BUILDING BRIDGES

Creative Journal



ANSTEE BRIDGE

When I speak of Anstee Bridge
I think of colour and comfort

When I speak of colour and comfort
I think of a fluffy pillow

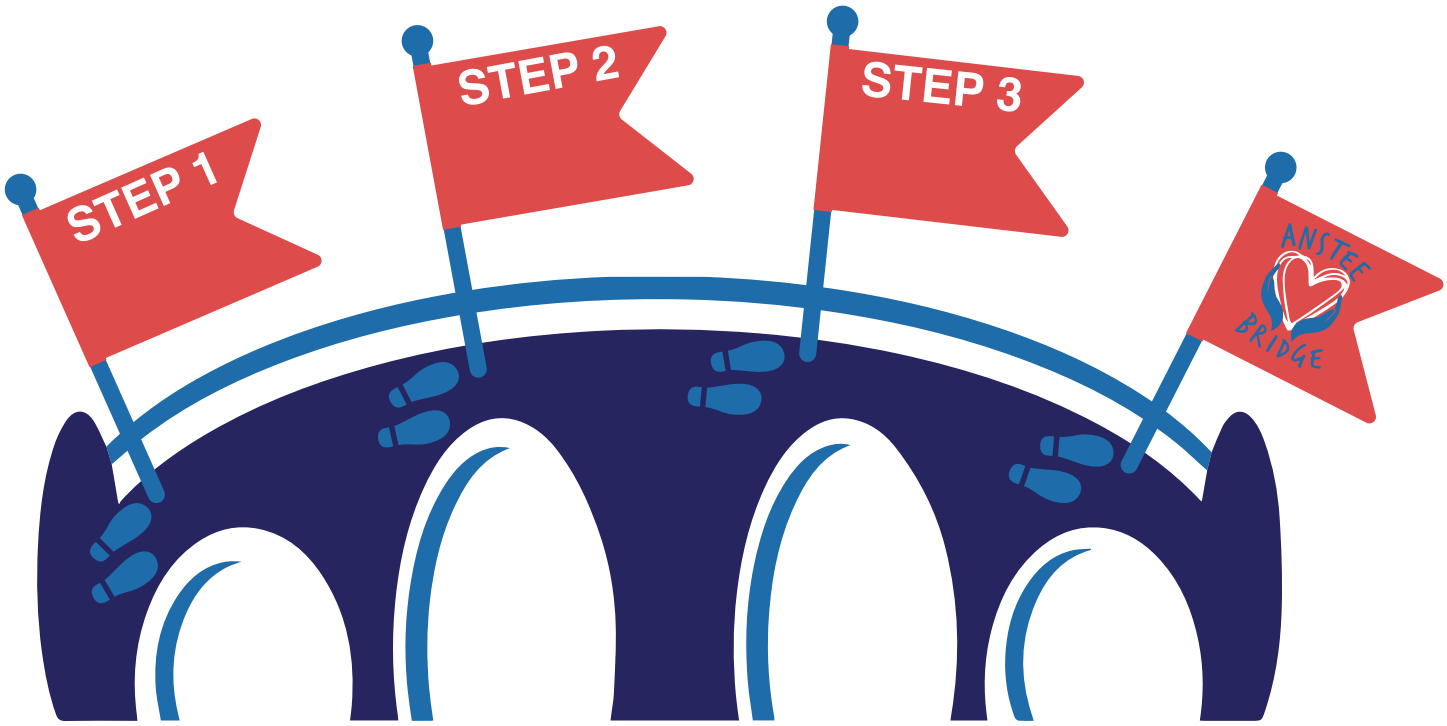
When I speak of a fluffy pillow
I think of Autumn

When I think of Autumn
I think of crunchy leaves

When I think of crunch leaves
I think of orange and yellow

When I think of blue and red
I think of Anstee Bridge





A LETTER TO YOU FROM KATHERINE

Dear

Before I tell you my story - never forget how amazing, special and unique you are. Anstee is here to offer your support, glimmers of happiness and a bucket full of opportunities, inspiration and HOPE.

