

KAREN FOLEY: Good morning, everybody, and welcome to another Student Hub Live event. Today, we have a really special event. We have a showcase from Wellbeing, Education, Languages, and Sport. And we've got a really super programme lined up for you today.

It's lovely to see some familiar faces in the chat today. So far, I've noticed we have Martin, who is not only speaking in English but also Japanese, Samantha, Tarla, Fiona, Donna Marie, Katia, Sangeeta, Jen, Virginia, Colin, Sarah, Zoe, Veronica, Carol, Elena, and lots more people, all talking to Eric and Karina, who are managing our chat box today. And it's lovely that so many of you are happy, nice and warm weather to enjoy, and you're all chilling out and hopefully making some new friends today.

So some of you may know how all of this works. As I've said before, the chat box is a space to be able to connect with other people. We will be recording all of the video from today so you can watch it again if there's something that you miss out on. But take the most of this opportunity to connect with other students. Community is so important, and it's going to be one of the topics of conversation today.

Now, many of you have been filling in our various widgets, our sort of maps and word clouds and other options that we have prepared for you today. Do fill in our map. It's lovely to see where everybody is. Let us know what you've had for breakfast, and let us know what you're studying.

There's a whole range of things that people are studying here today, from all of the different areas. And it's wonderful, also, to see many of our Access students here today. So I'm hoping that you're going to pick up some things, as well, that are going to be of interest to you.

So to welcome you to the session, I am joined by the Executive Dean Fary Cachelin and also the President of the Open University Students Association Sarah Jones. So a big, warm welcome to you today here. Fary, would you like to welcome everybody and perhaps tell them a little bit about why we're having this event at this particular time of year?

FARY
CACHELIN: Yeah, thanks so much, Karen, and thanks again for including me. So welcome everybody. We're really, really glad that you're joining us today and taking this time just to talk with us and with each other. So what we're doing today-- why this event today-- we're hoping to bring together students and academics from our faculty of Wellbeing, Education, and Language Studies to explore the different forms of resilience we've each developed, either alone or together, during what's been a pretty difficult year, and then to look ahead to a hopefully brighter future.

This is a time of the year, usually, for moving up, moving on. It's the close of the academic year, and we're looking forward to the year ahead. So we're inviting you to reflect with us on this past year. We want to hear from you and others about the stories of resilience, sort of shake off the lows, have a dance session, and think about the fun that's coming ahead and, hopefully, the relaxing stuff that maybe we have planned for the year ahead and the summer ahead. So it's just a chance to get together and think about those things a little bit-- move on.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. And now, you've had a look at our programme, as well. I wonder if you can tell people what to look forward to. You've mentioned a whole range of excellent things that we've got lined up.

FARY We've got a bunch of stuff. So really, again, encouraging you to reflect on the highs and the lows of the year,
CACHELIN: think about the things that you've learned in terms of resilience, and then imagine what a better future could hold in terms of study and work-- life.

So what we're going to be doing today is hearing and sharing stories of resilience, of hope, joining in discussions about the importance of standing up against all forms of discrimination and racism. Because it was quite a year for that. Especially during times of crisis, things like that tend to happen, so we want to talk about that.

You're also going to get a chance to hear about what's going on in the faculty in the different schools, for example, the Children's Research Centre, the School of Languages and Applied Linguistics, the School of Education, Childhood, Youth, and Sport, and basically just join us in celebrating a year of making it through-- thank goodness-- and then also making things happen, looking forward, building on our resilience. So a lot of good stuff happening today, including, like I said, some fun activities and dance sessions. So hope you enjoy it and take advantage of as much as you can.

KAREN FOLEY: I'm looking forward to the dancing, in particular. Sorry, I've just got rid of one of my dogs here under the desk. They're having a bit of a fight, but I've managed to remove one. It's always one of those challenges, I think, in working from home that I struggle to sort of get a grip on is how to keep the dog quiet at all times.

[LAUGHS]

So Sarah, can you tell us a little bit about what you're looking forward to, as well? You've been involved with the faculty, and now you're the president of the Students Association. And you've also been involved in today's programme.

SARAH JONES: Yeah, I mean, some of the things that I'm looking forward to seeing is the conversation around student voice and well-being. I'm very much involved with that group, and it's exciting to see how they're using student voice and engaging with students about their well-being. So it'd be good to hear what's going on there.

Extremely excited about the dance session. So we get to see. I may miss it, unfortunately, because, unfortunately, I might be in another meeting. You know, things happen. But I'm going to catch up later to see how it's gone. But there's some fantastic stuff going on.

And I think, because it has been such a challenging year, I think our students have gained such amazing resilience with the different things that they've done over this past year and the skills that they've learned. And I think being able to share that with fellow students will be a great part of today.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, absolutely.

