

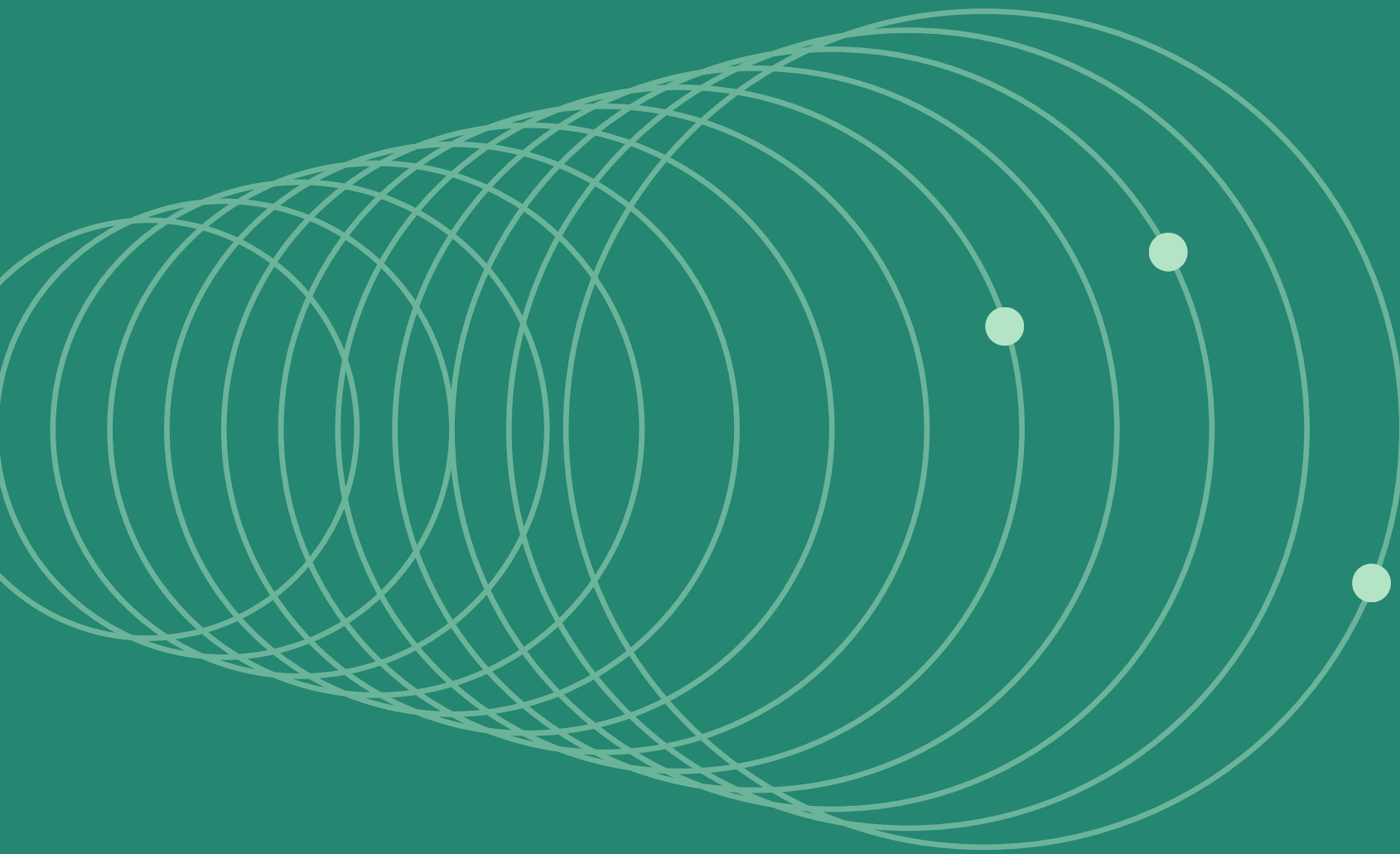


Gravity

Working together – to build mental resilience in young adults

August 2024

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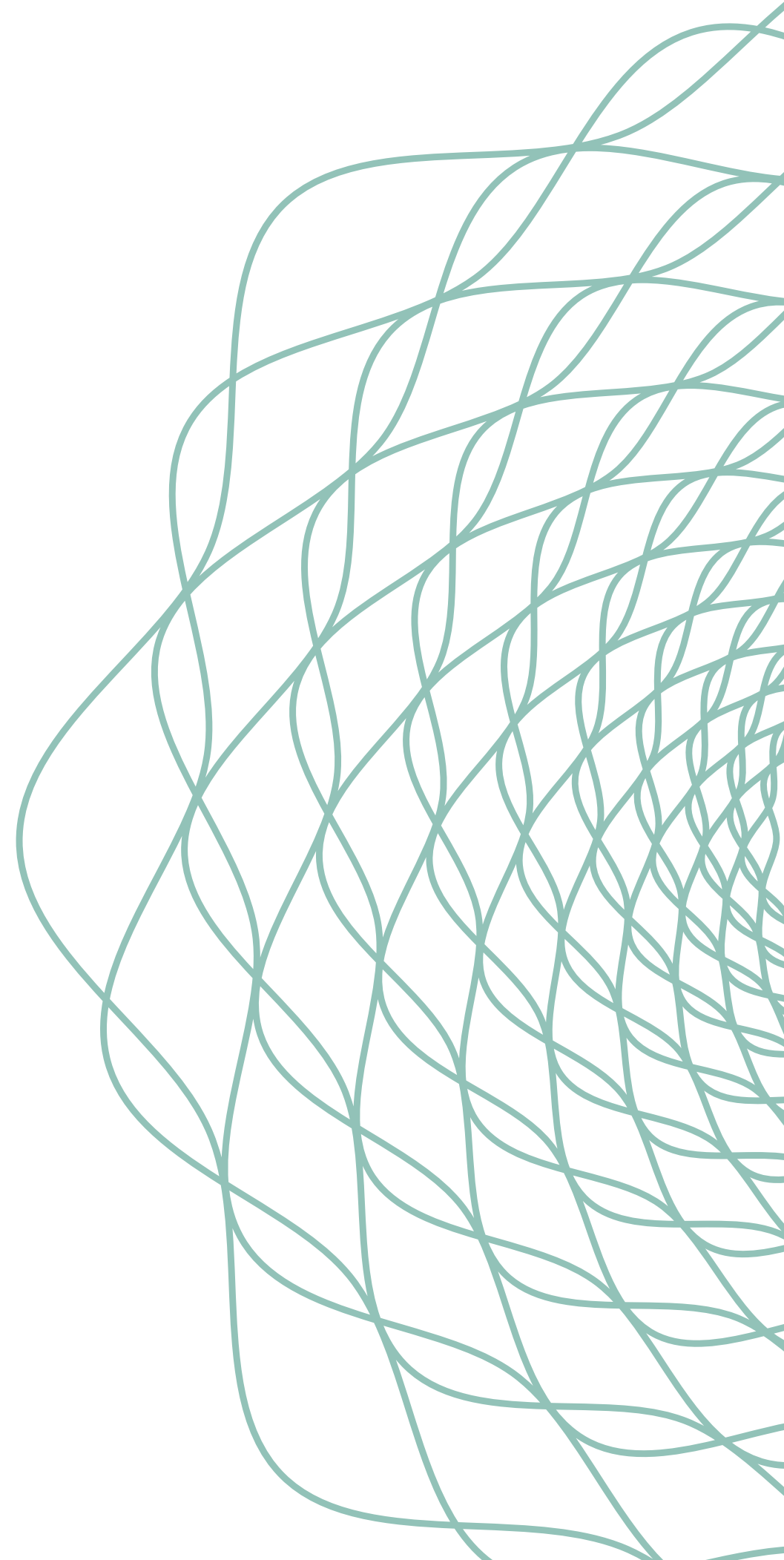
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Context and Introduction



A new smart campus, covering 1.1 million sq. m that will create up to 7,500 jobs is underway in **Bridgwater in Somerset**. The adopted Gravity Local Development Order (LDO) sets out the planning consent and local priorities. One aspect of the LDO is a ‘skills charter’ that responds to the demands of new roles needed in pursuit of green goals, and a net zero economy.

