



SHINING THROUGH ADVERSITY

Shining Through Adversity is a drama project based on the lives of the young people who work and engage with Elevated Minds. It gives young people a voice and the platform to tell their stories, enabling them to share how their lives took a different direction at a pivotal time. The process of scriptwriting, collating and organising props, assigning roles, and promoting the play will primarily be the young people's responsibility. The final production will showcase the young people's strengths, talents, and abilities as they assume roles that are significant to their real-life experiences.

This project will enhance the life skills of young people by improving their confidence, self-esteem, emotional well-being, communication, and personal development. It will utilise their creative thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving as they take responsibility for their progress and final outcomes. All young people will receive mentoring throughout the whole process, which will support them as they participate in the project.

The drama specialist, Sherita of Limitless Inc., is also a LAMDA teacher. The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) are an awarding organisation providing world-renowned qualifications in communication and performance. All young people involved will get an opportunity to study LAMDA outside of the practice sessions, suitably preparing them to sit their LAMDA exams in their chosen discipline.

ELEVATED MINDS RECENT RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Sharing their stories will allow young people to gain confidence, becoming an observer of their story, allowing them to take control of their lives. They look at their stories objectively, pulling out the bits they love, changing the meaning of the bits they don't like. Telling their stories will allow their audience to connect with them emotionally, getting buy-in from other young people who can relate. Young people in the audience will discover that they are not alone. They discover that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Adults will be taken back to their childhood, thinking about what they would have done differently and what they can do differently as adults.

Elevated Minds regularly provides training and support for gifted and talented and, also vulnerable young people who lead and deliver our Cultural Awareness training programme to new police recruits as well as senior officers. The training focuses on improving communications between the police and the Black community whilst building confidence and trust in the police from the Black community. The young people highlight and discuss personal experiences of racism, bias and discrimination, and demonstrate a different approach to stop and search via reverse role-play.

EVIDENCE THAT THE PROJECT IS NEEDED

The evidence of need is captured via statements from young people below. Sahara highlighted losing belief in herself and her abilities; her confidence and self-esteem plummeted, impacting her behaviour in school. Her referral to Elevated Minds positively changed the direction of her life.

Emmanuel, considered a failing student, was constantly being excluded, and he strongly disliked the police. He joined Elevated Minds, turned his life around and improved his relationship with the police.

Javell, also considered a failing student, was on the verge of permanent exclusion. Referral to Elevated Minds helped him turn his life around. He went on to win Southwark Young Volunteer of the Year, 2021. Another Elevated Minds Ambassador has gone on to win this award in 2024.

Through our discussions with young people about issues they faced, the idea of a drama project naturally evolved as role-play was used as a tool to explore their stories and feelings.

The Timpson Review, May 2019/ 103, highlighted that “there is evidence to suggest that children who have a history of either fixed period or permanent exclusion from school are more likely to be both victims and perpetrators of crime.

Recent research by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and The Difference highlights a significant rise in school exclusions and suspensions in England. In the 2022/23 academic year, there were 9,376 permanent exclusions and 787,961 suspensions, marking increases of 44% and 36% respectively compared to the previous year. Notably, students from low-income backgrounds, those with special educational needs, and certain ethnic minority groups are disproportionately affected.

INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (PROPOSED SERVICE USERS) IN DEVELOPING THIS PROJECT?

The idea of this project originally came from members of the Elevated Minds Advisory group Elevate2Success (E2S), as role-play is used to explore feelings when practising for the new recruits' training sessions.

The girls from the E2S team took private LAMDA lessons to improve specific aspects of their lives, such as confidence, self-belief, and public speaking. The experience of progressing through the LAMDA sessions greatly influenced the idea of developing a drama production that highlighted the life experiences of the young people involved.

Shining Through Adversity centres on the journey of how young people have transformed their lives. It showcases their resilience, confidence, self-awareness and their significantly improved emotional intelligence. The original E2S team believe that it is imperative to share their transformation with the community, and what better way to showcase their development than through a drama production. Their initial intention was to create opportunities for the local community youths to use their voices through the platform of a drama production. Telling their story in a safe

space where their vulnerabilities are exposed makes a much-needed human-to-human connection. Original member, Javell, who is still working with Elevated Minds, was given a leading role in a movie sequel shown nationwide. The boys wanted a platform to tell their stories as they prepared themselves to train new Met recruits. They all believe that this is a fun way to tell their stories using different genres without being judged.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The drama specialist, Sherita, is a LAMDA teacher.

