

# matrix

*with young people, for young people*

WWW.MATRIXTRUST.COM



Dear Friends,

One of my greatest joys in working for Matrix is regularly hearing stories of young people whose lives have been impacted by the work of Matrix and our team. In this issue of our newsletter you will hear about the moments of impact that our work is having amongst young people who have been engaging in a variety of our projects, some of these include Mimi's story and how just meeting one-to-one with a young person every week can make a huge difference to their lives.

You will also hear about our recent 'Ready 4 Action' workshops at our Youth Cafe as well as an update on our new Wellbeing Drop-ins that are helping young people wait well for support. And finally we have an update on the development of our 'Job Searchers Toolkit', specifically designed to help young people into the working world.

As this academic year draws to a close I am so proud of our team and all of the fantastic work they continue to deliver with the most amazing young people across Guildford Borough.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support, we really appreciate you journeying with us!



D. Setterfield





Feedback has been a key focus this season, helping us understand the many ways in which our projects positively impact young people's lives. Seeing tangible evidence of our work has been incredibly rewarding. The drawing below, crafted by a young person, serves as a heartfelt thank-you for the support Matrix

has provided, illustrating the meaningful impact we strive to achieve.

Here is a brief insight into moments of impact we have had with young people we've worked with recently:

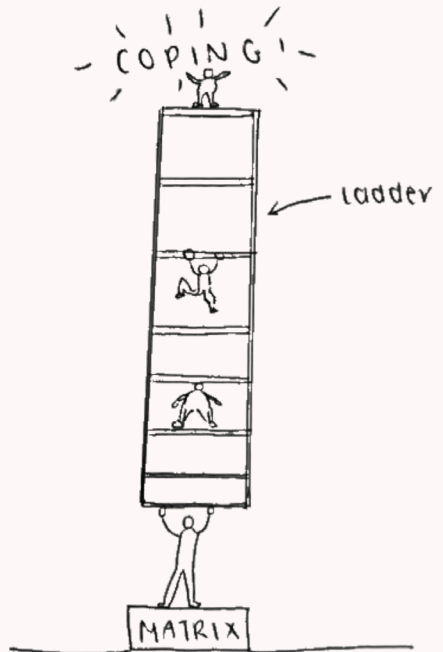
## KAYLEY'S STORY

Meet Kayley\*, a young person we had the privilege of working with one-on-one for an entire year. When Kayley first began her sessions, she was grappling with significant challenges at home, and we started exploring themes of loss and grief.



Throughout the 50 sessions we had with her, Kayley developed coping mechanisms to help her manage the impending loss of a parent. She formed a strong bond with her wellbeing practitioner, finding a great sense of support in their time together. Recently, she encountered our wellbeing practitioner and immediately felt safe to approach, say hello, and share how she has been doing. Since we last saw her, Kayley has unfortunately experienced the loss of her loved one. However, she seems to be coping well, utilising the tools and lessons learned during her sessions.

Despite this profound loss, she seemed hopeful for the future and was doing well



in both her personal and professional life. This reflects the strength and resilience she developed through our sessions, highlighting the importance of having support during difficult times.

\*name changed



## MIMI'S STORY

We worked with Mimi\* for roughly 18 months. Initially struggling with severe anxiety and panic attacks, especially in crowded spaces, she joined us seeking help. Our sessions focused on coping strategies, breathing techniques, and grounding exercises. Mimi began uncertain about herself and her relationships but was determined to improve. Together with her Matrix youth worker they explored various techniques to help manage her anxiety. Colour Breathing, a combination of visualisation and breathwork, became a breakthrough and helped her manage black-and-white thinking regarding her personal issues.

Mimi's journey was not linear; she faced many ups and downs. Despite setbacks, she showed resilience and a strong desire to heal. Discussions on self-care and self-compassion were vital in improving her self-esteem and rebuilding her confidence in friendships and meaningful connections.

Throughout, Mimi valued having a constant support figure. Matrix provided a safe, non-judgmental space where she felt heard and supported unconditionally, crucial to her progress. Today, Mimi continues to thrive, empowered by the tools and support she received. Her story illustrates resilience, courage, and the transformative impact of consistent support and understanding.



## Colour Breathing

Colour breathing is a self-soothing tool that involves a combination of visualisation and focused breathing.

Here are four simple steps as to how you can practise this grounding method yourself:

1. Start by picturing the colour in your mind that you associate with a desired feeling e.g joy
2. As you inhale, picture yourself breathing in this colour.
3. Visualise a colour you associate with a negative feeling.
4. As you exhale imagine this colour leaving your body through your breath.



## Workshops

We've poured a lot of energy into promoting our workshops and are thrilled to see a surge in attendance! Recognizing a genuine need, we're committed to equipping young people with skills to make a positive impact on their communities.

Our workshops offer a taste of social action and guide participants on how to continue contributing. By exposing them to a variety of activities, we aim to help them gain diverse skills instead of focusing on just one area.

We've received enthusiastic feedback from young people who are excited about our recent workshops and the variety of topics we offer. Attendance has been steadily increasing, with some sessions reaching full capacity and requiring a first-come, first-served policy.

This response has reinforced the positive impact we are making and has encouraged us to continue growing and expanding in this area.