[GROWLING]

Oh, no, the dogs are fighting again, and it's the little one. The little one's at it. I'm going to have to pick one of them up to show you. Yeah, I'll get the-- this is my big baby.

SARAH JONES: Oh, gorgeous.

KAREN FOLEY: So Meghan's going to be having a nice time for the dance. Yes, yes, she is. She's lovely, especially when they're not fighting.

So we've got lots of things lined up for you today, but let's take a look at what you've had for breakfast. Because food is very often an important part of not only feeling and being good but at setting yourself up for a good start to the day. So let's see what our Wordle said when we asked what you had for breakfast.

Well, we've got some interesting things here. We've got coffee, toast, sugary milk tea, yoghurts, biscuits, rats cuddles? Now, I'm not sure that's a thing, but that does sound super lovely. Marmite on toast, ooh, Weetabix and banana-- very, very good, so some very nice, healthy breakfasts here, as well, and lots of things that people are enjoying at home, too. So that's wonderful. And don't forget to fill in our map and let us know where you are throughout the day.

So we're going to be taking a look at some reflections and things that have changed for us as a result of lockdown. Fary and Sarah, could I ask you for one thing, the most important thing, I think, that's shifted for you in terms of lockdown and something you might be doing differently from now on? Fary?

FARY
CACHELIN: Oh, that's a really good question. I think probably what's shifted for me the most is I've been living in a house with five adults. And I think I've learned that there's only so much energy I've got, only so much I've got to give. And so I've actually learned to get better at ignoring other people, stay in my own lane, turn a blind eye to the mess in the kitchen, and live and let live. So I think that's been, probably, a very good lesson in resilience for me.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. I think saying no and knowing your limitations and being confident in doing that is so important. It's really important to look after our well-being. Otherwise, we're no good to anybody else, are we?

FARY
CACHELIN: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: Sarah, what's sort of changed for you?

SARAH JONES: Spending more time at home has meant that I've been able to do my job and be able to spend more time with my children and in my garden. My garden has been incredibly important to me over the last year because I've been shielding. So actually having that outdoor space where I can actually just let go of everything and growing things this year has done my mental health the world of good.

I've grown onions, and they taste good. To be able to just pick an onion out the ground and know that you've grown it and eat it, almost kind of ground to plate, that's been amazing. And so I'm in my second year now of growing things.

Some haven't worked, but it's doing me good, going out and checking on my vegetables and checking that things are going good. And it gives me that space to move away from my studies, move away from my work, get a bit of space from my kids. You know, it's really done me good, and I think it's something I'm going to carry on.

KAREN FOLEY: Mm. Lots of people have said that actually spending time with nature's been very restorative. And many people, I think, can identify with that. Well, let's take a look and see how everyone's feeling at home right now.

So we asked, how are you feeling? And we've got lots of lovely emotions here-- happy, excited-- hooray!-- interested, exhausted-- oh, dear-- suspicious, hat on, hip, hip, peckish-- yes, I think we're all peckish after hearing about the breakfast-- eager, and keen, and enjoying the sun. Motivated, happy, and excited are the key words that are coming up. But overall, lots of positive feeling.

And with that in mind, Eric, you stepped in today to host our chat there, so I wonder if you might share some of the things that people at home are talking about right now. Eric's also a member of our faculty, and he's going to be relaying your comments and questions to our guests today. Eric, how's everyone doing?

ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH: Everyone is doing very well. The chat has been buzzing. We started off with sort of comparing notes about the weather. It's great weather here in Northampton. We've got some feedback from colleagues all around the country.

I've got sunny weather in Milton Keynes, East London, South Wales, Chichester, Sheffield, Northampton, Cornwall, not so great in Scotland-- a bit cloudy in Scotland. But hey, we'll take that. It's been fab, and it's great to be enjoying this session in great weather, as well.

We've got a range of students, as well, and it's always good to have that, across the faculty. So we've got Gaynor, who is in her first year of, sorry, final year of a nursing degree. Big shout-out to her. Well done. We've got Zoe, who is completing her Ed Studies primary qualification. Yay. Congrats to that.

And we've got colleagues studying languages, as well-- U214 and others. So yeah, the chat is buzzing. We're all looking forward to exchanging conversations in the chat and contributing to the session, Karen.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Thank you, Eric. And Korina is also in the chat, as well. So do make the most of this time to talk to people about any things that you would like to get off your chest right now. Right. So that's our first session. Thank you, Fary and Sarah, for coming and giving us such a wonderful introduction and really setting the scene.

We're going to have a short video break now, and then we're going to come back, and we're going to all spend some time together with Amber, reflecting on lockdown and some of the things that we'd all like to take forward from that. So enjoy this video break, and I'll see you very shortly.

[MUSIC PLAYING]