The testimonial below highlights the LAMDA teacher's passion, skills and dedication.



Sherita guided our son from grade 3 to Grade 8 (gold) LAMDA Verse and Prose. He has now finished his LAMDA journey, having achieved distinctions at bronze, silver and gold level. Sherita forged with our son an endlessly creative and fulfilling relationship. Her personality allows her to relate comfortably with her students but at the same time she ensures they stay focused. Her lessons are enjoyable and collaborative. She helped our son to express himself in pieces as diverse as Shakespeare's sonnets and comic novels. Our son firmly believes that Sherita brought out the best from him, having started his LAMDA journey under another teacher and that he would not have attained the level of success he enjoyed without her guidance and support. As his parents, Sherita has our unequivocal recommendation and thanks for everything she has done for our son.

– Mark and Jill

My experiences as a Headteacher and a member of various professional groups and my responsibility to funders to produce formal reports on our progress involves impact assessments and an evaluation of the quality of each piece of work we do.

PARTNERSHIP WORK

Elevated Minds will work in partnership with Limitless Inc, who facilitates 'expression through the Arts' – delivering Drama and Dance-based programmes or sessions within schools, community groups and to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; with the aim to improve confidence, self-esteem, emotional well-being, communication and personal development. They provide a tailored service where each programme/production is written specifically in line with the requirements of the client group.

They also deliver LAMDA sessions that suitably prepares each learner to sit their LAMDA exams in their chosen discipline.

Limitless Inc has taken a leading role in all aspects of the drama production and LAMDA sessions.

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Youth violence is currently a significant concern of all communities across London, especially the Black community.

Each programme that Elevated Minds delivers is unique in that they are from the initial ideas of young people due to their first-hand experiences.

Our Cultural Awareness training provides new Met recruits with the lens and insight into the experiences and feelings of young people, particularly Black males, which is very powerful. This training is led and delivered by young people, aiming to rebuild the damaged relationship and avoid further damage to the public confidence in the police and police legitimacy. Also, we firmly believe that this training is of tremendous benefit to higher-ranking police staff members.

This drama project provides a platform for young people to use their voices without fear of ridicule. They are given opportunities to gain additional qualifications and showcase all their skills acquired and talents in a final production.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

This project, Shining Through Adversity, gives young people a voice and a platform to share their stories, enabling them to recount how their lives took a different direction at a pivotal time. The entire process of scriptwriting, collating and organising props, assigning roles, and promoting the play will primarily be the responsibility of the young people. The final production showcases the young people's strengths, talents, and abilities as they assume roles that are significant to their real-life experiences.

Participation in Shining Through Adversity enhances the life skills of young people by improving their confidence, self-esteem, emotional well-being, communication and personal development. In addition, it utilises their creative thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving as they take responsibility for their progress and future outcomes.

All young people involved will receive one-to-one or group coaching and mentoring throughout. These sessions will provide young people with alternative strategies to build self-esteem, develop emotional intelligence, increase self-value, and significantly improve their belief in having a better future. Young people will feel empowered by developing their self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-insight through a strengths-based coaching approach.

WORKSHOPS/COURSES

The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) are an awarding organisation providing world-renowned qualifications in communication and performance. All young people involved in Shining Through Adversity will get an opportunity to study LAMDA outside of the practice sessions, suitably preparing them to sit their LAMDA exams in their chosen discipline. This opportunity provides young people with pathways into training in Acting or Directing via completing relevant LAMDA courses.

PREVENTATIVE WORK

Participants in Shining Through Adversity will develop social and emotional skills, such as effective communication skills and empathy, giving them the ability to co-operate with peers and adults, even when they are out of their comfort zone. Social proof and peer pressure can lead to situations where young people feel the need to conform. Recreating and interpreting information, ideas and emotions, and using problem-solving skills and social and creative skills gives young people the tools to change their life outcomes as they learn how to work in a team and be effective, developing tolerance and empathy. Young people will explore their decisions, life actions, and experiences through performances as they take responsibility for their choices and experience the consequences of their decisions, regardless of the circumstances.

First Floor, 120 London Road, London, SE1 6LN ☎ 020 8079 0703

EMAIL: info@elevatedmindscoaching.com **WEBSITE:** www.elevatedmindscoaching.com

📧 @elevatedminds_cic 🎧 @elevatedmindscoaching 📠 @ElevatedMinds_C 🔗 Elevated Minds CIC

Elevated Minds CIC envisions a world where young people and their families are equipped and empowered to know who they are, identify their purpose and raise their aspirations.