

OUR VOICES

COMMUNITY IMPACT
IN ACTION

Our Voices - Community Impact in Action

CommonHealth Assets (CHA) is a research project, led by Glasgow Caledonian University, investigating how community-led organisations (CLOs) impact on health and wellbeing.

One aspect of the research is the development of 'Programme Theories', which explain how community-led organisations improve the health and wellbeing of individuals through their activities. As of November 2024, five theories had been identified by the research team. This list is not a finalised version, the research team are still working on the data, however, it reflects the overarching themes emerging from the research findings:

1. Self-Worth, Empowerment, Confidence
2. Purpose, Productivity and Social Connection
3. Healthy Living, Improving Physical and Mental Health
4. Space and Inclusion
5. Social interaction, Inspiration and Self-esteem

At the heart of the project, is the Lived Experience Panel (LEP), made up of 11 participants from the project partnered CLOs, which has met biannually for the last three years to ensure that the research is informed by ongoing community expertise, voice, and perspective. As part of this, the LEP worked on the development of the programme theories with the research team.

This comic was produced in collaboration between Magic Torch Comics and the CHA LEP to bring the work-in-progress programme theories to life, through LEP members individual stories of participating and volunteering at their local CLOs.

Annexe Communities (Glasgow), Colin Neighbourhood Partnership (Belfast), Vita Nova (Bournemouth), Bromley by Bow and Poplar HARCA (East London) and Healthy Valleys (South Lanarkshire).

This comic illustrates themes in the research data in an accessible way to demonstrate the important and valuable work of community-led organisations in supporting health and wellbeing in their communities. We hope that this comic will help community-led organisations showcase and celebrate their work with community members and stakeholders.



Self Worth, Empowerment, Confidence



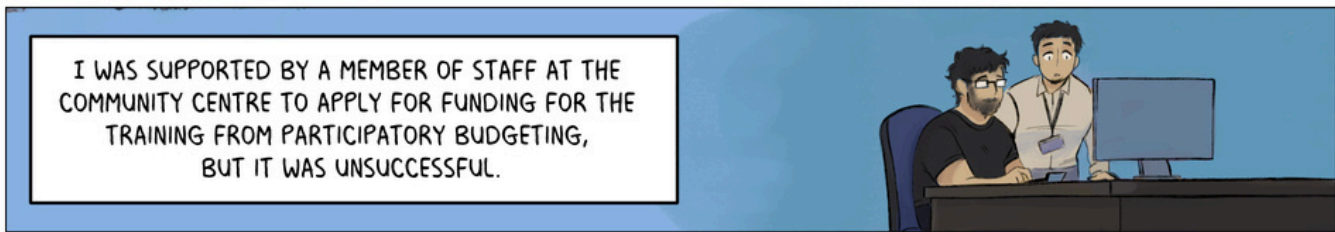
I HAVE DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY, AND AM LONG TERM SICK.