I always had a dream to create something which specifically supported young people who were struggling with their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH).

I studied and I learnt a lot about psychology and mental health.

However, the reason that I wanted to do it was because I was you.

I had a troubled childhood and when I was growing up, I felt isolated and alone. I knew

I was shutting down and I didn't know how to stop it.

Then I found creativity....

When I was in my drama class, I became different characters and started to realise that I could change into other lives and things could be different. I still remember Miss Mason, my drama teacher, after an audition, giving me the chance to be Gwendolyn in the Importance of being Ernest. She chose me over everyone that auditioned. She said she would give me the opportunity for the role as she believed I could do it. I remember that feeling that someone believed in me was very powerful. I gave the role my all and received a standing ovation.

I will never forget that feeling that I could DO something after so long of being told of being nothing that I couldn't and would become nothing. Miss Mason took a chance on me, gave me hope and it was a defining moment in my life. When I started being creative, I started thinking differently. I began to believe in myself and think that I might be ok.

It took me a long time to find something that ultimately changed my life. I know that if I had had somewhere to go when I was growing up, when I was at my most vulnerable, where there were professionals who actively wanted to be there for me and were ready to really listen, then I would have coped better and quicker, increased my emotional resilience faster and recognised that I was loved and I was needed in this world sooner.

Anstee Bridge is a hub of creativity.I believe that you can cover your pain in glitter, but when you shake off the glitter what sticks is hope, resilience, compassion and ultimately happiness.

I really mean it when I say that I would love you to come and visit us. In the meantime, turn the pages and let us put a little taste of Anstee in your hands.

Katherine

A note from our young people

If you are reading this book, you might be in a place where getting up, leaving your room, your house, seeing anyone feels like something you can't do right now.

The pressure is real, right? To have loads of friends, worry about what you look like, doing well in school, bullying and the idea of somehow being perfect.

We've lived those days, where it felt impossible to get out of bed in the morning and we've come to realise it's impossible to be perfect when life throws so many things at us.

We think life is about being the best you can be & sharing it with people you care about.

Everyone who contributed to this book has been part of Anstee Bridge. We champion choice, creativity and community to provide young people with 'restbite' in order to build their confidence, resilience and strength to meet the challenges of life.

When you come to Anstee, you know that there will be someone to sit with you when it all feels dark.

You also know they'll be someone to sing & dance with you when the load feels less heavy. There will be hot drinks, art, music, woodwork and even a life size Zebra!

Plus trips and more.

We've written this book to put a little piece of Anstee Bridge in your hands.

