

CASE STUDY

Hashtag Me

Real support for real emotions.

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT 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.

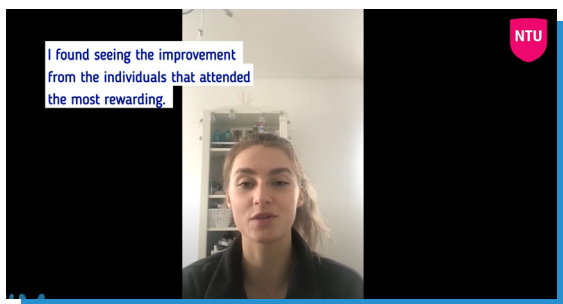
THE IMPACT OF #ME

#Me has been offered in the School of Science and Technology during the previous two academic years. **295 students have been involved** to date. (34 peer groups)

99.3% would recommend

2019/2020

- 86 student sign-ups (3.1% uptake of students in the School of Science and Technology).
- 10 peer groups.
- One Brand Ambassador.
- Adapted to a 10-week course at the University's discretion.
- The peer support course was offered to second year and final year students.



// A VIDEO COMPILATION OF THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE COURSE

[WATCH ON YOUTUBE ►](#)

2020/2021

- 206 student sign-ups (3.7% uptake of students in the School of Science and Technology).
- 24 peer groups.
- Three Brand Ambassadors, one of which went on to undertake a three-month internship with #Me during their final year of studying.
- The peer support course was offered to all students in the School, including postgraduates.



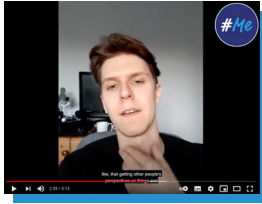
// WHY DID YOU SIGN UP TO THE #ME COURSE?

[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 ►](#)

PRE & POST COURSE QUESTIONNAIRE

Prior to the 10-week and 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% ↑).

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	4.63
The course was well structured and easy to follow	4.67
I felt I had an equal opportunity to contribute and ask questions	4.73
The venue was appropriate and suitable for the meetings	4.58
Attendees only: I felt the group was a good fit for my emotional needs	4.10
Facilitators only: I felt the responsibility of being a facilitator was manageable and I was adequately supported during the course	4.80

STAFF FEEDBACK



The #Me student led support programme has been an extremely valuable support tool within the School of Science and Technology (SST). Many students have disclosed that having a platform to discuss shared experiences in a structured but informal way with their peers, has not only been beneficial in relation to their wellbeing but also contributed to their sense of belonging and community at NTU. Megan [#Me founder] and the Programme facilitators ensure they have an understanding of the University's Support Services and referral pathways and work collaboratively with these services, including my Student Support Adviser Service, to ensure that where individual concerns arise they are escalated appropriately.

The programme continues to be an extremely valuable resource for students within SST and has grown from strength to strength each year both in terms of participation and impact. In this academic year of restrictions and forced isolation, the #Me programme has been more important than ever and has created a crucial platform for students to continue to access peer to peer support and benefit from each other's lived experience.

The #Me programme has worked alongside and complimented existing support structures within the School of Science and Technology to proactively address student wellbeing and resilience, I would fully support its expansion into wider NTU Academic Schools.

Daniel Hendry
Senior Student Support Adviser, Nottingham Trent University

STUDENT FEEDBACK



I really enjoyed everything about #Me!! I loved the logbook, thought the course was well structured and the coping methods were very helpful!

1st year computing, female student



#Me is a great way to meet new people and feel validated. It's a good outlet for stress and emotions with people all working through the same things. Make sure as many people who could benefit from this have access to it because it has really made a difference for me as I'm sure it could for many others!

1st year biosciences, female student



The course helps to develop mental and emotional well-being. It really was a perfectly designed course to overcome shyness and anxiety. It helped me to build my self-confidence, be more resilient and the logbook is awesome.

Masters biosciences, male student



This course helped me to better understand my mental health and that I am not alone. I feel equipped to face difficult situations and now realise how resilient I actually am. I thoroughly enjoyed this process.

2nd year computing, male student



I loved being able to be myself and not be judged by those around me. I felt very safe during the meetings and being able to contribute as little or as much as I liked. It was a very beneficial experience.

2nd year physics and maths, non-binary student

[// SEE ALL WRITTEN NTU STUDENT FEEDBACK ►](#)

#Me founder, Megan Gamble, training NTU student facilitators in 2019/2020 academic year.



NOTTINGHAM TRENT STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES **INDEPENDENT EVALUATION**

Do you feel it met your expectations?

“There were a good breadth of responses and the students were very happy explaining about how it met their expectations and what they personally got out of #Me. Seeing the students smile and how they expressed their answers showed how much they really did get out of #Me. **One student said ‘What I got out of this was better than anything I could have expected.’** This alone speaks volumes.”

What did you think about the materials – did they help and how?

“**All participants (100%) agreed the resources were helpful and the feedback was very positive.** The booklet helped to give structure to the sessions and it was handy having it as a hard copy.”

Are you putting what you have learnt into practice, any examples?

“Again, there was a broad range of responses. This year [2020–2021] there were some significant outcomes which included students feeling they have better coping strategies and can structure things better by breaking things down into small chunks and taking a step back to reflect on situations which helped prevent stress and panic setting in. Each student we interviewed got something positive from the training. **They were left wanting the sessions to continue.**”

How were the facilitators / was the facilitator training?

“Again, the responses were very positive. **There was strong feedback that the peer to peer approach is much more favoured than a member of staff.** The students liked how the facilitators were nice and friendly, showed empathy and could clearly relate and comment on the issues being talked about. The facilitators knew what they were doing and were clear on their roles.”

Do you feel more equipped and able to approach situations better than before the course?

“Being more equipped is very important and having a kit bag you can dip into when you need to is a good approach to have. The students demonstrated that they do feel more equipped in different areas. **There was a clear sense that the students we chatted to felt more equipped and resilient.**”