



# Growing 2gether

Scottish Youth Mentoring Children

CELCIS: Education Forum  
11.02.25



[www.growing2gether.org.uk](http://www.growing2gether.org.uk)

# Reaching out to the Sector

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## **AIM**

**To gain feedback and insight, from the sector, on the value of a pilot Care Experienced Nursery Mentoring Programme and progression to a Youth Social Action project, and what steps we could take next.**



### Empowering Young People:

- Our programmes help young people build confidence, self-belief, and positivity, supporting their first steps toward positive change and transformation.

### Nursery Mentoring Programme:

- Enables young people to earn a nationally recognised SCQF Level 4 Qualification in Personal Development (“Self in the Community”/“Self Awareness” Units).
- The only programme in Scotland combining mentoring and coaching to support nursery, primary, and secondary pupils.

### Growing2gether Community:

- A youth-led initiative where young people assess community needs, identify issues, and design/deliver projects to address them.

### Wide Reach Across Scotland:

- Active in local authorities from Highland to Moray, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City, and Dundee City.

## Our Mission

We give young people facing disadvantage the support they need to thrive, raising aspiration so they can make positive choices in their lives. We build their mental health, educational engagement and life skills, so that they can contribute to their communities.

## Our Vision

A world where all young people can realise their unique potential, improve their lives for the long term, and contribute to stronger communities.



## Care Experienced Nursery Mentoring Pilot programme (example)

- A 'Growing2gether in partnership' pilot programme for Care Experienced young people (18-24 months) for initially 5 or 6 CE young people (S3-S6) in the group (or more)
- Planning from Feb 25- June 25 / Pilot Nursery Mentoring programme could start in Sept 25 - Jan 26 (Programme 1)
- 2nd Nursery mentoring programme Feb 26-June 26 (Programme 2)
- Youth Social Action (YSA) Programme starts during the 2nd cohort or during summer or from August 26 (Programme 3- flexibility)
- The same young people would go through the whole programme with opportunity to invite new participants if there is drop-off / wider interest/ peer support (initial thinking/feedback is 5-6 is a good size for the first pilot)





*“I could have gone down a really bad road at one time, but, doing Growing2gether and knowing what I want to do, has made all the difference.”*

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt with a black and green graphic, is leaning forward and pointing his right hand towards a large black tire that has been repurposed as a planter. To his left, the side profile of another young boy with curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a black shirt, is visible. In the background, there is a green chain-link fence, a grassy area, and some trees. A yellow plastic tray is on a stand next to the tire. The text "Why choose to join Growing2gether?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

**Why choose to  
join Growing2gether?**

# Our History

- The early days ....
- Growing2gether : Education Scotland
- 2016 Pilot Programmes in Highland
- 2017 to 2024 we have been delivering our Nursery Mentoring programme in Highland, Moray, Aberdeen, Dundee.
- We believe our early intervention programmes could benefit care experienced young people in improving mental, health, educational attainment, behaviour and their aspirations for the future- We want to hear what you think?





# Our Model: Positive Psychology

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There is increasing evidence that interventions based on positive psychology enhance wellbeing which has been recognised by The Scottish Government. This has further created many initiatives to address the significant challenges that children and young people in Scotland are facing today: *Closing the Attainment Gap, Getting it Right for Every Child, the Curriculum for Excellence, Developing Scotland's Young Work Force*, Christie Commission report ([2011](#)) and the National Youth Work strategy ([2014](#))

Growing2gether highly values these initiative and aims to contribute to them. Growing2gether is underpinned by positive and transpersonal psychology, which provide a holistic psychological approach and focuses on enabling individuals to access more of their potential; on developing self-awareness and personal responsibility and on recognising the importance of *meaning* as requirements for well-being and positive engagement with society. Combined, we find a congruent pedagogy with transpersonal psychology and positive psychology, a branch of mainstream psychology which was founded 1998 by Seligman (Seligman 1998). Growing2gether focus on bringing out the unique potential of young people, rather than seeing them as a 'problem', empowering them with life skills, work experience and a deeper understanding of who they are.