I ATTEND MY LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATION AS A PARTICIPANT AND A VOLUNTEER

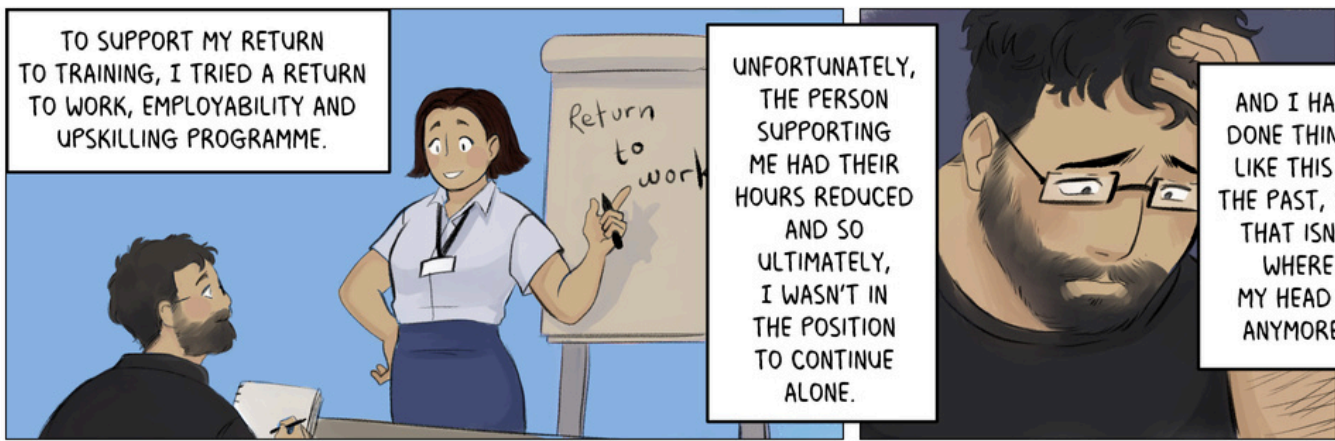


IN THE PAST I HAD BEEN A FIRST AID TRAINER, BUT I STOPPED DUE TO POOR MENTAL HEALTH

NOW, I'M BEING SUPPORTED BY MY COMMUNITY ORGANISATION TO DELIVER FIRST AID TRAINING, FOR PEOPLE THERE, AND OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS.



I WAS SUPPORTED BY A MEMBER OF STAFF AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR THE TRAINING FROM PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING, BUT IT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL.



TO SUPPORT MY RETURN TO TRAINING, I TRIED A RETURN TO WORK, EMPLOYABILITY AND UPSKILLING PROGRAMME.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PERSON SUPPORTING ME HAD THEIR HOURS REDUCED AND SO ULTIMATELY, I WASN'T IN THE POSITION TO CONTINUE ALONE.



AND I HAVE DONE THINGS LIKE THIS IN THE PAST, BUT THAT ISN'T WHERE MY HEAD IS ANYMORE...



BUT I'M HOPEFUL NOW THAT WORKING FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS, WE CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER TO GET IT TO THE POINT WHERE IT CAN HAPPEN

TO GET TO A PLACE WHERE I FEEL MORE IN CONTROL.