Here's a glimpse into the variety of workshops we offer:

- **'Fix your Bike!'** This was a partnership with The Bike Project Surrey in which they demonstrated to young people how they can fix, maintain and customise their bikes.
- **'The Power of Positive Messages'** This focused on allowing young people to go into local green spaces and finding natural materials to paint positive and uplifting messages to leave behind for the community.
- **'Peaceful Protesting'** Teaching young people about safe protesting and how to use their voices to make a difference in matters important to them through protest mediums such as badges and posters.
- **'Eco Bird Feeders'** Creating bird feeders from recycled objects and discussing local biodiversity.
- **'Natural Fabric Dyeing'** Using food waste to dye fabric and customise old clothes.
- **'Rosamund Community Garden Trip'** A trip to our local community garden to learn about wildflower meadows, seed sowing and vegetable growing.



## Connect: The Power of Community

Coming together as a community has been a central theme over the past few months, and we've hosted a variety of activities aimed at strengthening our connections and raising awareness about our mission. One of these being our, 'LinkedIn Local Business Breakfast'.

We organised a Business Networking event alongside LinkedIn Local at The Hideaway Café, offering a wonderful opportunity for local businesses to forge new connections and learn about our mission and initiatives.

It served as a powerful reminder of the importance of community and supporting each other's endeavours.

## Wellbeing Drop-Ins

Another way we've aimed to support and connect with our community is by providing a space for those who are awaiting support. Our goal is to try and hold them throughout the waiting period and keep them afloat amongst the challenges they might be facing. Waiting times for services across Surrey have steadily been increasing year on year, leaving young people and their families wondering when they will ever receive the help they need. One of the ways we are responding to this need is through our twice-monthly Wellbeing Drop-Ins, held on Thursdays from 4-5.30pm, a time that works well for parents.



These sessions take place at The Hideaway, where young people can meet with wellbeing practitioners and youth workers in a relaxed atmosphere. They can enjoy calming music, play games, have snacks, and engage in conversations about their mental health and wellbeing.

These drop-ins offer a comfortable and intimate setting for young people on our waiting list to receive brief one-on-one support from a youth worker while awaiting full 1:1 sessions. We also equip them with wellbeing tools they can use independently to manage and enhance their mental wellbeing. Many young people just need a safe space where they can be heard, and we aim to provide that "third space" for them.

Parents are welcome to join if their child is hesitant, and participants can engage in outdoor play or craft activities while discussing their challenges.

Over time, some regular attendees have developed a strong sense of trust and connection with our youth workers and wellbeing practitioners. This rapport often carries over into their 1:1 sessions, making it easier for them to open up and progress in their growth journey.

Our Wellbeing Drop-Ins are still in their early stages and often misconceived as large, group confession sessions. Instead, they are private, supportive environments where individuals can share their struggles safely. We are seeing growing attendance and positive outcomes from these sessions, which include games, chats, mindful colouring, and crafts—creative approaches that help participants explore and externalise their thoughts.

## Empowering Futures: Job Searcher's Toolkit Success and Expansion

Over the past few months, we've been soft launching our Job Searcher's Toolkit. This initiative has been delivered in both classroom settings and one-on-one meetings, tailored to individual needs. The program covers essential topics such as crafting a CV, preparing for interviews, writing personal statements, and composing cover letters. Rather than directly securing jobs for participants, we empower them with the skills needed to independently pursue employment opportunities.

The project's soft launch in November saw promising outcomes. One participant secured a trainee position at The Hideaway and later moved on to other opportunities, demonstrating the effectiveness of the skills they acquired.

In March, Guildford College expressed interest in our program for their LLDD students (Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities). We scheduled six sessions for 22 students, which took place from April through May.

The curriculum included identifying passions, setting goals, creating CVs, and conducting mock interviews. We guided students through the interview process, focusing on body language, eye contact, and building confidence. The aim was to prepare them thoroughly for real interview experiences.

### Reflections

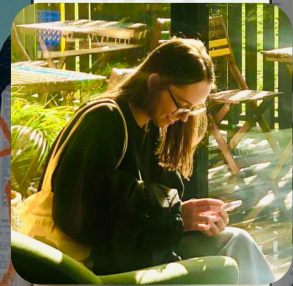
The feedback from Guildford College was overwhelmingly positive. Teachers reported that the sessions were encouraging and motivating for both students and parents. One course leader mentioned that some students were so engaged that they attended sessions on their day off, with parental support highlighting the program's perceived benefits.

By the end of the summer, we will have assisted 80 young people in building their work experience and contemplating their career paths, including our group of 22. This comprises 58 students receiving help with finding work experience and 22 gaining job-searching skills, surpassing our initial goal of helping 70 individuals!



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**The Hideaway,**  
Eastgate Gardens,  
Guildford  
GU1 4AZ





## Meet Jerry\*,

Jerry started working with us last year, seeking support for the struggles he faced at home and school. When he first joined us, he was grappling with an extremely low mood and self-esteem. Through the dedicated support of our youth workers and a nurturing environment, we have seen remarkable growth in Jerry over the past year.

Through our sessions, we helped Jerry realise the control he has over how he approaches his challenges. He has developed a toolkit to help himself, including making healthier choices, choosing better friends, creating a self-care routine, and honing in on ways to make himself happy. This transformation is a true testament to the importance of providing young people with safe spaces to be heard and supported.

\*name changed

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**In the last year, we supported over 2000 young people. This included over “250” one-to-one in both schools and the community, almost 150 attending our youth café in the centre of Guildford, and over 600 taking part in our lunchtime drop-ins in both primary and secondary school.**

**To support young people like Jerry and more you can donate here:**

