

BRIGHTENING LIVES

MARINA BAY
SINGAPORE
COUNTDOWN
2024

THE
Majority
TRUST

Stories of Featured Majority Grantee Partners

These groupings, nonprofits and charities work tirelessly all year to alleviate the struggles and brighten the lives of vulnerable individuals and families among us who often struggle on their own.

Youths struggling with depression



Youths struggling
with depression

Supporting children and youths from disadvantaged and disengaged families who face hardships through residential care, fostering service, respite care, youth outreach, adventure therapy, and clinical intervention

About Boys' Town

Boys' Town is a charity in Singapore that equips children and youth in need with skills to become socially integrated, responsible and contributing members of society.

Example

Adventure therapy to build mental strength and resilience for youths.

Since 2016, Boys' Town Adventure Centre (BTAC) has connected children and youths to outdoor adventure through their individualised programmes. The Adventure Specialists at BTAC are trained professionals in the fields of outdoor adventure, psychology, and social work.

"We use the adventure-based activity as a medium for engagement because it can exact therapeutic effects without the potential stigmatisation attached to being in therapy. There is [still] stigma attached to mental health issues so this becomes the barrier to entry and it's a lot lower, because there's an activity. [The youth] have something else to focus on."

– Lim Teck Koon, Senior Adventure Specialist, Manager (BTAC).

The Majority Trust also supports Boys Town's Little Hearts, Big Hearts programme, a three-phased programme that includes:

(i) public outreach to raise awareness on mental health issues, (ii) micro adventure based activities with children and youth, and their caregivers, and (iii) targeted intervention for children and youth identified from the micro adventure-based activities who have been assessed with risk of depression.

When the COVID-19 pandemic peaked worldwide and in Singapore, Boys' Town Adventure Centre team recognized the urgency of addressing children and youth mental health at the early onset. This is in part due to the higher incidence of mental health issues reported by the media.

This led them to kickstart a new public awareness programme to destigmatise mental health issues and depression. The team focused on providing resources for caregivers and parents of youths experiencing mental health issues through roadshows and parent-child engagement sessions for their services.

**BRIGHTENING
LIVES**

boystown.org.sg

Feature Story

Aldrich Jai Kishen Ramakrishnan entered Boys' Town in 2007 after displaying various "rebellious behaviours", including smoking and skipping class.

He was in residential care at Boys' Town throughout Secondary School, before graduating from the charity in 2010.

Jai eventually returned to Boys' Town as a youth worker in 2016.

Now 28, the senior youth worker organises regular street outreach programmes and engages with youths who face a range of issues such as self-harm, struggles in school, and conflict in relationships, as part of Boys' Town's YouthReach programme.

"A lot of these boys did nothing to be in Boys' Town, especially now that we have a lot of child protection and complex trauma cases.

As a former resident, I can relate to that experience where, as much as I loved my time there, I hated that I was stuck in a place I didn't want.