With the new Gravity development in a former employment hub, rekindling community spirit and supporting local communities is crucial. Skills development is a key aspect of the LDO.



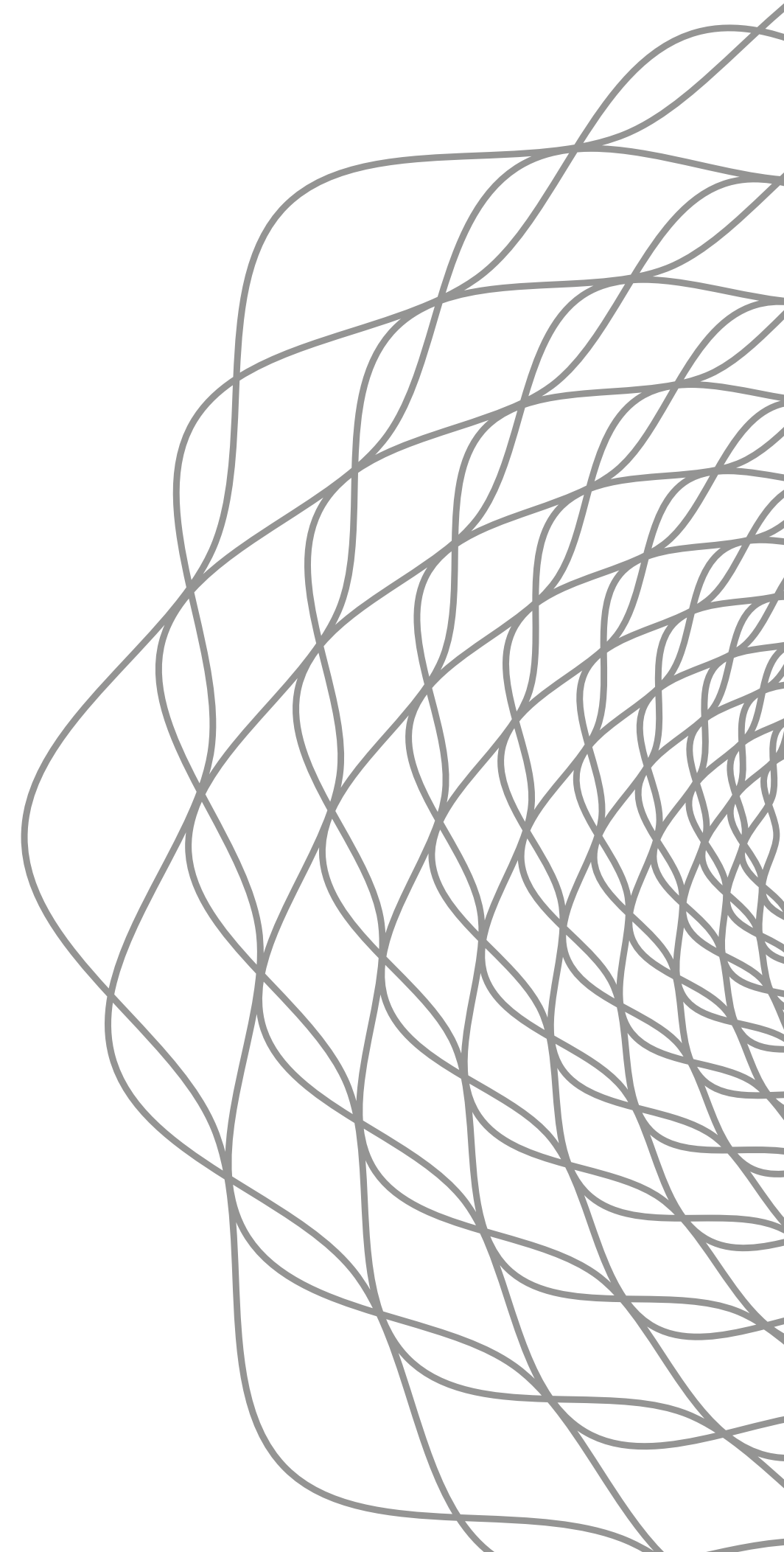
Bridgwater & Taunton College formed a partnership with **University of Bristol** to supercharge workforce development, revolutionise the immediate and long-term workforce requirements and research priority areas and skills gaps.