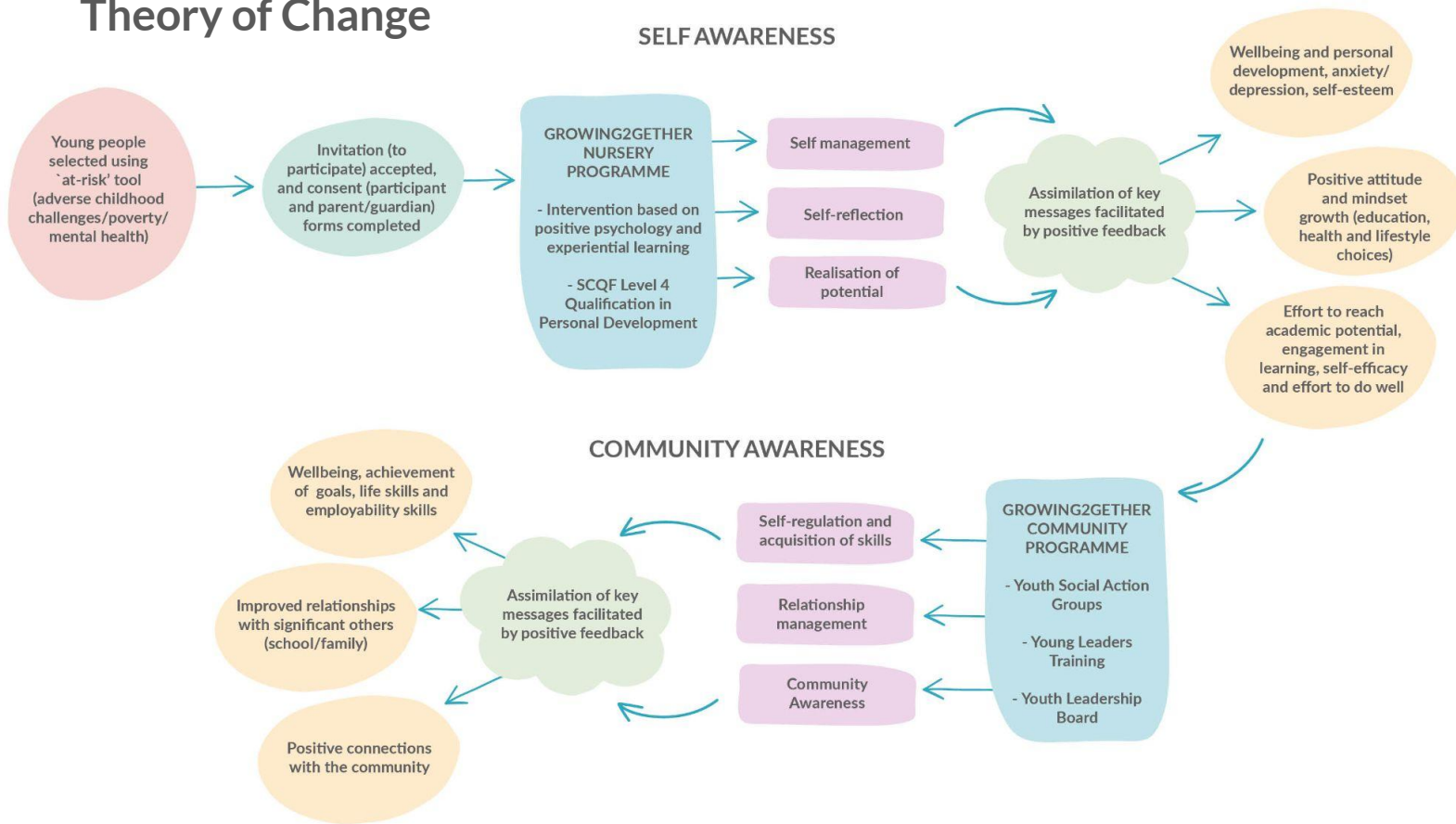


# Our programme(s)

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- **Nursery mentoring programme / Community programme** (key elements)
- Eligibility criteria / risk tool
- Curriculum overview ([link](#))
- SCQF accreditation (UHI)
- Pre and post evaluation with teachers/ young people

# Theory of Change



93% reach a positive destination (education/training work)

# Nursery Mentoring programme

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- An early intervention programme that works closely with secondary schools in Scotland to address the needs of young people's social and emotional development.
- Disengaged young people (13 to 15 years), are offered the opportunity to mentor small children in a nursery setting, providing them with volunteering/work experience.
- Whilst supporting the learning of a small child, the young people realise that they have a valuable contribution to make to their community. By choosing to commit to the programme they have the opportunity of developing self-belief, self-management and confidence.
- Throughout the programme, they also can earn a SCQF level 4 Personal Development units: Self in Community and Self Awareness.

# Our Impact, Outcomes & Evidence

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## Nursery mentoring programme

### Impact

Significant impact on mental health, growth of mindset and self-esteem, as well as engagement with education

### Outcomes (Measured using teacher's assessments)

Significant improvement in, engagement and interest in learning, (37%), grades they are capable of achieving, (42%), effort to reach their potential, (43%), effort to do well (62%), likelihood of achieving the grades they need to further their education, (21%), and self-efficacy, (44%).

