

Realise Your Potential

Be the best that you can be

Developing performance, attainment, wellbeing and positive behaviour in Years 9-11



*A mindmap drawn by a pupil back in school relating what they had learnt from the Realise Your Potential course to everyday life

Kingswood's Realise Your Potential Programme

A case study on impact - Ormiston Sudbury Academy

The 'Realise Your Potential' personal development programme is designed to increase attainment and well-being among Year 9-13's by building mental toughness and resilience and improving performance under pressure.

The programme uses a mix of adventure activities, reflection time and review sessions to equip young people with new life skills and introduce them to a range of challenges that encourage self-awareness. Each activity focuses on different intervention groups known to improve areas of performance which affect students' assessment outcomes.

A sample programme:



- **Day one:** Positive thinking changing 'I can't' into 'I can'
- **Day two:** Goal setting learning to avoid feeling overwhelmed by goals and targets, and turning them into something achievable and motivating
- **Day three:** Anxiety control learning to avoid panic and to deal with anxiety
- **Day four:** Visualisation seeing a challenge and the situation in a positive light
- **Day five:** Attention control learning to focus on doing what needs to be done and avoiding distraction

The main measure method of measuring the impact of the Realise Your Potential course is MTQ48 (the Mental Toughness Questionnaire) which scores individuals on the mental toughness 'Four Cs' model.

The higher the number, the more mentally tough someone is in that area, the lower the score, the more sensitive someone is when under pressure. Young people complete MTQ48 at the beginning of their course and again at the end of the course and the difference between the two reports demonstrates the impact the course has had.



Ormiston Sudbury Academy was one of the first groups to pilot the Realise Your Potential programme.

The group had a cohort of young people with complex home lives and were more 'mentally sensitive' but experienced a higher change over the course of their stay.

Below is the group summary which indicates the collective score of the group on mental toughness before and after the Realise Your Potential programme and shows the distance travelled over the course of the residential.

Ormiston Sudbury Academy: 18th - 22nd January 2016

Trait	Arrival Score	Departure Score	Change		% Change
Challenge	2.8	3.89	+	1.09	39%
Commitment	3.25	3.94	+	0.69	21%
Confidence	3.1	4.22	+	1.12	36%
Confidence in Ability	3	4.08	+	1.08	36%
Control	3.25	3.39	+	0.14	4%
Emotional Control	4.1	3.78	-	-0.32	-8%
Interpersonal Confidence	3.3	4.22	+	0.92	28%
Life Control	2.75	3.39	+	0.64	23%
Total Mental Toughness	2.7	3.56	+	0.86	32%

This shows a significant positive shift in almost all of the scales measured by the mental toughness questionnaire. Most notable was the impact on Challenge (the drive to push oneself to succeed and to see even setbacks as opportunities for learning) and Confidence in Abilities (the inner self-belief in their own abilities.)

A report written by a Year 11 pupil for the school newsletter:

***Realise Your Potential
Kingswood Residential***

Monday 18th January 2016. We left for Kent, with fear, excitement, and mystery all in one. After a two hour journey we finally arrived, as soon as the door opened up a gust of frost hit us in the face. It was freezing. We settled into our room, emptied our things and went to meet the instructors.

They were all so nice and welcoming, after a few minutes of introducing themselves we went and did a small questionnaire, the questions were simple and easy to answer.

*We did a variety of activities during the week of staying there, such as; **Nightline** an activity done blindfolded to help communicate with others around you.*

***Leap of faith** – this is when you need to climb a certain amount and then jump (you are attached to a rope!) this is to be able to demonstrate how far you can push yourself outside of your comfort zone and to show that you do not give up.*

***Adventure park** – this is where we had to climb a ridiculous; but not impossible*

assault course that is fairly high and gets difficult as you go on, this is to demonstrate self-confidence.

Throughout the trip there were ups and there were downs, however we made some amazing friends, and made our confidence grow, and we became more social towards people we didn't know.

Kingswood was the best thing that could've possibly happened; confidence wise. There were times where we felt like we couldn't do anything – and that's okay, we were never forced or told that we had to do something. If we didn't want to do it then we didn't do it, they were very understanding.

The dinner was nice, comforting and made it feel like home. The instructors themselves were so nice and were always there for us, we connected with them and had a lot of laughs!

We have learnt so much that can help us in the future, it was sad to go, and we will miss the instructors very much; however, we will definitely be visiting again soon!

Testimonial from Kelly Jacques, Director of Inclusion at Ormiston Sudbury Academy:

Why did you choose the Realise Your Potential course?

This course chose me! I was thrilled to be able to be part of a pilot, and knew that our students would get as much out of it as you would 'trailing' it.

What if any changes did you observe during the course?

We had many important changes within the group - some I expected, others took me by surprise. In particular I saw students, who had never stayed away from home before, manage their feelings/emotions much better than I predicted they would. I saw students start taking risks, become leaders and have fun! Having fun is something that some of our students desperately needed to experience.

What impact has the Realise Your Potential course had back in school?

The course met my objectives, it allowed me to form different and better relationships with these young people. This has allowed me to have difficult conversations with some of them, in an easier, safer way. Students have felt they can open up to me; after all I have seen them take risks (and vice versa!). One of our students is now receiving literacy support after six months of refusing "I don't need it!" now she feels empowered to say 'I can achieve, but I need this support can help me'.

What do you consider to be the single most beneficial aspect of the course?

Spending time away from school, in a safe managed way. Some of the students I took have never spent time away from home, this, for some, was very much needed. This allowed students to take risks!

Being away from home also taught the students that if they cause a 'difficult situation' (socially) they had to deal with it, as they couldn't just 'go home' after school - they had to live, sleep and eat with group - this was a great lesson in understanding how you can affect people's emotions.