Young people attending college and further education need to be equipped and supported to meet technological advancements and innovation. Their ability to respond to change and be mentally resilient has been identified as a priority.

The need to provide training and support to create stronger, better-prepared young people prompted **Bridgwater & Taunton College to reach out to Bounce Forward.**



What could Bounce
Forward offer?



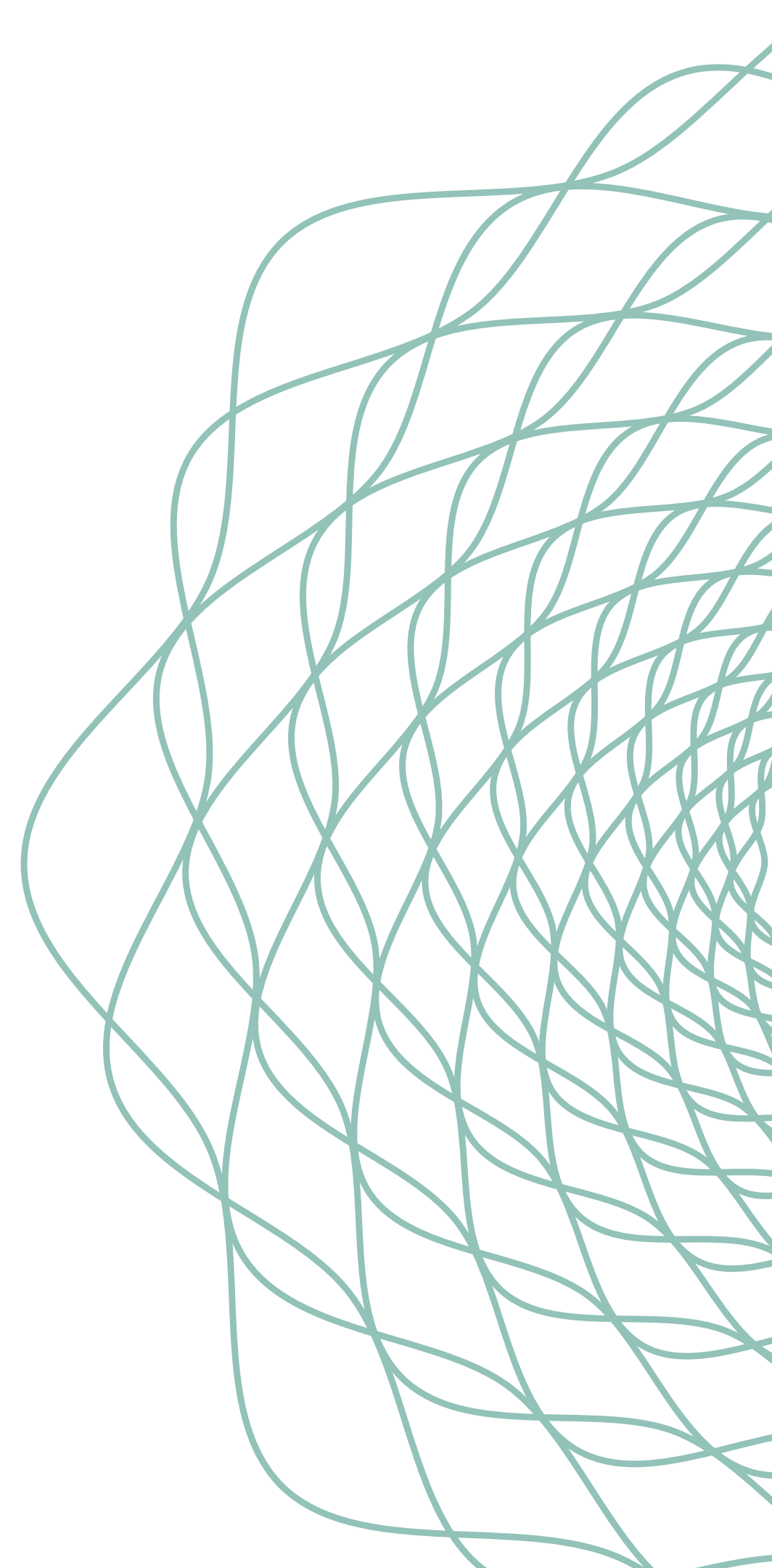
Bounce Forward is a UK based charity who provide evidenced-based teaching tools and resources to schools, training for parents and train the trainer to workplaces.