### Outcomes (Measured using pupil's assessments)

Significant improvement (18%) in young people's mental health, measured by RCADS ( $t = 6.814$  (109),  $p = <0.01$ ), significant improvement (9%) in self-esteem, measured by Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale ( $t = -4.547$  (206),  $p = <0.01$ ) and significant improvement of 18% in Growth of Mindset ( $t = -7.137$  (186),  $p = <0.01$ )

### Evidence

2017-2023 report ([link](#)) 'Exploring the Efficacy of Growing2gether on Mental Health, Education and Behavioural Outcomes', which was peer reviewed by Highland Councils Educational Psychology team.

2023-2024 [Report](#) / school letters of support ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#))



Our Reach: Over 2400+ young people/children since 2017.  
Delivering in Highland, Moray, Dundee, Aberdeen.

Since 2017 we empowered 2400 young people to  
mentor 2400 children across the Scottish Highlands!

**OUR  
IMPACT  
2017-2024**



**90%** of teachers agreed that the young people were more confident



**23%** improvement in young people's mental health, after participating in our programme



**95%** of young people agreed that education provides them with more opportunities in life



**93%** of young people would recommend Growing2gether to others

# Sustainability: Upskilling Schools and Staff

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- We train a school staff member, e.g. Pupil Support Assistant/Guidance staff and / or a youth worker to deliver the programme, building skills which benefit children & young people.
- Once the school is `independent`, Growing2gether continues to provide quality assurance, outcome evaluation and supervision

*“The training helped me to develop my active listening skills and allowed me to really ‘be’ with the young person in that moment. Valuing and listening to the young person allows them to grow and flourish. It is a privilege to see their confidence grow week by week.”*

*School Facilitator (trained by Growing2gether)*

Growing2gether Lead Facilitator Marit Beije (right) and trainee facilitator and youth worker at Elgin Academy, Derri Chamberlin (left).





## 'Growing2gether Community'

The Community Programme covers several key areas of community engagement and development with young people and is the overarching title for all Community Development work we engage with.

### Youth Social Action (YSA) projects

A 16 session , youth-led community project. This is a follow-on project from the nursery mentoring programme, and takes place out with school time.

Previous participants of Growing2gether who have chosen to continue to engage with us within a community youth action remit and wider support for the charity.

### Youth Leadership Board

Supports young people with leadership skills and experiences, the chance to peer support others, co-facilitate sessions and the opportunity to work towards other modules of the SCQF award

### Young Leaders Training



# Youth Participation Board

- Helping shape the charity's programmes to meet the needs of young people
- Supporting all Growing2gether participants
- Building life skills and mental health
- Giving young people a voice



# Showcasing Growing2gether's

## YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION GROUP

Read about it and watch their film  
"Stereotypes of Young People"



### Stage One

The Team form their group

### Stage Three

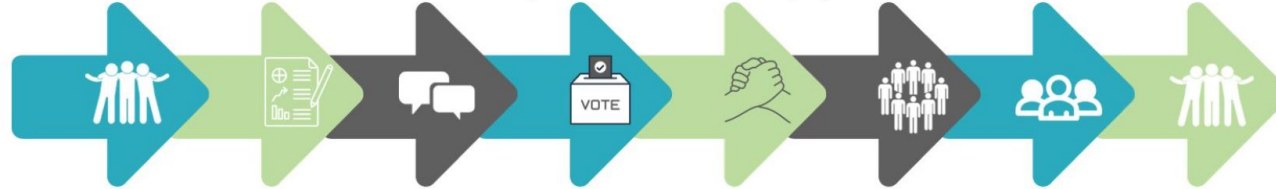
The team hold a community consultation (focus group) to hear from their community

### Stage Five

The team collaborate with a local community mentor to plan and undertake their project

### Stage Seven

The team showcase and celebrate their project with their community



### Stage Two

The team plan how to engage with their community for ideas on what are the communities needs