From our hands to yours
With love

Everyone at Anstee Bridge













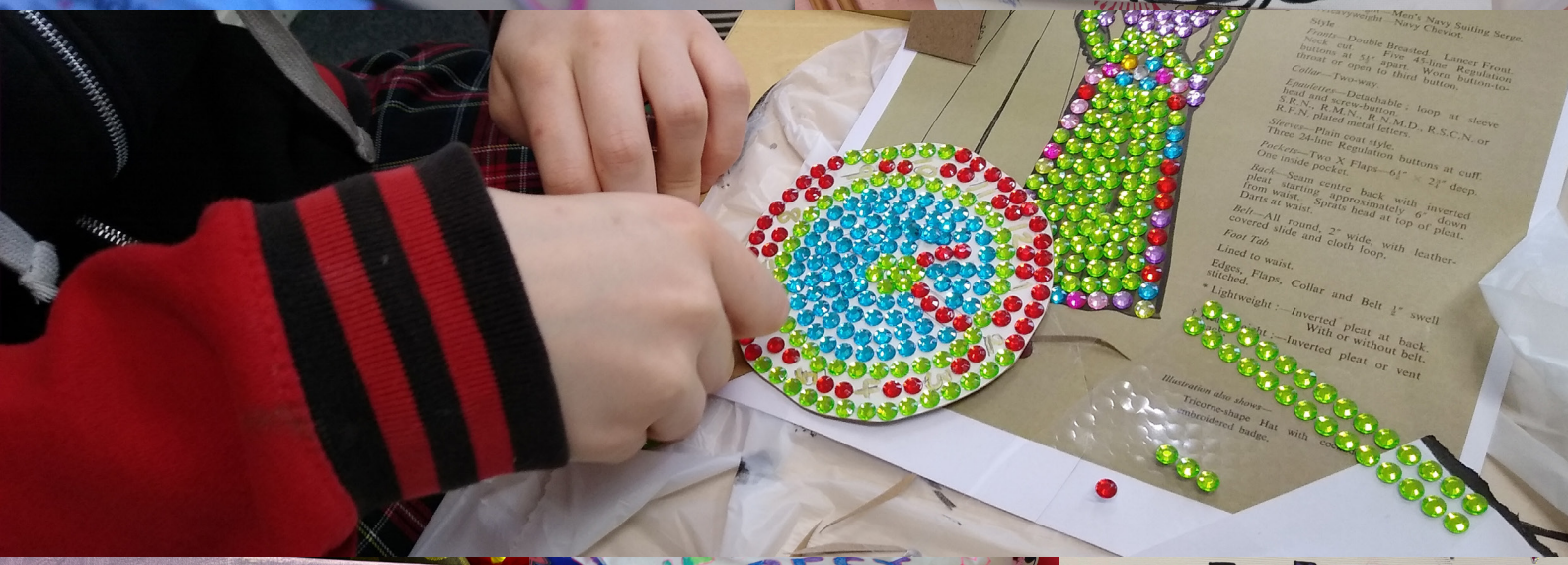


LOOK AT ANSTEE BRIDGE



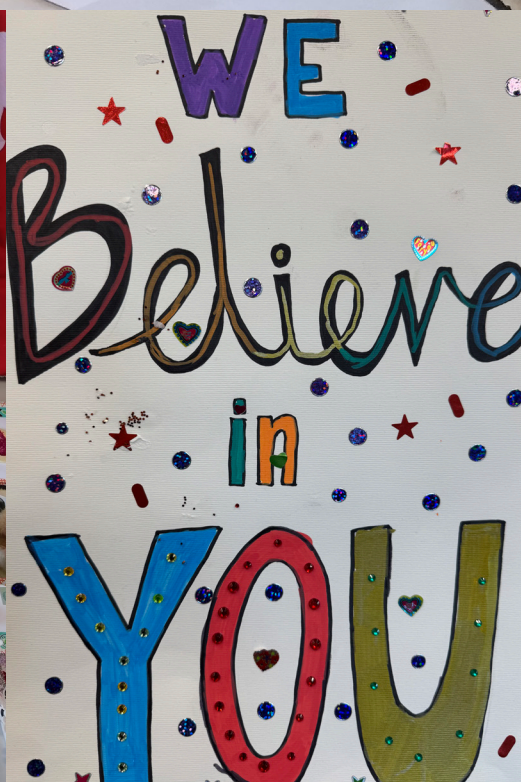









SMILE
ANIMALS ARE THE BEST


WE
Believe
in
YOU

YOU ARE NEVER
ALONE YOU ARE
NEVER ALONE YOU
ARE NEVER ALONE
YOU ARE NEVER
ALONE YOU ARE
NEVER ALONE YOU
ARE NEVER ALONE
YOU ARE NEVER
ALONE YOU ARE
NEVER ALONE YOU
ARE NEVER ALONE
YOU ARE NEVER
ALONE YOU ARE



YOU ARE NOT YOUR FEELINGS

If things are feeling like a struggle, these feelings might have sort of snuck up on you.

You might have slowly started to feel that things weren't right, or you aren't good enough, or you don't fit in. Your friendships might have changed. You might have started to feel that nothing you do is good enough. Or, that no one is proud of you. Your heart might feel shattered. Maybe you feel unloveable.

You might feel some of this or nothing like this.

