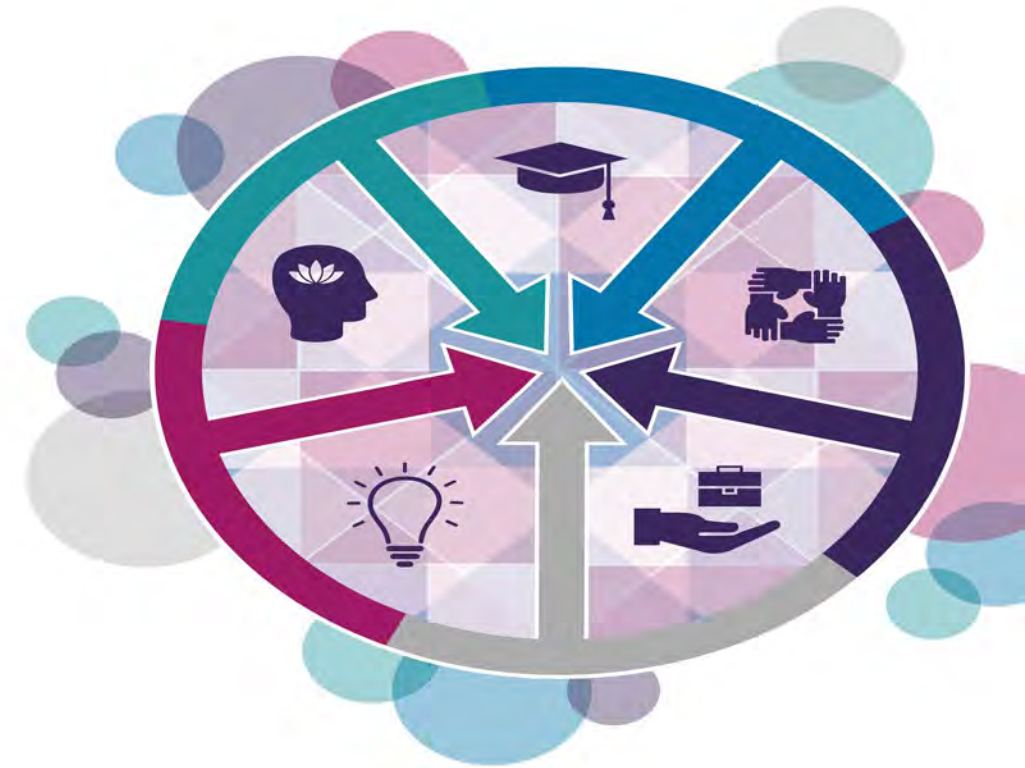


# Snack-size self care: Embedding holistic learning into the curriculum

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Student)



# Snack size self-care – Guided meditation



# Overview

- Rationale for project
- Design and implementation of project resources
- Methodology and evaluation
- Findings and results
- Key messages and next steps



Dr. Emma Green



Christina Kelly



Leona McQuaid

## The Team

# Points for reflection

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Are your students experiencing stress and anxiety alongside their studies?

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Are you signposting more often to the wellbeing service?

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Is your discipline/profession experiencing high rates of burn out?

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Are people choosing to leave the profession?

# Snack-size self care project: GCU Strategy for Learning



- This project aims to increase student skills to manage their own wellbeing over the duration of a trimester, through the co-creation of snack-size self care and wellbeing resources integrated into the curricula.
- Funded by the GCU Strategy for Learning fund
- Second intention of the Strategy for Learning 2030 to deliver excellence in teaching and the student experience, underpinned by a holistic approach to student support.

- Thriving learners survey reported low rates of wellbeing in Scottish students (Maguire and Cameron, 2021)
- Student minds mental health charter - recommends developing understanding, skills and strategies to manage wellbeing now and in future (Hughes and Spanner, 2019)
- Health and social care students and qualified practitioners requirement for “fitness to practice” (HCPC 2023)
- Burn out in the profession – 68% felt they were under too much pressure in work and a third said they are thinking of leaving their role in the next 2 years (RCOT, 2023)

# Rationale for the project

# Action research and co-creation: timeline





What has  
been  
developed?

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Weekly snack-size (5-10 minute) resources on a range of tips/ skills/ strategies to help develop student skills in managing self-care and wellbeing.