Bounce Forward's work goes beyond the delivery of training and teaching resources. They are dedicated to inspiring and transforming how we think about mental health and how we nurture and build psychological fitness. They work strategically to embed and upskill to realise their vision of '**A nation where positive mental health messages help people to live mentally and emotionally well so they adapt and thrive in life**'.

But visions cannot be realised without practical tools and resources.



What did we do that
might be of interest
to others?



Through the Local Skills Improvement Fund, Bridgwater and Taunton College invited Bounce Forward to deliver a train the trainer of Resilient Futures for staff from the college, and wider stakeholders including Bristol Port, Stantec and This is Gravity.

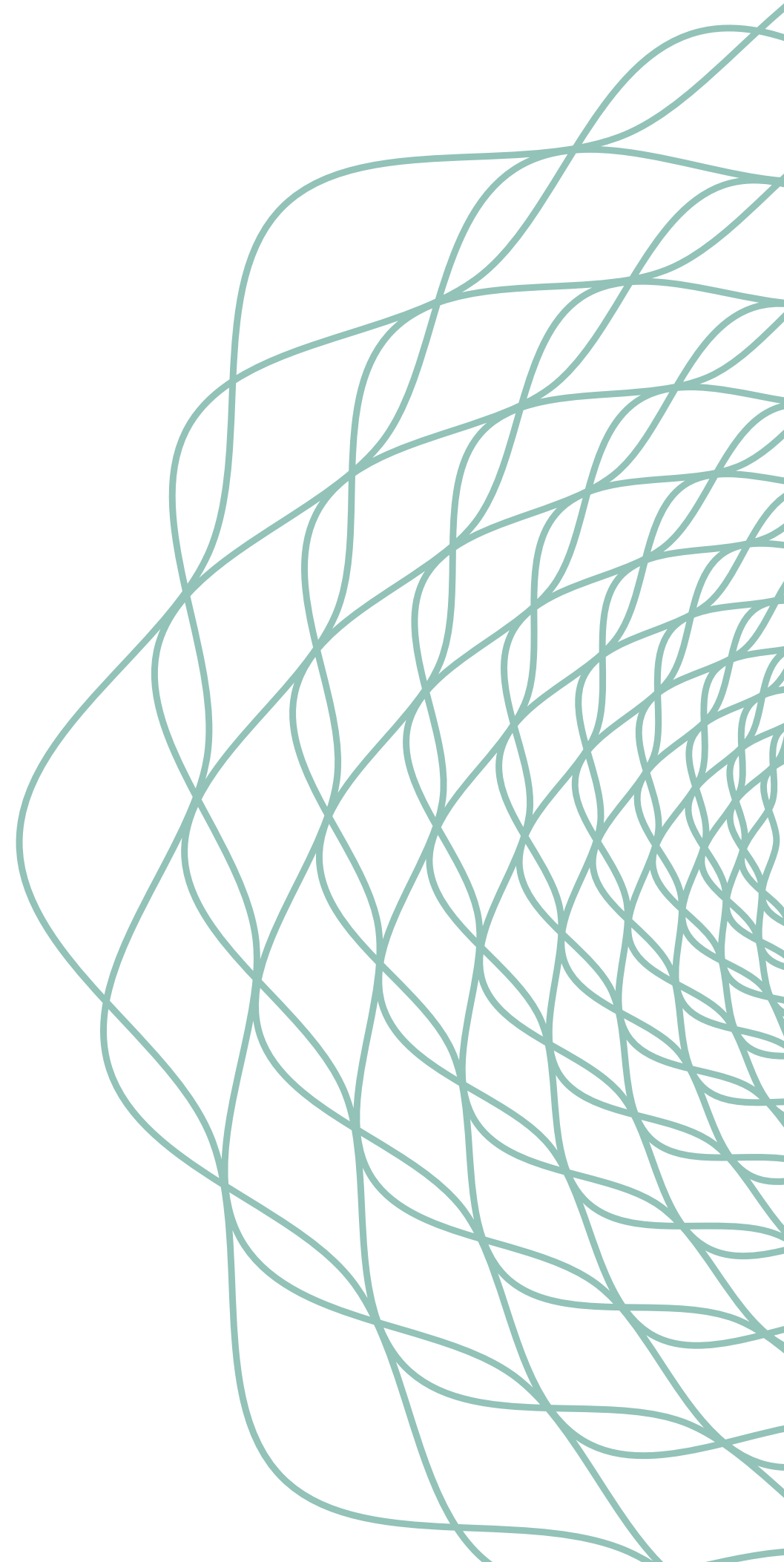
Resilient Futures is designed to embed the competencies and skills of mental resilience and emotional wellbeing by teaching young people aged 16 – 24 through an exploration of the challenges they currently face. Whilst the emphasis is on challenges it isn't assumed that all challenges are negative – pressure can be a privilege, and this is a time when there are opportunities to be realised.



