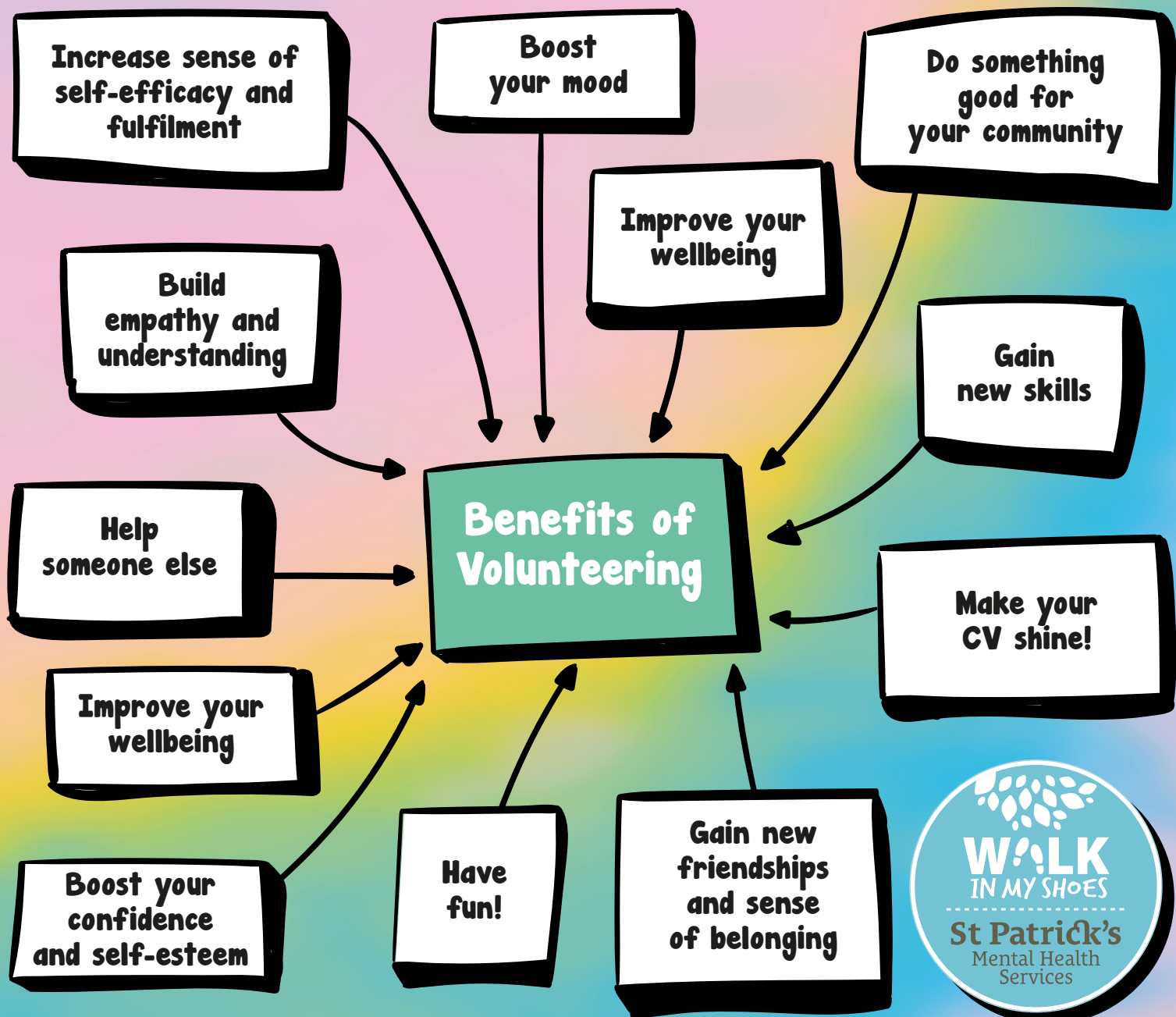


Benefits of Volunteering as a Secondary School Student:

Volunteering has been linked to numerous wellbeing and mental health benefits and can benefit not only the community, but the volunteers themselves. Volunteering can boost mood and feelings of satisfaction by releasing 'happy hormones'. It can also provide a break from daily routines and school-related stress. Through volunteering activities, secondary school students can see the positive impact of their actions and the result of their efforts. This can build their self-confidence and help to develop their self-esteem. Secondary school is a great opportunity to try new experiences and get involved with things students have not done before. Volunteering can help students to feel a sense of pride that they have taken steps to benefit their community, while hopefully also having fun and making new friends in the process!

Volunteering is also a great opportunity for young people to learn new skills; gain experience in the working world; and build a sense of responsibility and purpose. This can be a great addition to a young person's CV. Volunteering can support a student to explore their different interests and potentially identify future career goals and interests.

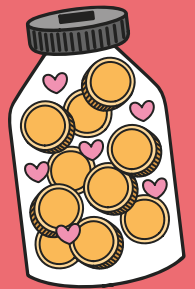
See some more potential benefits of volunteering below:



Volunteering Activities for Secondary School Students:

Charity event:

Students could organise a charity event in their school for a cause that is important to them such as animal welfare, mental health or climate change. Activities such as bake sales, car washes, sports tournaments or no uniform days can help to fundraise and are relatively easy to organise. Students can take the lead on organising and promoting the event, making posters and spreading the word. A teacher or other adult can assist students with this initiative and support them with donating the funds raised to the charity or charities of their choice.



A thought for the day:

A group of student volunteers can 'take over' school announcements for a week to spread positive mental health messaging each morning. A student can read from a pre-agreed positive message across the school announcement system. This works particularly well coming into exam season to raise morale and could also be used as a reminder each day for students to take some time out to practise an activity to support their self-care.

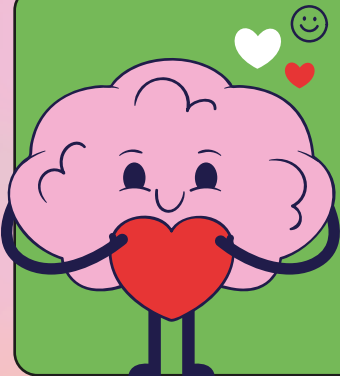
Sports coaching:

Students who play sports could consider volunteering with their local club as assistant coaches or referees for younger teams. This can help students to develop a sense of responsibility and leadership skills while also promoting social connection and developing friendships.



Act as a mental health ambassador:

Students can volunteer in their school for the role of a student mental health ambassador or join their school wellbeing committee. Student mental health ambassadors can work to promote mental health awareness, working alongside teachers and others in the school community to organise wellness activities. They can also act as a point of contact for signposting to other supports and be a supportive listener for fellow students. Anecdotally, we know that peer to peer support is of great benefit to young people and they cite their classmates as the number one place they would go for support when in need.



School mentoring or tutoring:

Students in senior years can offer tutoring or mentoring to younger students in subjects they may struggle with. This can help to improve younger students' confidence and study skills while at the same time building leadership skills for the student volunteer. This is a great way to encourage peer support between classes and develop social connections and friendships. The benefit of older children helping younger children learn lasts beyond the volunteering activity itself; it can give the volunteer a sense of pride and confidence and may also instil a sense of safety and belonging among younger children. Anecdotally, students learn well from the peers and enjoy connecting with each other.



We would love for schools to share their volunteering activities on our **School Portal**, to inspire other schools to get involved and spread the positive mental health messaging.