

The Value of Mentoring Relationships through Children Heard and Seen



In December 2020, Ryan was matched with a 16-year-old boy that we support (also named Ryan) through our volunteer mentorship scheme. Each mentor meets with the child weekly for one to one sessions, providing a neutral person that they can speak to about their feelings, outside of the family home. The pair hit it off immediately, and even spent time together on Christmas day pursuing a common interest: boxing. This week, both Ryans wrote about their experience of the mentoring relationship, highlighting its positive impacts. Please read below to find out more:

Ryan (Mentor):

" I was scrolling through Twitter and I saw a post from Children Heard and Seen appealing for a mentor to support a 16-year-old male. Already working in this field, I felt I had the experience and motivation to put myself forward to be his mentor. Shortly after contacting them they gave me a call to explain the next steps. I felt motivated to offer my support and after all checks were done I contacted this young man to begin mentoring.

Our initial meet was a dog walk, and I learnt a lot about the young male and his mind-set. I felt I really could help him and after our first meet, I felt even more compelled to. I remember when we first met we found it amusing that we shared a name. We tried to establish a way to communicate with each other knowing how confusing it would be saying our own names to get another person's attention. This led to us referring to each other as "The other Ryan." Simple.

More and more gradually Ryan shared his story. It is important to let young people speak and open up at a pace that is comfortable for them. I remember Ryan speaking about "his box." The box is reference to his personal space, and he explained how many people in his life have kicked down the walls to this box, and that had always bothered him. He told me that he liked how I waited outside the box and allowed him the power to invite me in. I found this very well-articulated and I knew in that moment we'd connected. I was proud of how far he had come (especially in asking for my support) and was excited for what he could go on to achieve.

Ryan has become very good at [recognising emotions and difficult situations](#), as well as having the smarts to ask for help. We spoke a lot about decisions and

managing frustrations. I tried to reassure Ryan it is okay to feel angry, we just have to process and control that anger. For him to now be in the army, in control of his emotions, is amazing.

Seeing Ryan grow and develop into a very well-mannered and respectful young man is great; **I am very proud of this growth and feel he too should be proud of how far he has come.** He has asked questions and listened to the answers, he has engaged with the lessons of discipline within our boxing sessions, and taken time out to process and accept his own worth.

Boxing, walking and talking, kicking a ball, chats outside the chip shop - moment's I'm thankful to be a part of. I look forward to seeing what he will become and will continue to support him where needed. He has a bright future ahead of him.

The time spent mentoring Ryan has had a positive impact on me too, enabling me to grow both personally and professionally. I am eternally thankful for the chance to work with Ryan and I am thankful too that CHaS considered me an appropriate mentor."

Ryan Meechan (Mentee):

"Ryan was a great help with an amazing mind set. I think he was a great help for me, he put a lot of time in to me. **If it wasn't for him, I don't think I would be here right now.** He helped me put my mind in the right place, he has a great understanding of situations.

He had such a positive impact on me I never thought someone can have such a positive impact on my life. He made feel like I'm never alone he's such a strong minded individual it helped a lot when he was talking about his own experiences because if he can open up it does help a lot it's like a trust to trust thing. Then I opened up. He's a great person he understands me very well.

We did the physical aspect like **boxing** that I enjoyed very much and it helped get the anger out. We also had the other side where we would just **go for a walk and talk about issues I had**, he is one of the best Workers that I have had the privilege to have he never forced me into telling him stuff I didn't want to. I preferred that because when I have help I prefer it not to be on the subject about my dad. I prefer getting treated like a normal person he did everything in an amazing way.

It was like he wasn't a worker he was more a mate, it made feel 100 x Better knowing that someone is there not to nose in your business if you do not want

them in. I reckon a lot of people could learn a thing or two from him. He supported in my dreams of joining the army and didn't doubt me once. I wish more people was like him. I have my best life right now, it's like a new Chapter in my life.

The way that Ryan helped to see it like I know it's not what it feels like to not have your dad there and you emotionally disconnect from everything. Instead, see it as this way: it's tough now but, it will get better. I never thought I would ever get to that stage, but I worked hard and you can achieve anything you want to if you put effort into it.

I used to hate every single day I lived. I was struggling. I didn't really like help so I found that the best way is to get help and speak about the problems you have if you can. Sometimes you have to be uncomfortable to be comfortable. If you're going through the same situation just remember you're never alone. Back when I was in School, on my Final year, **I didn't even wanna show my face outside**, then I ruined my education I currently have 0 GCSEs. I also got into a bit of trouble with the police a couple of times.

I looked at it as this way: I'm not going to be a no one in life, I am actually going to do something with it. **Ryan helped me to make the right choices in life by showing me the alternatives** from what you are doing: boxing, talking about experiences in life. If anyone ever feels like they can't do it, speak to someone. I promise you it will help.

Thank you, Ryan, for everything it means a lot. "