Resilient Futures focuses on the important role that our thoughts and beliefs play in three key areas:

1. Strengthening Self-Identity	2. Maximizing Current Opportunities	3. Expanding Future Potential
<p>Creating a stronger sense of self to better manage the expectations (both real and imagined) of family, school or college, peers, and their lives.</p>	<p>Making the most of current opportunities by focusing on beliefs about own abilities, the capacity to learn and how to handle the pressures of life.</p>	<p>Ensuring that self-beliefs do not limit students' ability to prepare for the future. Encouraging students to consider a future that enables them to play to their strengths and enabling them to present the best version of themselves when the opportunity arises.</p>

Learning with
young people



Resilient Futures

Resilient Futures offers a structure to guide groups of young people or can be used on a 1-1 basis. The content is founded on sound theory and concepts and presented in a way to be practical and engaging.

All teaching resources are provided as part of the training for all four parts of Resilient Futures.

Session 1: Hope and optimism

Session 2: Human connection, self-awareness and compassion

Session 3: Flexible and realistic thinking

Session 4: Communication and playing to strengths

Session 1: Hope and optimism

This session explores what hope is and why it is important? It introduces hope theory that involves setting goals, imagining pathways, and agency in thinking. It is these components that differentiate hope from dreams. Hope is tangible.

This session focuses on the 'goal setting' component. To have a goal means to be able to imagine oneself in the future.



Session 2: Human connection, self-awareness and compassion

This module starts with the question: why does human connection matter for humanity?

It explores our relationship with technology to engage young adults in a debate about the benefits and challenges.

Focusing on the pathways we can create to reach our desired goals in life. Considering positive role models and thinking about what am I doing right now that directly links to reaching my desired future, and what might be getting in the way?

Session 3: Flexible and realistic thinking

This session explores self-efficacy. What it means and how is it connected to agency in thinking.