Anxiety might be something you are feeling in your body, maybe it is a colour, it might be an uncomfortable shape, something you can't walk around or jump over.

Depression may have snuck up on you and after a while it feels like a dark cloud hanging over your head that you can't escape from or breathe in.

Whenever it is that which has stopped you from going out, we know the pain is real.

All of the above are things that young people at Anstee Bridge have expressed.

We know what it's like to feel the world is safer with your hood up, your head down and your hair hiding your eyes.

BUT

You are not anxiety.
You are not depression.
We know these feelings.
It feels like you, but it is not you.

You might be in a place where it's something you can't talk about yet. That's totally ok.

This book is a way to get to a place where you can either talk or show someone how you are feeling.

We want you to know that we are cheering you on to brighter times and glimmers of happiness and buckets full of hope

You have this book because we want you to know you are not alone and things can get better.





MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE

When you are dealing with pressure, or it feels like life is shutting down around you, it can be overwhelming.

When the load feels heavy, we believe you have to start small. You have to get comfortable.

You might have slowly started to feel that things weren't right, or you aren't good enough, or you don't fit in. Your friendships might have changed. You might have started to feel that nothing you do is good enough. Or, that no one is proud of you. Your heart might

Here are a selection of tiny ways to make yourself more comfortable.

1. Drink water
2. Make comfort food
3. Create something nice for your room
4. Wear a colour that you like
5. Fold your clothes up super neatly
6. Listen to a mindfulness app like headspace
7. Look at the window and find something beautiful
8. Stretch
9. Tell someone that you appreciate them.
10. Take 3 deep breaths
11. Find something that smells nice & put it in your room.
12. Look out the window for a bit of nature.
13. Have a shower / take a bath
14. Do some mindful colouring.
15. Doodle.
16. Write in a journal.
17. Listen to your favourite song.
18. Watch your favourite TV show or film.
19. Make your bed.
20. Have a warm drink.
21. Text a friend or family member.
22. Watch a funny YouTube Clip.
23. Tell someone close how you are feeling.
24. Say thank you to someone for their support.
25. Think about a new activity you used to do or would like to try.

Music brings me comfort.
I noticed that from my bullying I would go in my room and I would put music on and I started along and I noticed it kind of made me open up. Since starting singing I have found music helps me when I am overwhelmed, anxious, or having a really hard time.

Anstee Bridge Student

GET COMFORTABLE: THE SOUND OF MUSIC

For some of us, singing will always be in the shower, and for others it'll be out on a stage. Wherever your safe place to bang out a good tune is, it's a little oxytocin hit to make you feel good.

The Anstee Bridge feel good play list

This Megan Mckenna	**Stay** Rhianna	**Scars to your Beautiful** Alessia Cra	**This is me Greatest** Showman
The Climb Miley Cirus	**How long will I love you** Ellie Gouldling	**I have nothing** Whitney Houston	**I will always love you** Whitney Houston
I'm Yours Jason Mraz	**All of Me** John Legend	**Ordinary People** John Legend	**Love in the Dark** Adele
Halo Beyonce	**Fight Song** Rachel Platten	**Make you feel my love** Adele	



LISTEN TO US

Visit the FAB website for more musical inspiration. Hear the playlist and listen to our students sing. Listen to our students chat about coming to Anstee Bridge. We are with you, every step of the way.

I was feeling depressed, as life was pretty challenging. My dad suggested getting a puppy. My mum and I wanted to choose a dog who fit into our family & our other dogs. So, a Miniature dachshund was perfect. We found Mabel when she was 7 and a half weeks. She's 9 months old now. I had to sleep with her on the sofa as she was so tiny. It was literally like being a mum. I can't believe she's grown so much already! My other dog Dolly wasn't keen at first, but now they are best buddies and play together. Mabels definitely brought me happiness. She makes me talk to people more because people ask so many questions about her. I also cuddle her when I'm sad. She's the ultimate bestie

Anstee Bridge Student

GET COMFORTABLE:
PUPPY LOVE

At Anstee Bridge, we love animals. We adopted a Zebra who we've named Gloria. She lives at our Kingston site.

