

What is F-TEC Open Minds?

Welcome to Open Minds, a bimonthly newsletter from F-TEC that's all about promoting awareness, wellbeing, and shared values in our community. Each edition focuses on real-life topics that matter to you from mental health and social issues to safety tips and personal development. We also explore and celebrate the Fundamental British Values, helping to build a respectful, inclusive environment for everyone.

Our aim is simple:

- To keep you informed
- To help you feel connected
- To celebrate diversity
- To support a safe, inclusive learning and working environment

British Values: Why Do They Matter?

British Values are about more than tradition or flags. They're the foundation of how we treat each other and build strong communities at college, at work, and beyond.



Here's what they mean in real life:

Democracy - Everyone should have a say. That means voting, speaking up, and listening to others. Whether it's in elections or everyday decisions, your voice matters.

Rule of Law - Rules and laws help keep things fair and safe. Knowing your rights and your responsibilities helps you protect yourself and others.

Individual Liberty - You have the right to be yourself. That includes your identity, your choices, your beliefs, and your voice as long as they don't harm others.

Mutual Respect - We don't have to agree with everyone, but we can still treat people with dignity and kindness. Mutual respect means recognising that other people's feelings, opinions, and boundaries matter just like yours do.

Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs - Not everyone believes or lives the same way and that's okay. Tolerance is about accepting and learning from people with different cultures, religions, or backgrounds. It's not about changing your views it's about living peacefully alongside others.

New Season, New Focus: Building Resilience This Autumn

As the days get shorter and routines pick back up, the shift into autumn can feel like a fresh start or a challenge. Whether you're beginning a new course, adjusting after summer, or juggling work and personal goals, this is a great time to think about resilience.



Resilience doesn't mean being perfect or never struggling. It means learning how to bounce back, adapt, and grow stronger even when things feel tough. This edition of Open Minds is all about how to build mental and emotional resilience so you can face the season with confidence and strength.

Back Into Routine: Finding Your Balance

Transitioning into a busier schedule? It can be helpful to take note of your habits and make small changes that boost your energy and wellbeing.

Here are some simple ways to stay balanced this season:

Plan ahead:

- Use a planner or digital calendar to organise deadlines, work shifts, and time for yourself.
- Break down large tasks into smaller, manageable steps.

Prioritise sleep:

- Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day even on weekends.
- Limit screen time before bed to help your brain wind down.



Eat well & stay active:



- Autumn comfort food is great, but balance is key.
- Even short daily walks can boost your mood and energy levels.

Make time for things that lift you up:

- Connect with people you care about.
- Enjoy hobbies, listen to music, or try something new like journaling or a creative project.



Building Mental Resilience: What It Means and How to Practice It

Mental resilience means being able to handle stress, setbacks, or uncertainty without giving up. It's something we all have the power to develop.

Try these simple ways to strengthen your resilience:

Practice self-compassion: Talk to yourself the way you would to a friend. Be kind, especially when you make mistakes.

Stay flexible: Sometimes things won't go as planned and that's okay. Being open to change is a strength.



Take breaks from pressure: Step back when you feel overwhelmed. A quick walk, a breath of fresh air, or five minutes of stillness can help.

Learn from experience: What helped you get through a hard time before? Use those tools again and build on them.

Managing Seasonal Stress: It's Okay to Feel Overwhelmed

The return to studies, work, or commitments can bring pressure especially when the weather changes, energy levels drop, or anxiety creeps in. If you feel low or overwhelmed, you're not alone.

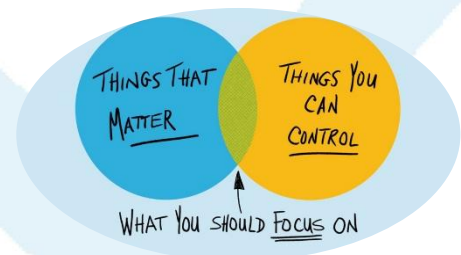
Here's how to protect your mental health this season:

Talk it out: Whether with a friend, family member, or professional, speaking openly can lighten the load.



Limit comparison: Social media can create pressure to appear "productive" or "perfect." Remember no one shares everything online.

Take things one day at a time: You don't have to figure everything out at once. Focus on today and what you can control.



Healthy Relationships & Recognising Red Flags

Having awareness as you navigate new environments, independence, and social circles is especially important as we head into the new academic year, many of us are meeting new people, forming friendships, or starting relationships. While this can be exciting, it's also important to think about what healthy relationships look like and what warning signs to watch out for.



This includes romantic relationships, friendships, housemates, and even online connections. Whether in-person or digital, respect and boundaries are key.

What Does a Healthy Relationship Look Like?

- You feel safe to be yourself.
- You can say no without fear of anger or guilt.
- You respect each other's space, time, and opinions.
- You listen and communicate openly, even during disagreements.
- There's no pressure to do anything you're uncomfortable with.
- You feel supported, not controlled.



Spotting Red Flags: What's Not Okay

If any of these show up in a relationship, friendship, or connection online or offline it may be time to reassess:

- Constant jealousy or control
- Pressure to do things you're uncomfortable with (emotionally, physically, or sexually)
- Gaslighting (making you question your reality or feelings)
- Isolation from friends, family, or support
- Fear of how they'll react if you disagree or say no
- Threats, manipulation, or guilt-tripping
- Monitoring your location, messages, or social media
- Non-consensual sharing of photos or information



What If You're Not Sure?

If something feels off or makes you uncomfortable, trust your instincts. Talk to someone you trust or contact a support service. You're never being "dramatic" or "overthinking" if something makes you feel unsafe.

Consent Is Key

Consent isn't just about one moment or one action it's about ongoing mutual respect, communication, and understanding. It must be freely given.

- It must be freely given, without pressure, manipulation, or influence.
- It can be withdrawn at any time, no matter the situation or stage.
- It applies to touch, conversations, photos, digital interactions, and more.
- Silence or lack of resistance is not consent.



Where to Find Support

Help is always available, and asking for it is a sign of strength. You're not alone. If you're worried about yourself or someone else, contact one of these free and confidential services:

If you or someone you know is struggling, these resources are here for you:

Mental Health & Emotional Support:

- **Shout** - Free, confidential 24/7 mental health support via text (UK).
Text: SHOUT to 85258
- **Mind UK** – Mental health information, advice, and local services.
Website: www.mind.org.uk

Wellbeing & Self-Help Tools:

- **Every Mind Matters (NHS)**
Website: nhs.uk/every-mind-matters – Custom action plans to improve your mental health.

Healthy Relationships & Safety

- **Refuge** – Domestic violence & relationship abuse
Phone: 0808 2000 247
Website: refuge.org.uk
- **Brook** – Sexual health & healthy relationships
Website: brook.org.uk
- **Respect Not Fear** – For young people in abusive relationships
Website: respectnotfear.co.uk
- **The Mix** – Support for under 25s
Phone: 0808 808 4994
Website: themix.org.uk



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