



Catherine's story*

Find out how Creative Mentoring helped 9-year-old Catherine to build positive relationships, advocate for herself and grow in confidence through painting, baking, clay and a variety of of sensory activities.

*Names have been changed to protect the young person's identity.

"My favourite thing about Catherine and Henry's journey was how intuitive Henry was to Catherine's feelings and doubts, and he supported her accordingly. He did a brilliant job at taking a person-centred approach."

Georgia, TMC

"I could still sense a little worry at times and a concern that something wouldn't work, or you wouldn't be able to do something. It's ok not to be able to do something and it's ok if things go wrong - especially if we learn from it."

Henry*, Creative Mentor

"I've told my friends about our sessions and they all want to come."

Catherine*, Young Mentee

social justice for young people

through arts, culture and creativity

the **mighty** creatives



background

Catherine was referred for Creative Mentoring by her Education Support Officer when she was 9 years old. She had recently moved to a new foster placement and a new school, so was dealing with lots of change and learning to trust the new adults around her at school. Professionals involved in her care felt that working with a Creative Mentor would help Catherine to believe in herself, as well as building a positive relationship through meaningful experiences. She had expressed a love of drawing, colouring and engaged in these activities at home and at school.

who was Catherine matched with?

Catherine was matched with Henry, a Creative Mentor with years' worth of experience working with children and young people. He has a multitude of skills and worked beautifully with mentees who wanted to explore a range of creative activities. His approach with mentees is open, nurturing and extremely playful, which TMC staff felt was the perfect fit for Catherine.

what happened next?

Henry recognised immediately upon meeting Catherine that she was a young person who had been through some challenges but, despite this, she always had a smile on her face, was full of energy and was generally "sparkly"!

Henry noticed through their early sessions that Catherine preferred to work side by side, with Henry working on his own piece of work whilst she did hers, sharing ideas as they went. Henry liked working this way too! Henry introduced Catherine to a variety of creative activities including: baking, designing dresses (a particular interest of Catherine's), clay, painting on canvases and making pizza as well as a variety of sensory activities. Henry noticed Catherine particularly liked getting messy and exploring textures!

what was a key moment?

Throughout their early sessions, Henry noticed that Catherine was often cautious to advocate for what she wanted to do, perhaps feeling like she had to please Henry. Henry would explain that he wouldn't be upset at all if she had a different idea or wanted to try something new - in fact, he'd be happy! At the end of one session, Catherine asked, without prompting, if they could make jewellery next week. Henry was over the moon to see Catherine sharing what she wanted.

what progress has been made?

Catherine's progress shows "some improvement" in **Confidence** (improving from a 3/5-4/5) and **Idea Generation** (improving from a 4/5-5/5).

We feel that Catherine's progress is also evident outside of these scores. For example, she scored herself highly in confidence from the first session, but we can see huge progress when looking at her interactions with Henry throughout their time together. Catherine realised through his modelling that it was OK if things didn't go to plan, and that she could try new things. She could wipe the paint away and try again! She also learnt how to advocate for herself and became more confident in expressing her wants and needs.