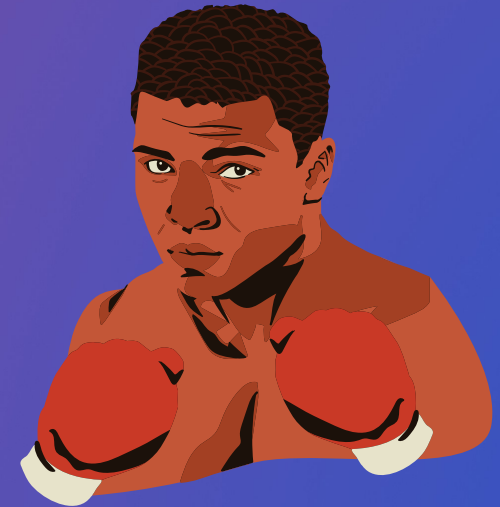

Black History Month

5 Ways to Wellbeing during Black History Month for West Lothian College





WELL
BEING

Be HAPPY



Positive
thinking

5 Ways to Wellbeing

We all have mental health, just as we have physical health, and it's important that we take the time to look after it.

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

This Black History Month (BHM) we can tie in the ways we maintain our wellbeing with our celebrations and commemorations, and use some of the energy and commitment of BHM to motivate ourselves. Here are some ideas on how the 5 Ways to Wellbeing can be tied into Black History Month so that anyone can take part whilst also practising self care.

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1. Connect
 2. Active
 3. Learn
 4. Give
 5. Take Notice



1. Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages. There's lots of extra and exciting opportunities to socialise and come together during Black History Month.



Consider attending a BHM event, check out [CRER \(The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights\)](#) who have their 2021 live programme [here](#), with online and in-person options. There's everything from Africa In Motion (an online film festival) to The Great Black History Quiz Night.

2. Active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise. To get the wellbeing factor, it doesn't have to be complicated.

If you are a West Lothian College student you can access a range of discounted gym memberships. This includes Pure Gym, Excite Leisure, Houston House, and Dalmahoy. Students can also access discounts via the 'SA Discount and Savings' channel on Microsoft Teams. As well as this, there are student discounts for Innoflate and Paradise Golf for more active fun days.



Be motivated this Black History Month:

- Be inspired by some of the UK's top athletes and community figures in sport at the British Ethnic Diversity Sports Awards: [here.](#)
- Check out the work of the Scottish Ethnic Minority Sports Association (SEMSA). They have annual races, badminton tournaments, an annual awards ceremony and a connected network of BAME sports people: [here.](#)
- Read on the work of Sport Scotland – the national agency for sport – and how they can help us break down barriers to ethnic minority people's barriers to sport: [here.](#)
- Watch this video from Scotland's Women's football star Ifeoma Dieke on her sporting journey, made by the BBC for Black History Month 2020: [here.](#)

3. Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. This could be: Signing up for a class, reading the news or a book, doing a crossword, researching something you've always wondered about or learning a new word.

For many of us we can begin to understand ourselves as we learn more about our histories and contexts. Access to information on history is vital as it helps us explore our identity. Many Black histories have been under documented or made inaccessible, and Black History Month could be a helpful time to combat this and raise awareness on the many stories to be learned and listened to.

Reading Lists on Work of Black Authors:

- 62 great books by Black authors, recommended by TED speakers: [here.](#)
- This list of Black British women's authors, curated by award winning author of 'Girl, Woman, Other' Bernardine Evaristo for The Guardian: [here.](#)

Reading Lists of Black History Books:

- This curated list of history books on the black experience through history, from Good Housekeeping: [here.](#)
- This list of Black British History Books, Recommended by Creatives, Educators, Bookshops and Activists for The Strategist: [here.](#)



4. Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Giving is the act of freely parting with something and offering it to someone or something beyond ourselves. It can involve parting with material things like money and gifts, or immaterial things like our time, skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, passion and kindness.

Those with protected characteristics may already spend a lot of time patiently supporting others, and in the context of Black History Month 'giving' can be a complex notion. There are ways to give and share whilst protecting your energy and your wellbeing:

Through cooking and sharing food: Food is a great way to explore our cultural identities and connect with others. Our families and histories can be shown through recipes. Perhaps your class could get together and gift each other lunch. Read this lovely article from the National Geographic on The Joy of Food: [here](#)

Through sharing something inspirational: During BHM a good way to give is to share on social media. Sharing a quote, icon, or piece of learning on those who are important to you from the Black culture can spark an interest and raise awareness and visibility of the celebration in a simple way. Watch this new documentary from the BBC speaking with prominent Black Scots from all generations: [here](#)



5. Take Notice

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations. This could include simple acts such as spending time in West Lothian College's Mindfulness Space (more info [here](#)) or taking a different route home from College.

Some other ideas for College life and taking notice: Get a plant for your workspace, Have a 'clear the clutter' day, Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting, Visit a new place for lunch.



Mindful Minute

With Melissa Carter, Head of Mindfulness Education and Programming at New York University

Try this short guided meditation devoted to the black community at large, promoting self soothing and self care: [here](#)



Emotional Support

The Black, African and Asian Therapy Network, UK (BAATN)

If taking notice of your feelings leads you, or someone you know to look for support it is helpful to know the networks out there who can understand and support you. Check out this resource: [here](#)

For further info on mental health and wellbeing at West Lothian College, enroll in our Moodle page: [here](#)

If you would like to give feedback, get more involved in mental health and wellbeing at West Lothian College, or feel you have something to offer our community please email:

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