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These were introduced in class every week across trimester A with a chance to experience the particular topic as a class/ staff community

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Embedded within GCU learn for students to access resources to allow them to go back to or download they wish

# What has been developed?

Snack-size resources have been  
co-created and developed across  
4 blocks



# Action research evaluation

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- Mixed methods evaluation
- Survey post implementation (limitation due to ethics not at baseline)
- Students Invited to participate in a focus group post implementation
- Descriptive statistics
- Thematic analysis



# Survey Participants

- N = 24% response rate (41/ 172)
- 4 reminders to complete survey

1. What level of study are you currently in for academic session 2022/2023?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> BSc Level 3	18
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Bsc Level 4	14
<span style="color: green;">●</span> MSc year 1	9

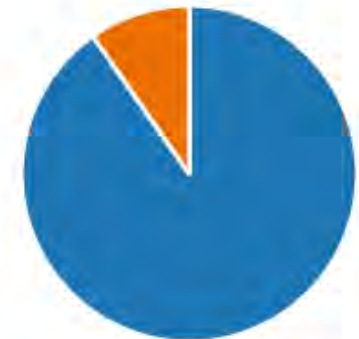


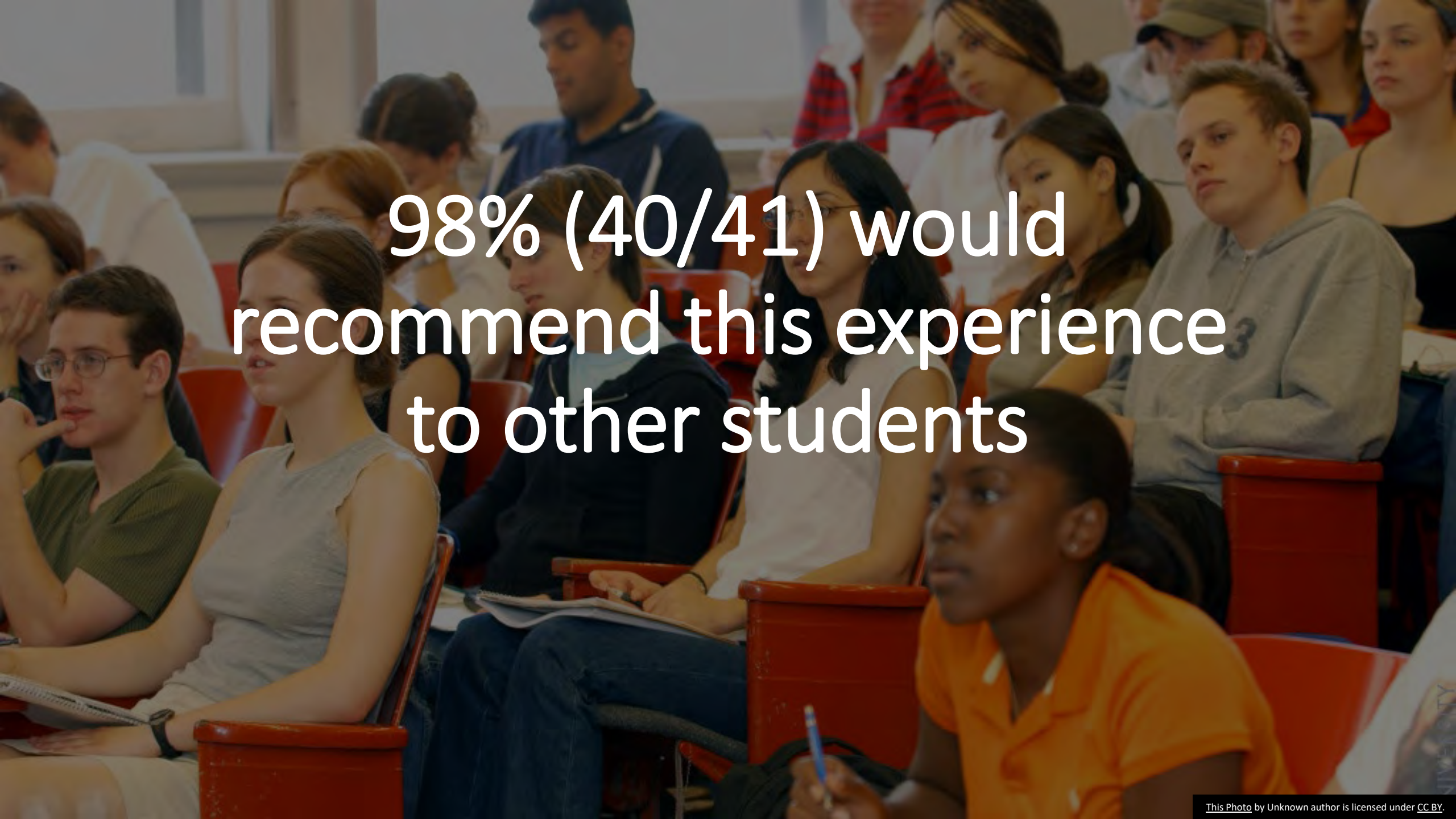
2. Which professional programme are you enrolled in?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Occupational Therapy	37
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Human Nutrition and Dietetics	4