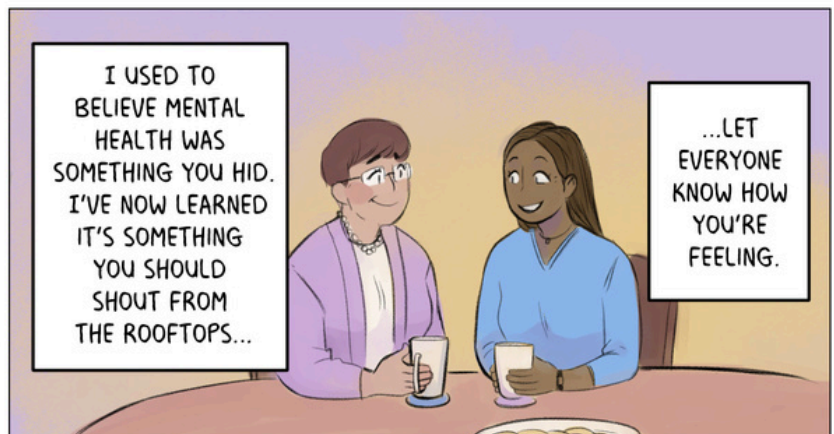
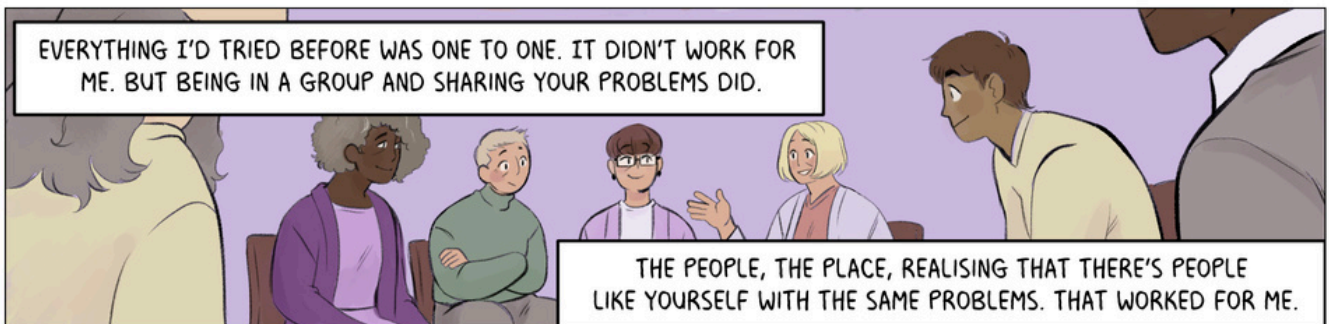
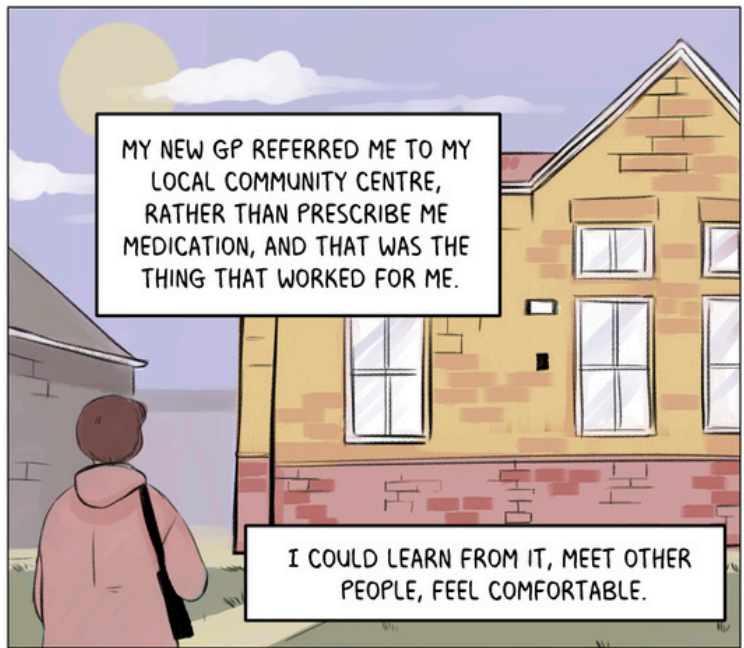
I LEAVE THE HOUSE MORE, I DON'T FEAR THE OUTSIDE WORLD, I CAN OPEN THE CURTAINS...

IT HAS SNOWBALLED INTO ALL THESE OTHER THINGS.



THE SUPPORT I'VE HAD AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE HAS INCREASED MY SELF-WORTH, EMPOWERED ME.