### Stage Four

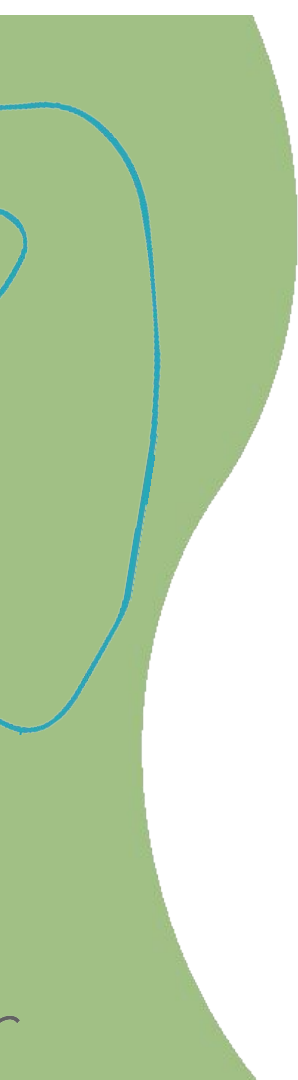
The team individually vote/score their preference for a community project . Voting is scored and project announced

### Stage Six

The project is delivered

### Stage Eight

The team evaluate their project, impact and learning and communicate project to wider community/alumni



In total, **210** young people from **Craigie High School** were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire designed to help provide a better understanding of how Growing2gether can improve their programme, in order to make it more relevant and appealing for young people. Participants were asked to rate how important a series of issues were. Each question is scored on a 5-point scale (1=Very Important, 2=Important, 3=Moderately important, 4=Slightly Important, 5=Not Important). The percentage of positive responses is achieved by summing the number of the 'Very Important' and 'Important' responses to each question and then expressing them as a percentage of the overall number of responses.

- **98%** agreed that “mental health” was either very important or important.
- **81%** agreed that “school and study problems” was either very important or important.
- **85%** agreed that “communication and relationships” was either very important or important.
- **84%** agreed that “coping with stress” was either very important or important.
- **84%** agreed that “self-esteem” was either very important or important.
- **89%** agreed that “bullying” was either very important or important.
- **81%** agreed that “connecting with others” was either very important or important.
- **76%** agreed that “sexual health” was either very important or important.
- **98%** agreed that “family problems” was either very important or important.
- **85%** agreed that “drug awareness” was either very important or important.
- **84%** agreed that “dealing with emotions” was either very important or important.

## Care Experienced Nursery Mentoring Pilot programme

- Gavin has initially met with Kellie Cunningham (Highland Council), whose team may be interested in a pilot programme.
- As part of reaching out to the sector to gain feedback on this initiative, Gavin met with Michael Bettencourt (CELCIS) / progressing with links to Education Forum / VSHT network. Also linked in with Tom Boyd (The Promise Team) and reached out to Carmel Jacobs (Chair of Who Cares? Scotland)
- **We are keen to hear from the sector:** Is their benefit in a Nursery mentoring + Community programme that allows Care Experienced young people (S3-S6) the opportunity to mentor children in Nursery, gain an SCQF qualification and then progress onto a Youth Social Action project in their community?
- **OUTCOMES:** Improved mental health outcomes /improved attendance & participation / Co-creating a sense of belonging in their community/ Accreditation (SCQF lvl 4) / Employability + Skills (work experience)

## Next Steps

- Who else should we speak to in the sector?
- Who might be interesting in partnering for a 12-18 month pilot programme - Gavin to follow up with Highland Council
- Where could we go for match funding?
- We are keen to hear from the sector: Is their benefit in a Nursery mentoring programme that allows Care Experienced young people (S3-S6+) the opportunity to mentor children in Nursery, gain an SCQF qualification and then progress onto a Youth Social Action project, to benefit their community?





## Breakout room questions

- 1. Why do you think care experienced young people would benefit from this early intervention programme- how will it help them address the issues they face?**
- 2. Who else should we be speaking to (who else could we partner with) / Any funding you may be aware of that could support an initial Pilot programme and wider development?**
- 3. What else should we be considering (ie trauma informed approach / co-design by young people) to help in the planning/delivery/evaluation process**

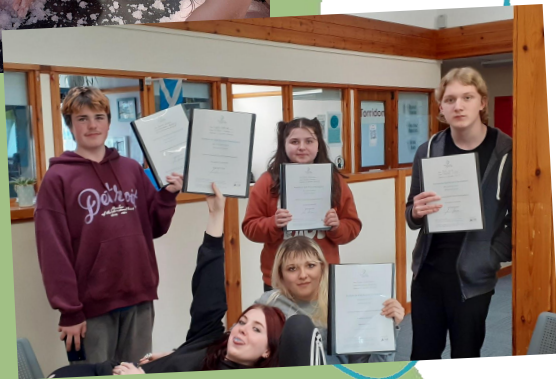
Our work  
proves to be

**life**  
**changing**

for some of  
our participants



  
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Contact **Gavin Morgan** for more information:

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