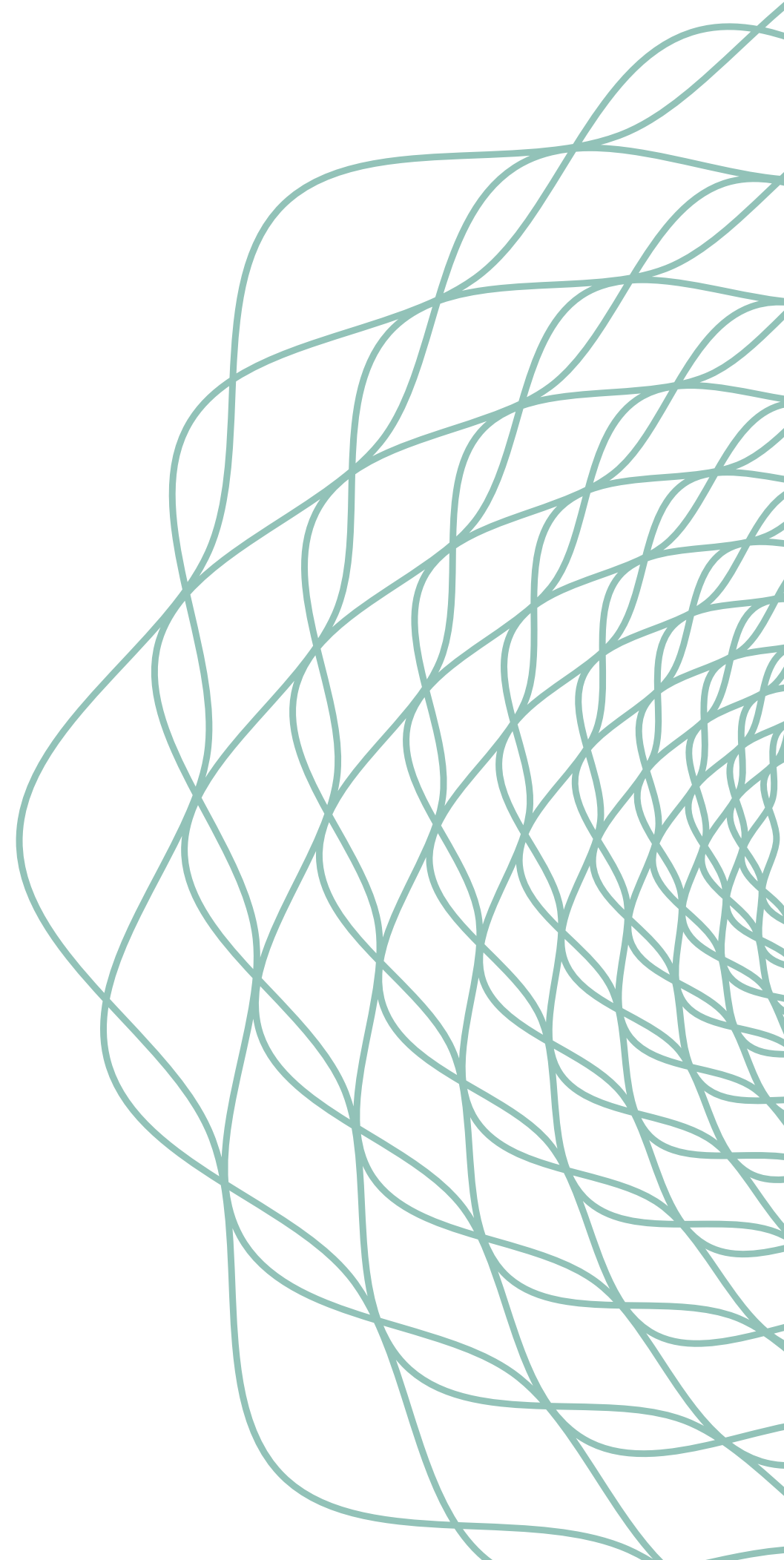
The link between what we think and how we feel, and behave. Sometimes, what we think can get in the way. Learning to reframe to flexible and realistic thinking lies at the heart of resilience (and self-efficacy). It enables us to do the 'right' thing at the right time, so we achieve the best possible outcome. Learning to think optimistically and remaining wedded to reality is central to the agency we believe we have and the difference we can make now and in the future.

Session 4: Communication and playing to strengths

Effective communication is essential for human connections and for change. Not being able to express oneself in a calm, clear and confident way can mean we become disconnected, give up and feel we cannot make a difference. This session will explore different communication styles, explores how our beliefs can get in the way and hinder communication, and offers 2 models for effective communication.