Space and Inclusion

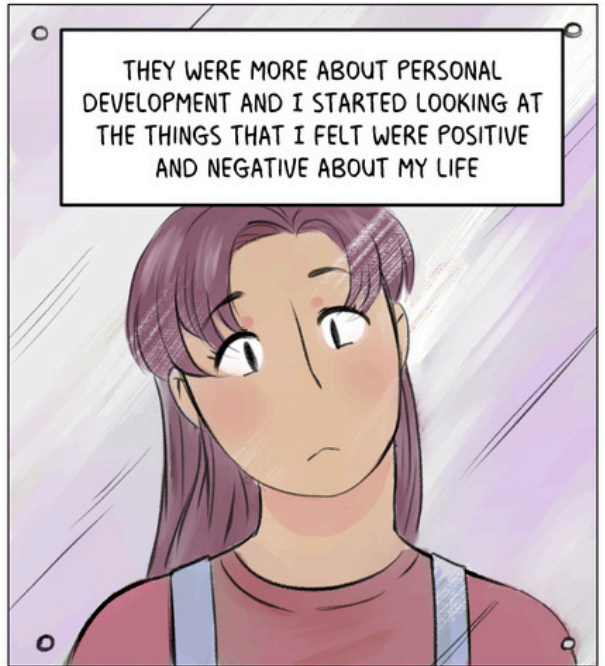


Improvements to Physical and Mental Health

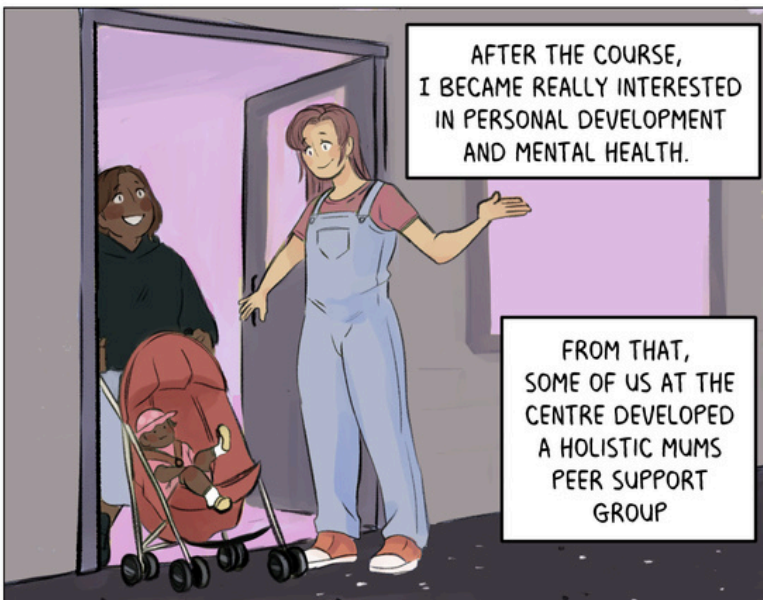


I GOT INVOLVED WITH MY LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATION THROUGH CRAFT ACTIVITIES AND GRADUALLY I ENGAGED MORE WITH THE STAFF...

...THEN GOT INVOLVED IN SOME OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COURSES THAT THEY WERE RUNNING.



THEY WERE MORE ABOUT PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND I STARTED LOOKING AT THE THINGS THAT I FELT WERE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ABOUT MY LIFE



AFTER THE COURSE, I BECAME REALLY INTERESTED IN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH.

FROM THAT, SOME OF US AT THE CENTRE DEVELOPED A HOLISTIC MUMS PEER SUPPORT GROUP



WE HAD FOUND THERE WAS A GAP IN SERVICES FOR YOUNG MUMS WHO HAD MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

SOMETHING I HAD EXPERIENCED MYSELF.



I FOUND IT AWKWARD WHEN YOU WENT TO PARENT & TODDLER GROUPS AND EVERYONE JUST SEEMED TO BE A PERFECT PARENT.

I WANTED TO CREATE A SPACE WHERE PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T FIT INTO THAT BOX COULD HEAR FROM OTHERS THAT FELT THE SAME.



