having to cope with stress can make me stronger’ (23.3% ↑).

### **Promoting a positive mindset and personal growth**

Moreover, results show that students have indeed adopted a more positive mindset and achieved personal growth, resulting in an overall improvement of students generally ‘feeling good about myself’ (26.6% ↑) and more specifically, feeling ‘relaxed’ (24% ↑), ‘confident’ (25.7% ↑) and ‘useful’ (25.4% ↑).

Students undertaking facilitator training in 2019/2020 academic year.



## COURSE FEEDBACK

Students are asked to fill in a feedback questionnaire after completing the course.

1 = Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree = 5

The purpose, outline and resources were clearly explained to me	4.75
The course was well structured and easy to follow	4.78
I felt I had an equal opportunity to contribute and ask questions	4.78
The venue was appropriate and suitable for the meetings	4.67
Attendees only: I felt the group was a good fit for my emotional needs	4.47
Facilitators only: I felt the responsibility of being a facilitator was manageable and I was adequately supported during the course	4.82

## STAFF FEEDBACK



#Me has been running at Loughborough University since 2018/19. Since that time we have had some outstanding feedback from students and staff on the impact of the course. Students tell us it has helped them improve their ability to maintain positive mental health, develop connections with peers, be more effective in their studies and, in some case, been the difference between them staying at university or quitting.

One of the key features is the way in which #Me complements and works alongside our existing support services. Working closely with our wellbeing teams students can be referred in either direction so that they can get the most appropriate support. The peer-to-peer basis of #Me also helps remove some students' inhibitions around asking for support and the #Me team has always been willing to work with us to make changes, enhancements and improvements to the offering.

#Me has been a game changer for us at Loughborough.

**Manuel Alonso, Associate Chief Operating Officer and Director of Student Services, Loughborough University**



#Me students at an away day in June 2021 to network, partake in mindful activities and brainstorm ideas for future courses.



## STUDENT FEEDBACK



It was great being able to connect with people who are all at university so often going through very similar things. It was also great being able to cover so many different topics relating to wellbeing, and the things you learn on this course are things which will benefit you long after the course has finished. As a group we've decided to keep meeting. Its a group I can share with freely. Incredibly cathartic."

**Masters, Chemical Engineering, Male Student**

It's really helped me get through this first term of uni otherwise I think I would have dropped out. I felt like I had a purpose and it's made me realise that we are all in the same boat and helped me build my resilience to things going on in my uni course."



**1st year, Design and Creative Arts, Female Student**



"This is just a really amazing system. Having our weekly meetings meant that there was a safe space for all kinds of people - those who've seen professionals for mental health before, as well as those who've never spoken to anyone. Being able to support each other and have a timetabled session each week to focus on your wellbeing has visible improvements on peoples mood, stress levels and overall wellbeing. Everyone, including facilitators and even those who feel they don't need any professional mental health support will benefit from this. I'm so glad I took part in my first semester as it really helped me settle in and facilitating now has been such a rewarding experience. I will definitely be signing up to be a facilitator again."

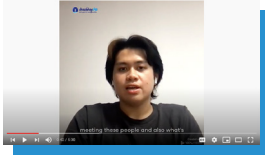
**1st Year, Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Female Student**

**// SEE ALL WRITTEN LOUGHBOROUGH STUDENT FEEDBACK ►**



#Me founder, Megan Gamble, with a group of student facilitators from a 12-week course offered in 2018/2019 academic year.

## **VIDEO FEEDBACK**



// WHY DID YOU SIGN UP TO THE #ME COURSE?

**WATCH ON YOUTUBE ►**



// WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF DURING THE COURSE?

**WATCH ON YOUTUBE ►**



// WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST BENEFICIAL ABOUT THE #ME COURSE?

**WATCH ON YOUTUBE ►**

// **SEE ALL LOUGHBOROUGH VIDEO TESTIMONIALS ►**

## **WIDER ACTIVITIES**

- Guest lecture for Strategic Management first year students (29th April 2019)
- Wellbeing drop-in session, including practical resources, for Claudia Parsons hall (26th September 2019)
- Guest lecture for Strategic Management final year students (5th December 2019)
- Guest speaker for School of Business and Economics 'Finding your Future' event on starting a business and building your personal brand (22nd April 2019)
- Seven Loughborough University student internships, four of which have come through the Loughborough Talent Match Scheme
- 'Year In Enterprise' student mentoring

Loughborough University students from Claudia Parsons hall at a #Me wellbeing drop-in session in 2019/2020 semester one.

