

## ‘Social Technology’

Modern Society and in particular, ‘The West’, has been dominated by consumerism yet there are signals that there is a growing desire to move away from this kind of lifestyle. Some wish for a more simplistic life, devoid of all the pressures to conform, removed from the trappings of success and so on.

People no longer view happiness as restricted to the large house, two cars in the drive and the annual holiday, for many, contentment, happiness, experience and satisfaction is as important, if not more important than material possessions.

The definition of happiness most agreed upon by neuroscientists, psychiatrists, economists, positive psychologists and Buddhist Monks is not one of a state of bursting with glee but of happiness as a sense of well being, contentment, the feeling of living a meaningful life, of utilizing one’s gifts, of living with thought and with purpose

There are many ways to find happiness – making time to visit friends and family, read a book, go for a walk, listen to music, stop and take in your environment, etc.

One way of achieving happiness or at least reaching a level of contentment is by exposing people not to some new methodology but exploiting those methodologies that already exist but as a result of modernity have been somewhat ‘lost’ to us, or only result in occasional use as we endeavour to ‘fit in’ or function in the modern era.

Our level of interaction with people and our even our surroundings, for example, nature, has been affected and with it our ability to engage meaningfully. Whether it’s smiling, saying hello, striking up conversations or simply being aware of what is going on around us, we are slowly losing our capacity to engage with each other at the most basic level.

Social Technology, or to give it its full title, *‘Social Technology: Learning to Interact again – Meaningful Engagement in the Present’*, aims to remind participants of what it is to *‘be in the moment,’* by reintroducing them to ‘the basics’ of social interaction through the use of ‘technologies’ that pre-dates the Internet and Social Media.

The programme promises to bring participants to a state of mind where the ‘Common Currency’ is being present, and to savour, live in and enjoy the moment, to remember that moment and use it as basis with which to develop and orchestrate new approaches to life going forward.

*Social Technology: Learning to Interact again – Meaningful Engagement in the Present* is underpinned by **Five Ways to Well-being**, a set of evidence-based actions that promote people’s wellbeing developed by the [New Economics Foundation](http://www.neweconomics.org).

**Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give**<sup>1</sup> has attained global recognition and provides with us the foundation from which we locate our approach. Through their research, the New Economics Foundation has found that by:

- **Connecting** *there is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world;*

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/entry/five-ways-to-well-being>

- **Being Active** is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups;
- **Taking Notice** can strengthen and broaden awareness [and] enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities;
- **Learning through[out] life** enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life;
- **Giving** Individuals are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

**Five Ways to Well Being** provides us with 'a flow' that helps map out the journey individuals undertake in our training, that is to say, it helps to form a progressionary route for participants from the place that they arrive in to the more desirable place they wish to reach by the end of the programme. This also allows us to track the 'journey travelled' by participants enabling us to collate evidence of impact.

Social Technology is an experiential learning programme that shows participants a variety of methodologies and techniques that can be replicated not only in their daily life but also in their work settings.

### **Aim**

*Social Technology* aims to increase the capacity, resourcefulness and knowledge of practitioners to engage more meaningfully with colleagues and service users to achieve better outcomes through more caring, compassionate, considered and thoughtful actions.

### **Objectives**

We will achieve the above by:

1. recruiting and selecting targeted audiences willing to take 'time-out' and immerse themselves in focused, considered and deliberate processes;
2. engaging participants in a continuum-focused journey that promotes progressionary learning;
3. using 'old-skool' methodologies that nurtures and promotes patience, concentration and a greater appreciation of people, time, setting and environment;
4. creating space and time for reflection;
5. engaging participants in a process of self-assessment so as to identify goals, targets and goals;
6. promoting learning as to how to be present and 'in the moment';
7. promoting positive health and well-being through connecting, learning, being active, noticing, giving and initiating;
8. increasing resilience, self-awareness, self-belief, confidence and self-esteem;
9. using a wide variety of non-formal methodologies to fulfil programme objectives;
10. ensuring outcomes-focused delivery.

### **Outcomes**

With our 'Social Technology' programme we will achieve the following outcomes:-

- (i) improved competences, linked to their professional profiles [staff, youth workers and professionals] by engaging participants in person-centred methodologies that:
  - (a) promotes a greater sense of patience and perspective
  - (b) increases the ability to prioritise more effectively and achieve a more positive mind-set
  - (c) enables effective decision-making and capacity for initiating change
  - (d) generates ability to reflect, monitor and assess own performance

- (e) creates and nurtures ideas, aspiration and motivation to progress personally and professionally
- (ii) innovative and improved way of operating towards their target groups, by providing:
  - (a) more attractive programmes for students, trainees, apprentices, young people and volunteers in line with their needs and expectations: through provision of a 'unique product' that is newly developed but is 'tailored' for each individual
  - (b) improved youth work methods and practices to actively involve young people and/or to address disadvantaged groups, etc: through a series newly developed methodology based on 'old-skool' elements which can reduce disadvantage by focusing on the importance of quality social interaction in the most fundamental of youth work approaches, i.e., the relationship between the practitioner and young person.

## **Learning**

Participants will have a better understanding of the 'Social Technology' concept, its methods and the competences it uses to aid and abet Social Interaction, and how it can be used to engage, navigate and negotiate relationships in a more meaningful way through a range of tailored methodologies that not only enhances but promotes Mental Health and Well Being.

Participants will leave with a much greater perspective on things, they will learn to prioritise more effectively, they will be better rested and will have had the opportunity to reflect and 'take stock' on their life and their 'everyday-governance.'

In addition to this, they will leave much better informed, possess many more tools and techniques than when they arrived, will perceive themselves differently and with a much greater sense of self-esteem and self-awareness, will grow in confidence and self-belief as well as the capacity to deliver practice more effectively due to the unique, unusual, testing and challenging nature of the activities we use.

They will have much clearer ideas about follow-up activities they can use and they have developed new sets of relationships with a variety of practitioners across a number of European countries.

They will also draw new conclusions, identify new aspirations and set themselves some new goals as a result of how they perceive their life and their work setting and this has a positive impact on those they engage with thus helping to inspire those around them.

Participants will leave more knowledgeable, compassionate, empathetic and positive in their outlook with enhanced levels of motivation and commitment to participation. They will develop a stronger sense of their identity and belonging and well as gaining more self-awareness and renewed perspective.

They will enhance interpersonal skills, be more confident in their approach, feel greater levels of self-esteem and possess a renewed vigour for the work they will do post-programme. They will have enhanced their personal and professional capacity through a greater understanding of and appreciation for the relevance, importance and value of individual face-to-face Social Interaction between individuals because of its strong emotional emphasis, its 'being present in the moment' ethos, its prioritising-process-over-outcomes focus, its commitment to being attentive, empathetic and compassionate, and its making time and space for individuals to reflect, consider, explore, examine, converse, create, nurture, dream, aspire to, envisage, plan and develop.

Finally, participants will leave with a greater sense of perspective, a new or renewed approach to life, methodologies and tools they can apply in their everyday setting, new ideas and inspiration from

interacting with their colleagues, enhanced confidence and self-belief in their own ability, and a commitment to design and develop post-programme activity.