

Lighthouse Club selected as mental health training provider for London Colleges

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The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity has been selected to deliver specialist mental health and wellbeing training to construction students and tutors at five London colleges.

The pilot scheme starts in the Spring and is expected to be completed by October. The scheme will see 1,000 students at Windsor Forest, West Thames, West London, Brooklands, and Harrow and Uxbridge Colleges complete a half day MHFA England Mental Health Awareness Course. The awareness courses offer an insight into what mental health is and how to challenge stigma, basic knowledge of common mental health issues, an introduction to looking after your own mental health and giving people the confidence to support someone in distress or who may be experiencing a mental health issue.

In addition to this 100 tutors will also be offered the construction focussed two day MHFA England Mental Health First Aider Course. These courses offer an in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing and practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues. It also teaches enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening and gives people the confidence to step in and support a person in distress and signposting for specialist support where necessary.

The ground breaking project will also ensure that students and tutors can access the charity's extensive range of wellbeing masterclasses and the specialist information, advice and guidance available through the charity's confidential 24/7 Construction Industry Helpline and Helpline App.

The scheme is being funded by a college collaboration fund and it is hoped that there will be an opportunity to roll the training initiative out to other colleges in the future.

Barry Mortimer, the West London Hub Coordinator for the Mayor's Construction Academy, said, "The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity deal first hand with the effects of poor mental health and are experts in their field, and that is why we selected them to deliver this important training. The suicide rates in construction are shocking so we want to be pro-active about the support we provide to our construction students and tutors so that situations do not escalate to crisis point. We want to directly address the stigma of talking openly about mental wellbeing and we can do this by making sure people are comfortable about starting a conversation to encourage better mental wellbeing."

Sarah Bolton, Head of Charitable Services at the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity said, "We are incredibly excited and pleased to have been chosen to deliver our mental health training programme to these colleges. This is a fantastic opportunity to reach out to those who are about to embark on a career in construction and to give people the confidence to talk about issues affecting them or their peers. The key message is that it's OK to talk and to seek help or advice if things feel as if they are getting too much to cope with."

To find out more about all of the wellbeing masterclasses and mental health training through the charity, visit www.lighthouseclub.org/mental-health-first-aid-training/

Photo credit: Lighthouse Construction Industry