A diverse group of students is seated in a lecture hall, looking towards the front. The students are of various ethnicities and are dressed in casual attire. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

98% (40/41) would  
recommend this experience  
to other students

# Survey results

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98% (n=40/41)

- Overall enjoyed engaging with the Snack Size Selfcare resources

95% (n= 39/41)

- Found it beneficial

95% (n=39/41)

- it enhanced their health and wellbeing in some way

95% (n=39/41)

- Felt more prepared to manage their wellbeing and self-care now

88% (n=36/41)

- Have used the skills/resources outside of class

98% (n=40/41)

- Think they will use the skills/resources in future

# Embedded in the curriculum is key

## Do it in class

### **Ground students for learning and prioritises their selfcare**

"Found it good way to bring focus at the start of the class. Cleared the mind and then felt in the right head space to focus on lectures" (Survey comment)

## Do it for all

### **Inclusive, universal without perceived stigma.**

- "...as the weeks went on I kind of understood that it wasn't just like mental health as such, I was just general well-being as well. So I definitely used it from week 6 onwards" (Student interview 1)

## Do it yourself

### **Staff confidence and enthusiasm effects engagement**

- ".....if they (lecturers) come across as more confident and comfortable with the resources themselves then I am more likely to engage with it" (Student focus group participant 2)

## Keep it short and simple

### **Easy to understand**

- "i liked that way were short and simple and easy to understand" (Survey comment)
- "...because it was like a video and then some points and things, I think it made more sense in my head as to what I was doing. So got more benefit out of it." (Student interview 2)

# Developing Skills for Success

## Skills for managing workload and pressures

- **Time management resources** "... I got so much in this trimester. I've actually started breaking things down a lot into what I am going to do, what takes priority." (Focus Group Participants 3)
- **Journaling resources** - "I feel lighter after journaling, like a weight being lifted. Its like I've written down what I am worried about, so I don't need to think about it anymore." (Focus Group Participant 2)

## Skills for managing assessment stress

- **Breathing Resources** - "obviously you have to go in 5 minutes before and you are just sitting at this black screen, like, trying to remember what you're gonna say. It was quite helpful to just like, take deep breaths, trying not to overthink everything. So yeah I definitely found it (breathing techniques) helpful for that.....my mark was better than before, so maybe it did work" (Student Interview 1)
- **Sleep Hygiene resources** "the sleep hygiene one when I was doing my honours project, just to try and stay calm because two weeks before hand and I was getting a bit stressed..... just having a wee look at like hints and tips, which was helpful to be fair. I was like, OK, yeah, obviously I'm not getting to sleep but I'm not giving the brain that time to like calm down. I was like put a candle on, read a book, like chill out as opposed to. So even like after a couple days I noticed the difference and I just kept up So I think definitely my sleep did improve. (Student Interview 1)

## Skills for managing daily life

- "Thank you for including the self care module. This year has been particularly stressful and we all need a reminder to be kinder to ourselves. Especially as a lot of us work in the care industry and spend a lot of time caring for others" (Survey Comment)



"first thing that's actually been seen to....show that you are actually caring about us outside of academic grades, which I thought was quite nice..... feeling like the lecturers are considering your .... mental health outside academic work, which makes the overall learning experience.....a bit more positive"

(Student Interview 1)

## Questions & Discussion

What's your initial thoughts?

How and where could this be used in your discipline/ university?

We would be keen to hear from you. Please contact  
[Emma.green@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:Emma.green@gcu.ac.uk) or [leona.McQuaid@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:leona.McQuaid@gcu.ac.uk)

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