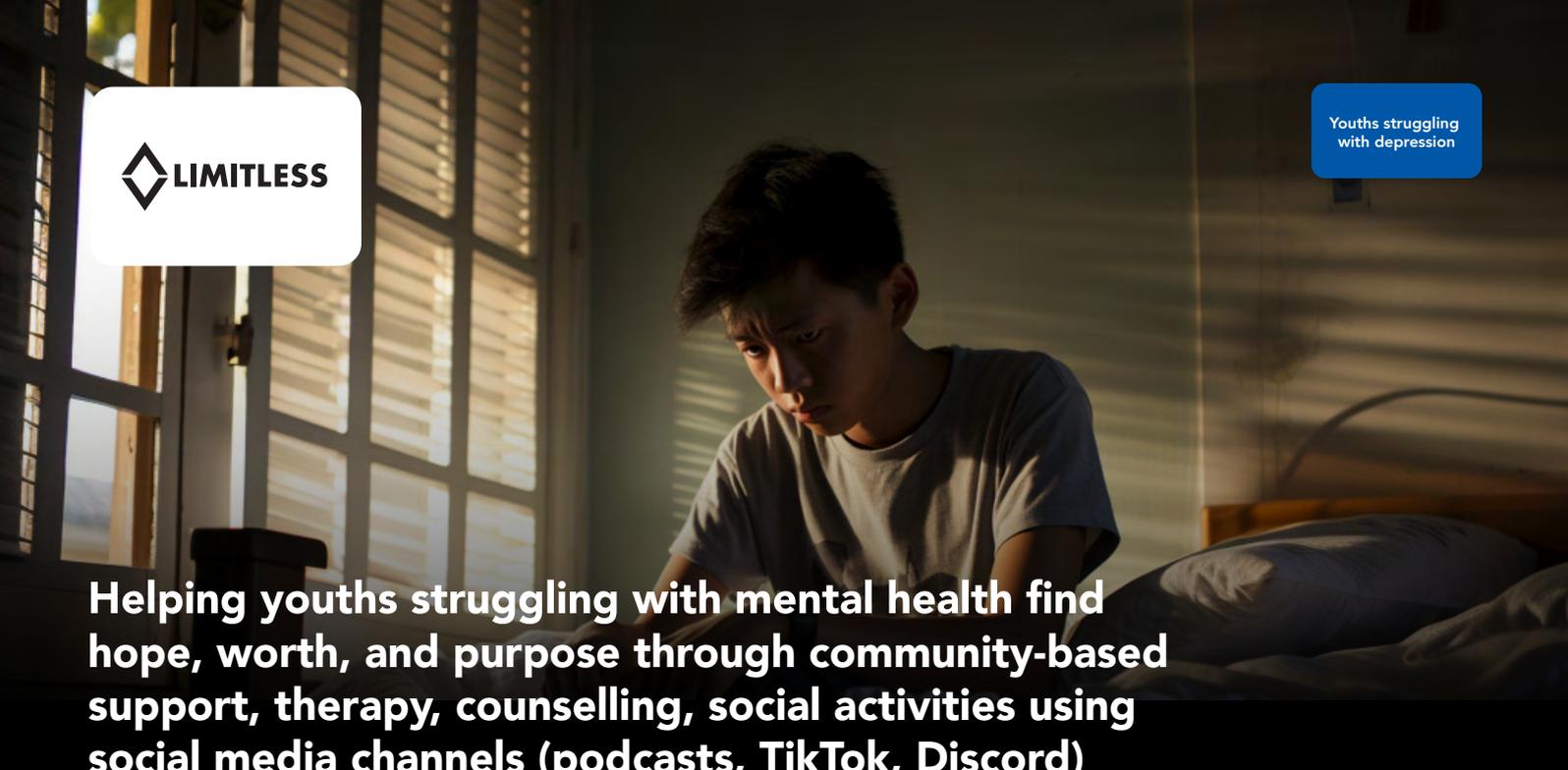
Knowing that and giving the boys the space to talk about their situation, and how they can make the best of it, is what I hope to impart to my boys. To have that renewed outlook.

I feel their struggle and I'm now in a position to support."



Media Feature

This former Boys' Town resident is now a full-time youth worker there. He shares why he went back.



Helping youths struggling with mental health find hope, worth, and purpose through community-based support, therapy, counselling, social activities using social media channels (podcasts, TikTok, Discord)

About Limitless

Limitless is a nonprofit organisation founded with the desire to give every youth the opportunity to live out their potential.

On average, it takes youths with mental health conditions up to 6 years to seek help. Many often struggle but don't seek help due to multiple reasons including the stigma of seeking help or for fear of being ridiculed.

To reach these youths who are struggling, Limitless developed outreach and awareness initiatives using popular online channels among youths. (podcasts, TikTok, Discord).

Example

Online Safe house for youths to get mental health support from volunteers and counsellor.

Leveraging technology, Limitless provides counselling support on the instant messaging platform, Discord.

Named SafeHouse, the online discord server created by Limitless enables youth to message and receive help from trained mental health professionals on the platform at any hour of the day. Youths can approach Peer Support Specialists on the channel for therapeutic support.

Feature Story

“We want to create barrier-free access to treatment in the youth mental health space.”

– Asher Low, Founder and Executive Director of Limitless

The 34-year-old started Limitless in 2016 to level the odds for the youths-at-risk that he saw through the cases he handled. “I wanted to go beyond just a social worker for the young people’s parents, for them to come direct to us and open up about their issues.”

As a teenager growing up and struggling with body image woes and mental health problems, Asher understood the difficulty faced in reaching out for help. It was for this reason that Asher saw the need for youths seeking help to have dignity restored to them in the process of doing so.

