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## Helena Stylianou

# 'A Practical Guide to Becoming a Healthy College'

Jane Marshall, the Healthy College Manager at Bradford College, has been instrumental in helping to reform the health and wellbeing culture at the College - with spectacular results. Confident, healthy, and personally fulfilled staff and learners are just some of the benefits Bradford College has enjoyed since Jane Marshall's appointment in 2007.

Jane wanted to communicate her message to a wider audience, following national demand for more information on how to become a Healthy College. She came up with the concept for a book.

In 2009, the Department of Health gave every region in England a £5,000 grant to promote Healthy FE in colleges. Each area chose different ways of using the money. Jane put forward the idea of using the money to create the book, to help colleges set up their Healthy FE programme, with a 'how to' guide. The idea was backed by the Yorkshire and Humber region. Working in collaboration with Jane Marshall, we produced 'A Practical Guide to Becoming a Healthy College'.

### Implementing the Healthy FE programme

The book is for anyone working in a College, implementing the Healthy FE programme. These may include Healthy College Managers, Co-ordinators, Student Services etc. The book should be used as a guide. You don't have to use all the information and resources contained within

it. You can dip in and out and use the information in a way that lends itself to an FE environment.

Speaking about her latest initiative to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of staff and students across the country, Jane said: "I'm over the moon with the book. I think it will really help other colleges that are just starting out on the journey that we've been on for quite a while. I think it's really going to help to fast track them into implementing initiatives that will change the culture of their college."

### Healthy FE - The Benefits

The whole college approach to improving health and wellbeing services for staff and learners at Bradford College resulted in many positive outcomes. Improved diets and eating patterns helped students keep alert, which in turn contributed to improved success rates; this impact has resulted in a £700,000 increase in Bradford College's funding contract.

### Stress levels

Stress levels used to be very high at Bradford College, particularly for staff; now they are the second lowest in the country. Staff absenteeism rates dropped considerably. In 2007, the national average for colleges with over 750 employees was 4.48%; in contrast, the absenteeism rate for Bradford College was 3% a saving for Bradford College against any public sector benchmark of at least £390,000.

## Work Life Balance kite mark

In addition, Bradford College's Healthy FE work meant that it achieved the 'Investors in People: Work Life Balance' kite mark and was also awarded a Grade 1 Outstanding by OFSTED for Every Child Matters: Being Healthy.

Jane, elaborating further on why the book came to fruition, said: "I've also attended other Regional Healthy College Meetings and been asked how I've done it. It's such a big programme that it's quite difficult to convey everything in an hour as there's so much to say."

"I think it will fast-track everyone - a book full of ideas that they can put into practice in their own college." Bradford College was the first to appoint a Healthy College Manager. There are now more and more positions like Jane Marshall's appearing in the education sector, so there is now growing demand for direction on how to roll the model out on a national scale.

Jane continued: "It's a way for them to implement a Healthy College Programme quickly and efficiently to get it up and running, so we're all at the same standard. We're all offering health initiatives to staff and students, that's why I wanted to share the knowledge I've gained because I want everyone to benefit."

## Pioneer

Jane Marshall is the pioneer behind the success of Bradford College gaining Healthy College Status and has been singled out for praise by the government for her work in this area.

When asked if Jane had received any feedback from other institutions about the

book, Jane replied: "We've had some great feedback! Colleges that have been given a sneak preview have said they have found the book an invaluable tool to assist their College in developing a healthy college ethos."

When asked how Jane would feel if every college and university in the country implemented a Healthy College model, Jane replied: "That would be the ideal! For everyone to take this seriously and realise how important health is. It's at the core of everything we do. We can't operate without our health, we can't work, look after ourselves or our families - health is absolutely at the centre and foundation of everything we do emotional and physically."

Jane's ideas have met with unprecedented success - making it possible for colleges and universities across the country to see how a whole college approach to improving health and wellbeing services for staff and learners can result in positive outcomes.

## Free publication

'A Practical Guide to Becoming a Healthy College' is a free publication and can be obtained by sending an SAE. For more information please contact [j.marshall.3@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:j.marshall.3@bradfordcollege.ac.uk). To back up the book, Jane will offer free help and advice for new colleges starting up with the Healthy FE programme. This can include a visit to the college, discussions with our caterers and even the Finance Director who reported a £700,000 saving directly relating to the Healthy FE initiatives promoted in Bradford College.

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HRBR about 16+ year olds

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