The programme concludes with a focus on personal strengths and how to understand and use them to best effect now and in the future.

Impact of the training



100% of participants agreed and strongly agreed with four impact statements:

“I found the training useful personally”

“The training has prepared me to facilitate Resilient Futures”

“Resilient Futures will be useful for the young adults I work with”

“I would recommend the training to others”

How do participants intend to implement Resilient Futures?

- Use to inform my company and our work with apprentices.
- Delivery of training to staff and students across the company.
- Deliver to the wider college staff team.
- Looking at offering similar course to colleges within my site area.
- Apply goals and pathways, and attributes to future stem events.
- Roll out in department to 2nd year A level students, then look at rolling it out to other departments.
- Team relay to other staff and recommendations for future staff to have to deliver to.
- We have created a working group to plan how to disseminate this info to staff (through development days, TLCs, new starters, etc) and students (across curriculum areas).

Tip: Use links to go to the research materials cited in your thesis presentation.

How: Highlight text, click on the link symbol on the toolbar, and paste the link of the document or material that you want to connect.

What else did participants say?

- We offer a plethora of mental health support across the campus. Bounce Forward's approach will add value, will hopefully reduce referrals, and provide opportunities for core staff to support more effectively. The approach is refreshing and will have a huge impact on the way we do things moving forward.
- I liked the fact that it is about empowering students and giving us a tool kit to help them improve their psychological fitness.
- What I've learnt today will be invaluable to all, on a personal level, educational and occupational. Thank you for this opportunity to develop my skills to better support others.
- Young people are far less equipped, and much less resilient than in previous generations, and Covid has been huge for them. We need a different approach, and this is definitely part of the future for us.
- It is clear that you made a huge impact on the staff at BTC, such positive feedback from them. Cleverly, we had a variety in roles so this will see the widest impact for the host of young people we work with.
- The training made me think not only about my own mental resilience, but the way I might come across to the young people I support. It really got me thinking on so many levels but also gave so many practical ideas that I can start to put into place straight away.
- Particular enjoyed the variety of attendees and differing experiences.
- The training was clearly presented and well delivered.
- Excellent training.

What next?

Katherine Stern, Course Leader and Teaching & Learning Coach

“Those of us that attended the Resilient Futures train the trainer event have formed a working group to plan, promote and deliver Resilient Futures collegewide, beginning in September 2024. The academic year begins with induction sessions across the first weeks of term, to welcome and prepare all new students to the college and those returning. We intend to incorporate Resilient Futures into our induction programmes, to encourage students to approach their studies with optimism as they embark on achieving their college goals. This will begin with a rollout of training sessions to equip lecturers, across campuses and curriculum areas, to deliver Resilient Futures to their individual cohorts. All students engage with tutorial sessions alongside their studies, to support their personal development and wellbeing. Resilient Futures will then be revisited in these sessions at key points in the year, such as in the lead up to exams, which can be triggering and therefore result in a decline in student mental health; their resilience is tested as well as their knowledge and ability. An important part of our proposed delivery of Resilient Futures is to enable students to support their peers. We envision student ambassadors, volunteers, that we can equip with the necessary skills to, with our guidance, offer an additional channel of support available to the student body. We also deliver a programme of sessions for teaching staff new to BTC and those new to teaching, to support them in their lecturing roles whilst completing their initial teacher training qualifications with us. Resilient Futures will become a part of this package, to equip them with vital skills to best support their learners.”

What next?

Support from Chris Ridgwell, Executive Project lead

“As our regional demand for a skilled workforce continues to grow in a range of exciting and emerging sectors, we must ensure that our young people are equipped with the attributes to transform their opportunities. Through our collaboration with Bounce Forward we can be confident that BTC teaching staff are equipped with the skill set they need to support young people in developing their own resilience. Employers are at the forefront of our skills delivery, so we must ensure that our employer partners are prepared with the skills to support young people in their organisations so that, as a region we can continue to grow and nurture a strong workforce.

