



BIORHYTHMS.EXERCISE.NUTRITION.®

At school my daughter was talented, sporty. First team hockey and netball, regionals as a swimmer, nationals with her javelin. But even though on the surface she seemed happy, thriving in most areas, including socially, there were unseen problems lurking below the surface; problems not picked up by any of her coaches, teachers, or her parents. A story becoming more and more common these days.

My daughter's mental illness got such a grip on her that she ended up in intensive care for 2 weeks, followed by 4 months as an inpatient with CAMHS. That is when my interest in teenage wellbeing really began.

I've been a fitness coach in some guise or another for over 30 years. The priority is always injury prevention, the health of the person you are training whatever their goal. As coaches we want to build robust, physically and mentally resilient athletes that can deal with whatever competitive sport might throw at them. You will never avoid all injuries, and sometimes an athlete will need to look to their coach, but we try to give our athletes the best opportunity to excel, and to adapt when things aren't going to plan. B.E.N. takes that preventative approach and applies it to wellbeing and mental health.

As coaches, we know skills are empowering. Teenagers are resistant to being controlled, but if they understand why they are doing something and we give them some autonomy or ownership, engagement follows naturally. B.E.N. is designed to upskill our teenagers; it helps put each aspect of their life in perspective and aims to build a rounded human being, equipped not just to cope but to thrive.



BEN STORK, FOUNDER



“A SHINING EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PASSION, EXPERTISE, AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE COME TOGETHER IN ONE INITIATIVE.”

Sara Thomas, Assistant Head of School (Wellbeing), ACS International School Cobham

How often do we tell our kids that they need better quality sleep, to eat more healthily, to hydrate properly, to move more, get their heads out of their phones, to look up and take notice, to make face to face interaction? The aim of my programme is not only to remind them what they need to be doing, but also to provide them with a toolkit (the app) which helps them to piece themselves together through the development of healthy habits. The app is anonymised, so our teenagers can learn to self-regulate and manage their own wellbeing, giving them the autonomy they crave. Education and empowerment.

How does it work? Users score themselves each day on their sleep, exercise, nutrition, and wellbeing habits, and a traffic light system signposts them to areas they need to work on. It is quick and easy to use; it is not about screen time but real-life actions. When it comes to their wellbeing, students no longer need to ask themselves, 'what can I do better?' or 'where do I start?' They can see clearly the areas they need to work on. But more than that, they, and we as coaches/teachers/parents, have a starting point for conversations both in school and at home.

Wellbeing is not just about contentment, but continued progress and personal development. The programme I have designed is not about being perfect but building healthy habits. We want our students to maximise themselves; by maximising themselves they will lift those around them. And while only the user can see their own score, we can look at the data for cohorts within the school (e.g. year groups, boarding houses, even staff.) This data allows us to see the usage and habits within those cohorts and identify patterns, helping to ensure that we are creating the right environments for our pupils.

Wellbeing needs to be woven into the fabric of school life. By taking a holistic, preventative approach to student wellbeing – one that links together sleep, exercise, nutrition, and mental health - young people get to understand how these elements of their daily lives are deeply connected, and how small changes make a big difference. And a culture is built where wellbeing is something young people feel confident managing.



“I THINK THIS APP IS AMAZING.”

Student

“IT IS ELEGANT, ACCESSIBLE, AND ITS GENIUS IS ITS SIMPLICITY.”

Barnaby Sandow, Principal, Nord Anglia International School Dublin