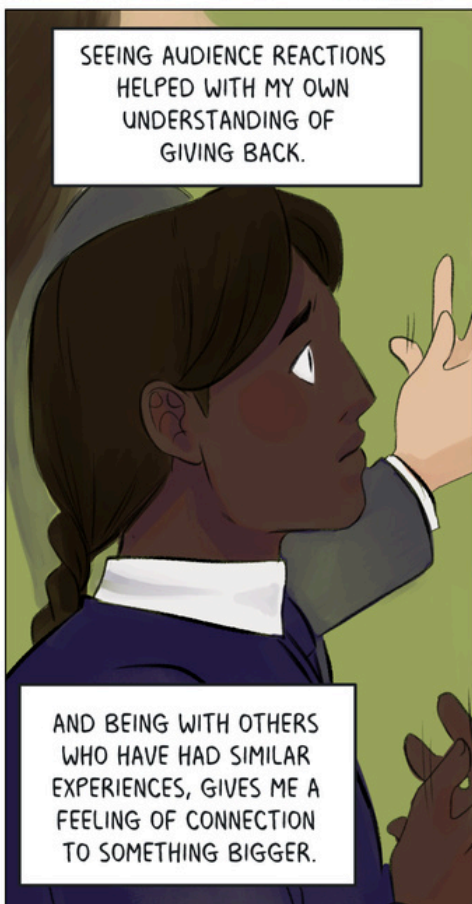
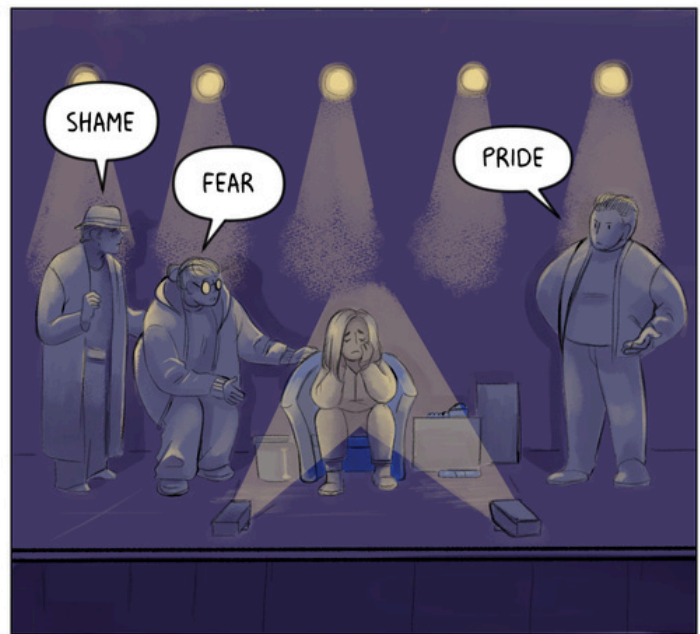
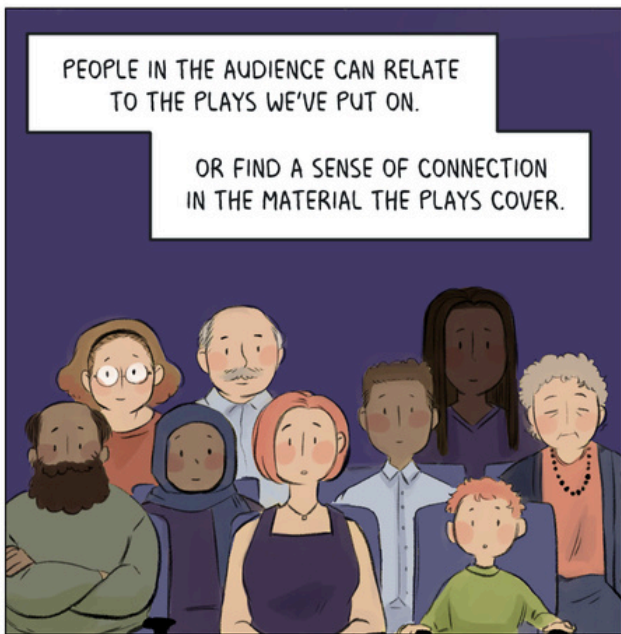
THE GROUP EMPOWERED ME TO BE A BETTER PARENT, WHILST IMPROVING MY MENTAL HEALTH.

SUPPORT FROM THE MUM'S GROUP HELPED TO IMPROVE MOTHER/BABY RELATIONSHIPS, RATHER THAN ALL THE FOCUS BEING ON THE BABY WHILE MUMS' MENTAL HEALTH WAS SEEN AS A SIDE ISSUE.

