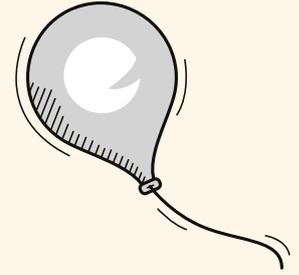


# North Ayrshire – Student Perspective



## St. Matthew's Academy: Spreading the message – a student's passion to educate their peers

### What is it?

Following See Me training one student was empowered to initiate change in her own school.

### Who is it for?

For other pupils within the school to feel listened to, respected and most importantly, safe.

### What was done?

Pupils were selected to be Wellbeing Ambassadors within the school. As part of a leadership project a school pupil from St. Matthew's Academy organised Mental Health Workshops within her school to coincide with a Wellbeing Day. The pupil took knowledge gained as a Youth Champion with See Me, and combined this with personal experience (in a safe way) to empower others to see the challenge that is present in fighting mental health stigma and discrimination.

### Why was it done?

In her own words:

*"At my leadership project and wellbeing day I had organised mental health workshops. I was able to take my knowledge and experience with See Me and put this forward to my school and promote our school community as safe and respectful. All whilst highlighting the importance of our Mental Health Ambassadors and why they were created."*

The mental health workshops were on four different topics:

1. Discrimination – What is it? How can we tackle it?
2. Physical/Mental Health – What are the differences?  
How do people view them differently?  
How can we promote positivity in this?
3. Coping mechanisms – Why do we need these?  
Different ways we can cope with stress and anxiety.
4. Signs of poor mental health – how can we prevent this?

*These workshops were for the 4th years in my school as part of their wellbeing day. Throughout the day we took them group by group and they worked their way around all the different workshops and engaged with the Mental Health Ambassadors on the topic discussion and created mind maps. I held a meeting with teachers and the ambassadors to plan out everyone's task, created a presentation and ensured classrooms were booked for this to happen.*

*This was inspired by my experience at the EYP residential, the journey See Me put me on with them and my greater understanding of topics such as stigma and discrimination. It gave me the confidence to want to share this with others in my school and promote the normality on speaking out about your mental health."*

The workshop plans were inspired by resources from the See Me 'What's On Your Mind?' pack that was designed for young people, by young people. These are used across the country by EYP staff and Youth Champions when delivering training or information sessions. They are also designed to be used by pupils and teachers by being integrated into lessons, or (if possible) as standalone events – like here at St. Matthews Academy by an amazingly inspirational pupil.

### What was the impact?

In her own words:

*"This had such a crucial impact for St. Matthew's Academy as it promoted the goals set within the school to create it as a safe space for all. It also gave the pupils taking part a chance to discuss mental health as school is a massive part in a young person's emotional welfare, so this was a chance to provide this equal support for everyone in my school."*

This is an example of the positive outcomes from the strong partnership working with North Ayrshire Council. This has involved all senior pupils, and some staff, within the local authority schools being trained in SMHFA. To date, 240 students and 48 staff members have been trained. Such training further enforces the safe, non-judgemental and positive environment that was established within the school by the work of passionate pupils, such as the one outlined here at St. Matthews Academy. With other examples being present across the local authority.

### Resources

- EYP Residential [Link »](#)