

Title: Getting Serious about Leisure: practical, research-led approaches to supporting staff and student wellbeing through leisure.

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify key areas of leisure activity that contribute to their own wellbeing
- Recognise the importance of leisure pursuits for staff and student wellbeing and utilise strategies to justify and prioritise these activities
- Explore the use of podcasts in staff and student development, in particular where mind-set change is required
- Explain the role of leisure activity for engaging and retaining students
- Identify opportunities for 'Serious Leisure' for students, and staff, offered by higher education institutions (HEIs), and how these could be developed further

Outline

Both positive student experience (and therefore retention) and staff wellbeing and morale require the maintenance of rich social lives and holistic identities beyond academic work. The pandemic has increased pressure even further on work/life balance for academic staff, whilst reducing the university experience for students to mainly programme-related teaching and learning activities. This session discusses both why and how we can maintain our own wellbeing as staff, and also for our students.

This session argues that HEIs need to focus on two key areas to support staff and student wellbeing. Firstly, we need to support our staff, and students, to develop approaches to prioritising activities outside formal academic work. Secondly, that spaces for serious leisure pursuits should be made open and accessible to all staff and students.

The session will share how a podcast series about reflecting on experiences and approaches to prioritising leisure activity, through the lens of Stebbins' Serious Leisure concept, and drawing on the Arts and Health discourse, was found to be an impactful intervention to develop such approaches. The session will explore how similar interventions, can be employed to influence student development and thinking, about the place of leisure in student and professional lives.

This presentation will draw on the experiences of UWE Bristol's unusual Centre for Music, which provides free music services and facilities for all staff and students at UWE Bristol. And how this is found to be an important part for the student and staff experiences for those involved, by offering accessible spaces where both come together outside of formal course and role-bound structures and boundaries.

Activities and Approximate Timings

20 mins presentation from three presenters followed by 20 mins discussion facilitated by Dr Petrova exploring:

- Barriers to staff, and student, engagement with leisure and ways to address them?
- How do we integrate leisure narratives into student personal and professional development opportunities offered within academic programmes, or institutionally?
- How can our institutions prioritise, promote and even create opportunities for leisure activities for students and staff?

Preparation before the session

Please outline anything you would like participants to do before they attend this session (e.g. any weblinks you would like them to look at, or questions you would like them to consider).

Participants are welcome to listen to some of our podcast recordings available here: <https://soundcloud.com/uwebristol/sets/serious-leisure>, if they want to find out more about these, and the Serious Leisure discourse.

References and sources

Elkington, S., Stebbins, R. A. (2014). *The Serious Leisure Perspective: An Introduction*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.

Huimei Liu & Shuyang Da (2020) The relationships between leisure and happiness-A graphic elicitation method, *Leisure Studies*, 39:1, 111-130, DOI: [10.1080/02614367.2019.1575459](https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2019.1575459)

Kenny, A., (2018) Exploring Student Learning and Leadership through a University-Community Choral Initiative. *British Journal of Music Education*, 35(2), pp. 203-216.

MacDonald, R. A. R. (2013) Music, health, and well-being: A review, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 8:1, 20635, DOI: 10.3402/qhw.v8i0.20635

Mansfield, L., Daykin, N., Kay, T. (2020) Leisure and wellbeing, *Leisure Studies*, 39:1, 1-10, DOI: [10.1080/02614367.2020.1713195](https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1713195)