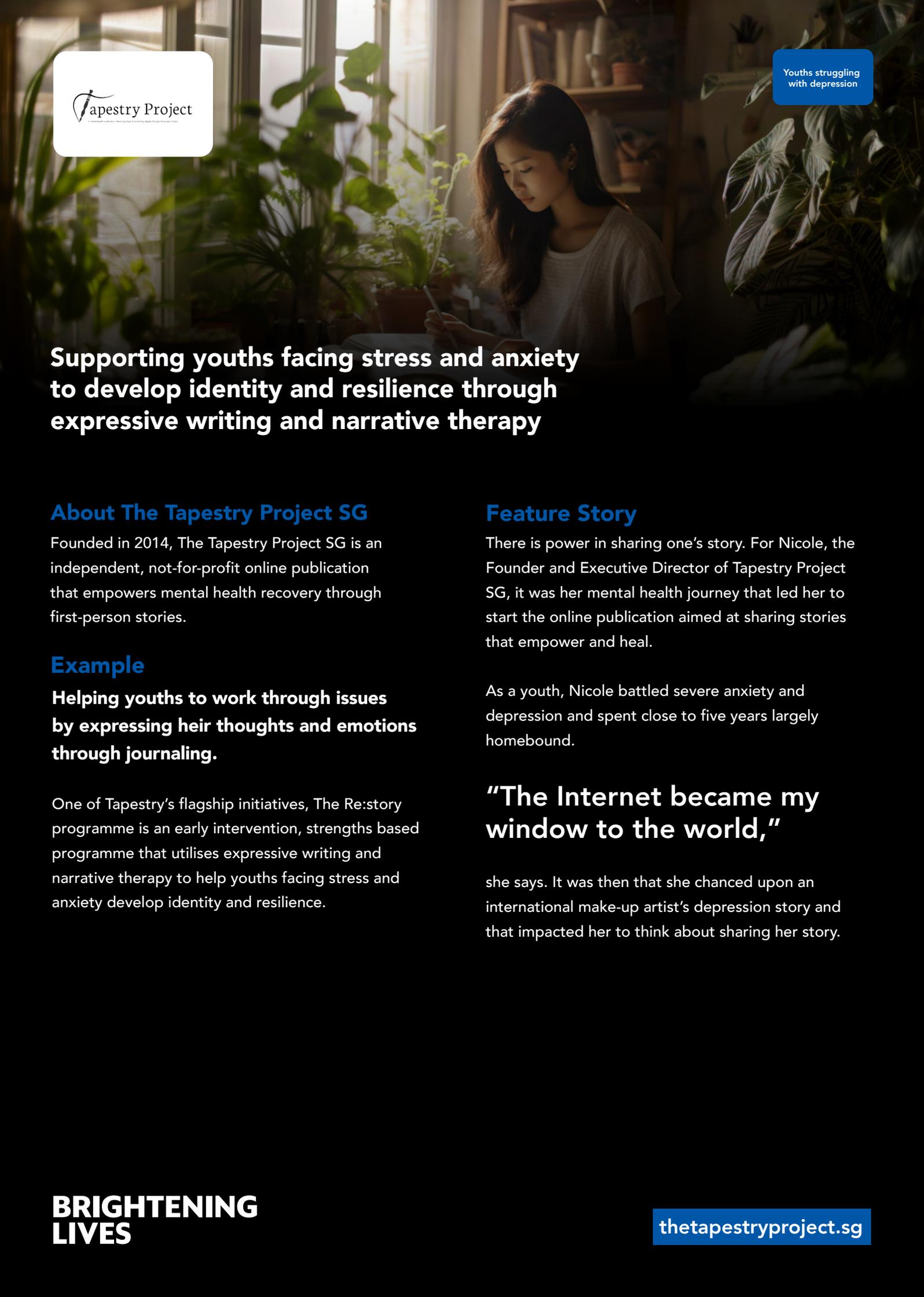
“A lot of the youths are familiar with each other’s journey, they talk about their small wins, share their anxieties or mental issues, or they just simply hang out with each other online,”

says Asher who has seen youths with suicidal tendencies become the voice of reason and empathy for other young persons. That, he describes, is the empowerment that Limitless aims to give to those who struggle with mental health issues.



Media Feature

Youth in Action: A survivor of mental health struggles turns his focus to helping young people find their way



Supporting youths facing stress and anxiety to develop identity and resilience through expressive writing and narrative therapy

About The Tapestry Project SG

Founded in 2014, The Tapestry Project SG is an independent, not-for-profit online publication that empowers mental health recovery through first-person stories.

Example

Helping youths to work through issues by expressing their thoughts and emotions through journaling.

One of Tapestry's flagship initiatives, The Re:story programme is an early intervention, strengths based programme that utilises expressive writing and narrative therapy to help youths facing stress and anxiety develop identity and resilience.

Feature Story

There is power in sharing one's story. For Nicole, the Founder and Executive Director of Tapestry Project SG, it was her mental health journey that led her to start the online publication aimed at sharing stories that empower and heal.

As a youth, Nicole battled severe anxiety and depression and spent close to five years largely homebound.

"The Internet became my window to the world,"

she says. It was then that she chanced upon an international make-up artist's depression story and that impacted her to think about sharing her story.

The lack of personal first-hand accounts online by those going through mental health challenges also seeded the idea for The Tapestry Project SG.

Nicole had hoped to create a safe space for young people struggling with their mental health to share their challenges, feel heard, and find acceptance.

