

A large, stylized white graphic of a tennis racket head is positioned on the right side of the image, set against a solid blue background. The graphic shows the circular head of the racket and the neck where it meets the handle, with a textured, chalk-like appearance.

Case study

Bedford Borough Council – Mindful Sport programme

Project at a glance

- Mindful Sport provides the opportunity for 12-18 year olds to be active in an informal and non-clinical space alongside CAMHS* professionals.
- The sessions are run in partnership with Mind BLMK, East London Foundation Trust's CAMHS* and Team Beds and Luton Active Partnership.
- In 2019, the sessions...



reached
40+
young
people



were
accessed
264
times

The challenge

In 2015, Bedford Borough Council launched a yoga session pilot aimed at local adults with a high prevalence of mental health problems. It was so popular that the local CAMHS* team approached Robert Lindsay, the council's Sports Development Officer, to adapt it for young people.

Bedford Borough Council's response

"We started off by consulting young people about what they wanted," says Robert. "This began with our branding."

“They immediately said, ‘we need some emojis in the poster – and we don’t like being called children’.”

In the adult sessions, we have time afterwards for coffee where people socialise, but young people wanted to socialise during the activities instead.”

*CAMHS = Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

“That’s vital”, says Robert. “Because the people who attend, meet others who might be facing a similar mental health problem and get support from CAMHS professionals. You don’t get the same experience from going to a gym alone.”

Young people also fed back on the activities they wanted to try. Yoga and table tennis were both popular – in part because they weren’t activities students could do in PE. This also helped separate the sessions from what happened at school.

“Keeping it separate from what was going on at school was important,” says Robert.

“I approached schools to run assemblies where I spoke about the sessions and my own mental health. That really helped get teachers on-board and raise awareness. Having the sessions out of the school system means we can be quite creative about what we offer. So it doesn’t have to be activities linked to PE”.



The poster is for 'Mindful Sport for Young People' and features logos for Mind, Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire NHS, and Fusion. It lists three activities: Yoga (4-5pm, £3), Badminton (4.30-5.30pm, £3), and Table Tennis (4.30-5.30pm, £3). Each activity includes an icon and a brief description. A note states a £3 max cost for one or all activities. A 20% off discount is offered in the Bickles Yard café for parents and participants. Contact information for Robert Lindsay is provided at the bottom.

Mindful Sport for Young People
Every Tuesday, at John Bunyan Sports and Fitness, MK42 9TS
Starting Tuesday 16th October 2018

| Yoga | Badminton | Table Tennis |
|--|---|---|
| 4-5pm £3, for ages 12-18yrs | 4.30-5.30pm £3, for ages 12-18yrs | 4.30-5.30pm £3, for ages 12-18yrs |
|  Informal and fun yoga with challenges and activities. |  Mini games and challenges with the coach or open play. |  Social and informal activity. Coaching advice available. |

£3 max cost - whether you do one activity or a little bit of all three.
Take part for as long as you wish to or feel comfortable doing so. CAMHS staff will be on hand in the café to offer support to participants and parents. Mindful Sport is designed to be open and inclusive, and no diagnosis is required. Signposting to other support services is available on site.

20% OFF
in the Bickles Yard café for parents & participants

For more information, please contact Robert Lindsay:
@ robert.lindsay@bedford.gov.uk | 01234 718829 | www.bedford.gov.uk/sport

Let's Be Open About Mental Health To **Break The Stigma**

The results

In 2019, Mindful Sport welcomed young people 264 times to their sessions. Part of this success was offering an informal 'third place' that wasn't school or a clinical setting.

With support from Team Beds and Luton, the sessions were kept at an affordable rate and allowed young people to continue to attend online throughout lockdowns in 2020.

“Having CAMHS practitioners there means young people can chat with them if they want to. But young people can also use us like a youth club, which helps the sessions feel quite relaxed.”

Robert Lindsay, Sports Development Officer



YOUNG MINDS YOGA
Every Thursday, from 4:00pm to 5:30pm

Mindful Sport in collaboration with Bedfordshire CAMHS offer Mindful Yoga - a free session designed to create headspace for young people aged 13 to 19 years.

The session will take place using Zoom and will include 10 minutes of breathing exercises followed by 35-40 minutes of yoga & a 15 minute relaxation.

Please visit <https://camhsspace.crd.co/> to find out more and enjoy previous sessions.

Learning

- **Get the venue and location right**

“It took some time to find a venue that students could all reach at the same time,” said Robert. “So sorting out the logistics took a while to get right.”

- **Be informal, but offer support**

“We did some research with the local university who said that the more questions young people had to answer about themselves, the more pressure they felt under,” says Robert. “So it was important to us that it felt like a youth club, but young people could still get support if they needed it.”

- **Consult young people**

Asking young people about everything from poster designs to the time and location meant that they had ownership over the sessions.



Relevant support available

Mindful Sport Young Minds Yoga video

Mind's Children and young people information

Mental Health and Physical Activity Toolkit: Involving people with lived experience of mental health problems in the design and delivery of your work

Mind's Influence & Participation toolkit – involving people experiencing mental health problems in projects and services