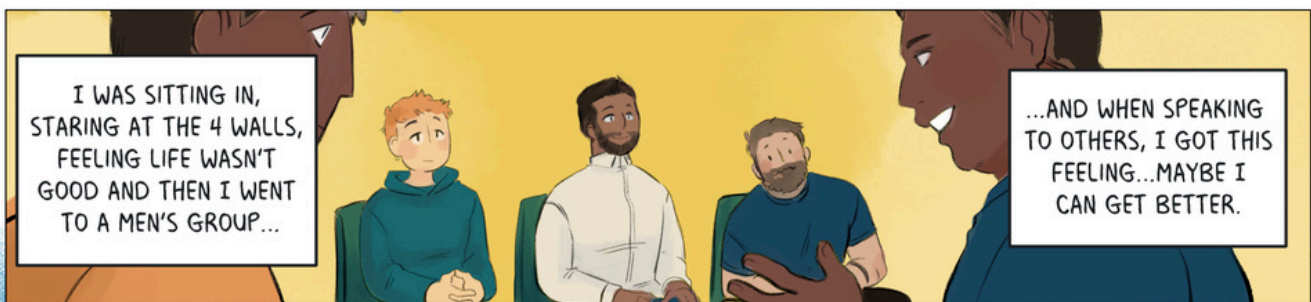


BY HAVING THIS NON-JUDGEMENTAL SPACE AND GETTING THE SUPPORT OF OTHER PARENTS, MY CONFIDENCE GREW, AND I WAS ABLE TO DEVELOP HEALTHY HABITS FOR MYSELF.

Purpose, Productivity and Social Connection



Social Interaction, Inspiration and Self-Esteem



I REALISED HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS OF SUPPORT,
WHICH CAN SOMETIMES BE DIFFICULT FOR MEN



The Power of Communities

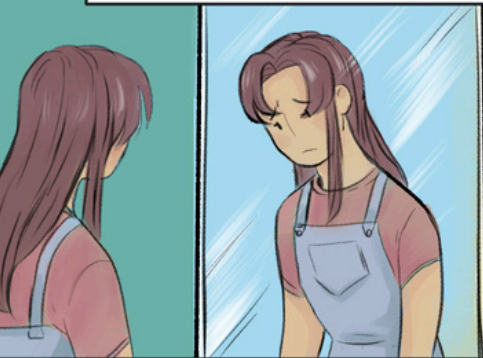


PEOPLE DON'T TALK ABOUT THE THOUGHTS, THE FEARS IN THEIR HEADS.

WE'RE ALL SCARED, WE ALL FEEL SELF-DOUBT, BUT WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT.

BUT WE ALL GET THOSE VOICES AND IT'S NOT THAT IT'S A MENTAL HEALTH THING.

THERE'S ALWAYS THIS WHISPER, "I WISH I HAD DONE THIS THAT WAY, OR SAID THAT INSTEAD"



SOMETIMES LOW SELF-ESTEEM GETS THE BETTER OF ALL OF US. IT'S AN EVERYDAY THING. AND WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT ENOUGH. BUT WE ARE TODAY. IN THIS GROUP.



PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH HARDSHIP CAN HELP OTHERS, WE'RE NOT SUPERHEROES...



...BUT WE CAN HELP.

BEING CONNECTED WITH OTHERS AND YOUR EMOTIONS, RECOGNISING WHEN YOU'RE OUT OF KEY AND HOW ITS EFFECTING YOU... IT'S SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT.



THAT'S WHERE YOU NEED YOUR COMMUNITY.



NOT EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE, JUST ONE GROUP OR SESSION AT A TIME, BUT GRADUALLY ALL THESE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OPEN UP TO YOU.

YOU DON'T ALWAYS WANT THINGS TO BE FORMAL, SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED MINDFUL ACTIVITIES...



...TO QUIET THAT MIND THAT GETS YOU TO A PLACE WHERE YOU FEEL YOU CAN TALK.

YOU FEEL SAFE AND SUPPORTED TO EXPLORE YOUR VULNERABILITIES.



Thank you to our Lived Experience Panel members and our community partner organisations for their involvement and support in the creation of this comic.



Comic created by Magic Torch Comics CIC
Artwork by Catriona Laird

For more information:

www.commonhealthassets.uk

www.gcph.co.uk



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