“I wanted people to not feel alone as I once did, it was also my mission to eradicate the stigma behind mental illness.

You don’t need a diagnosis to say that you are struggling with mental health, you don’t need to write a story that always ends with recovery.”



Media Feature

How local creative and founder of The Tapestry Project SG emerged out of the darkness

Supporting and journeying with high-risk youths facing adversity and mental health issues through Education, Community, and Mental Health Care

From left: Joshua (Impart), Melaha

About Impart

Impart is a charity in Singapore that supports youths facing adversity through educational support, sports engagement and passion projects.

In a world where circumstances can often hinder one's dreams, Impart has been working tirelessly to brighten the lives of youths facing adversity – many of whom others have given up on.

Example

One-on-one support to journey with youths facing adversity and mental health challenges.

One of its flagship initiatives, the “Jetpack” programme provides academic and career support to these struggling youths through tailored educational support sessions with trained volunteers, career exploration and mentoring opportunities, as well as a financial literacy curriculum with a savings matching programme.

Feature Story

Maleha is one of many youths who have benefited from Impart's support.

The 21-year-old overcame abuse, depression and eating disorder, excelling at A levels and is now on track to pursue her dream of studying psychology.

Maleha is one of many youths who have benefited from Impart's support. The 21-year-old overcame abuse, depression and eating disorder, excelling at A levels, and is now on track to pursue her dream of studying psychology.

Maleha's journey was far from easy. Despite a strong desire to study, family and life circumstances forced her to drop out before completing her O-Level examinations.



Media Feature

She overcame abuse, depression and eating disorder to score two As at A levels

Through a chance encounter with a volunteer from Impart, Maleha's life took an unexpected turn. Enrolling in Impart's Jetpack programme, Maleha was attached to 5 volunteer tutors that supported her academically and emotionally throughout her A-Level examinations preparation journey. Her hard work coupled with their guiding light led her to achieve remarkable grades.

Maleha credits Impart for shaping her future and is building towards her aspiration to be a teacher for children with special needs.

Today, she is a volunteer at Impart and is journeying with and supporting other youths like herself.

Equipping youths with personal development and leadership skills to better manage stressors of life and improve their mental health

About Character & Leadership Academy (CLA)

Character & Leadership Academy (CLA) is a youth development charity that seeks to engage, empower and equip youths of today, both local and international, with essential personal development and leadership skills, alongside appropriate character traits for an ever-changing world of tomorrow.

Example

Equipping youth with resilient building and mental wellness skills to manage stress.

The HAPPYOUTH Programme runs workshops, assembly programmes, and conferences that equip the youth with a coping mechanism to better manage stressors of life and improve their mental health.

CLA's focus on equipping youth with resilient building and mental wellness skills to manage stress plays a crucial role in their suicide prevention efforts.

CLA not only improves the resilience of their beneficiaries but also multiplies their impact as their beneficiaries are better equipped to spot and provide support for peers who may be under significant stress.

Feature Story

"Pause. Think. Choose. Act." (PTCA) This simple acronym has empowered students with the ability and skills to manage overwhelming emotions in stressful situations.

This is one of the coping tools that CLA teaches at the HappYouth workshop for primary, secondary and tertiary students. Lionel, Project Lead of HappYouth 3.1 shares how a trainer used PTCA to work with Jake, a participant of the programme. Jake struggled with anger and bullied everyone around him. However, the trainer knew that Jake was struggling with a lot of stress back home with his family.

During the programme he hurled vulgarities often as he was easily angered. The CLA trainer spoke to him in private and said "Why don't we do this, every day I am going to give you a count of how many times you can be angry. Let's try this, you will decide the count."



Media Feature

New programme launched to equip religious leaders with suicide prevention skills

On the first day, Jake gave himself a limit of 50 times to get angry. But there was a catch. Each time Jake wanted to be angry, he had to raise his hand and wait for the trainer to acknowledge his request. Jake was then free to decide if he wanted to spew vulgarities. Jake was happy because he had the freedom to express his anger.

That day, he used up all 50 counts. The next day, he asked for 100 times but interestingly, he only used up slightly more than 40 counts for himself. The trainers would praise him for doing so. Over time with encouragement, they saw big improvements in Jake; having fewer outbursts and scolding less vulgarities.

He eventually found himself not caring about what people did to him and had no desire to be angry.

He was exercising PTCA each time he raised his hand in that moment of anger. He paused to raise his hand and had to wait for the trainer to acknowledge him.

This lag between when he raised hand and the trainer responding, was when he could cool down and think about what he would do next. After a while, Jake told the trainers that he did not see the point of getting angry. He had learnt PTCA (Pause Think Choose Act) from the trainer though not explicitly with specific instructions.