We are often visited by Mabel, a miniature dachshund, who belongs to one of our students. Mabel brings us all joy and comfort. She reminds us all that there is something to be said about unconditional love - loving and being loved without force or pressure. To have someone who loves you unconditionally. That is what a pet can do for many of us.

A pet can be a massive source of comfort.

We love Mabel so much that we made Mabel biscuits. She offers us all unconditional love. She makes us all laugh. Plus she is so cute!

Mabel Cookies

Ingredients

- 130g salted butter
- 1 tbsp golden syrup
- 160g white sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 235g plain white flour
- 1tbs baking powder
- 200g choc chips

Instructions

In a large bowl mix butter, sugar and golden syrup until fluffy.

Mix in egg and vanilla extract.

Add flour and baking powder. Mix until dough is stick and light.

Fold in chocolate chips

Divide dough into 20 portions and roll into balls.

Bake at 180c for 16 minutes until golden brown.





Do you have a pet or a favourite animal ? Draw or write about them here.

LOOK UP AND SEE
THE GLITTER OF THE STARS



I started to draw every time I thought something negative about myself

Anstee Bridge Student

BE CREATIVE

We often hear people say "Oh I'm not creative when they arrive at Anstee Bridge."

We aren't going to try to turn you into an artist (Although we are incredibly proud of how creative our students are!)

We believe there is creativity in everything. It's in drawing, dancing, baking, lego, digital art, animation, cookery - it's everywhere.

We believe being creative is another way of looking after yourself. When you do something creative, it's like thinking in a different way, connecting to a different part of yourself and that might make you think differently about the world around you.

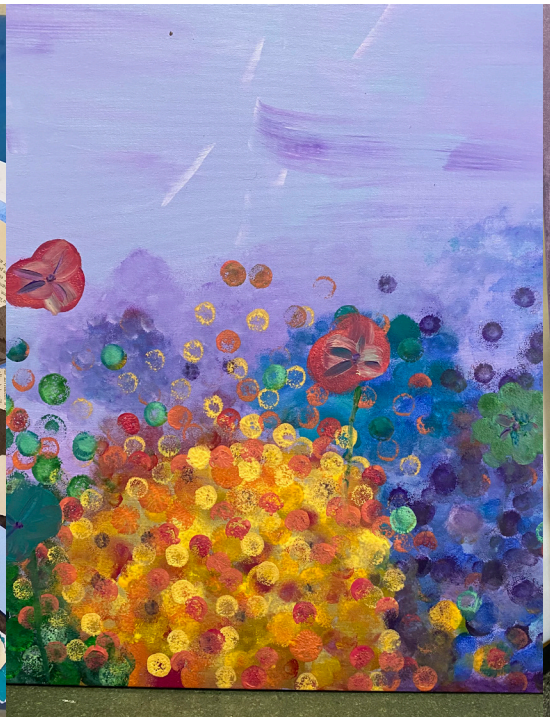
Some of us have been in pretty dark places but found that immersing ourselves in creativity and finding activities we didn't know we would enjoy allowed us space to think and be still with our thoughts and to stop being so hard on ourselves.

Creativity lets you experiment with new ideas. If they don't work out, it doesn't matter, that's the best learning.

There is no right or wrong in creativity.

That's why we love it.







BE CREATIVE:
DOODLE

Did you know that doodling is officially good for you?

There's no right or wrong way to doodle.

However, what it definitely does well is boost your creativity whilst your hands and mind relax. It can lead to new ideas, thoughts and ways of seeing the world. It is said that doodling is good for the brain and can actually help you remember things!

Turn these shapes into something else.

Turn this book around and doodle again

Finish this wave

Doodle something you can see right now

Doodle a view from a window

Doodle your name

Doodle the house you'll live in in 20 years

Doodle your pet

Doodle your favourite animal

Doodle your family

A place you would like to visit

Your favourite sport

Activities you like to do

Your favourite food

Your favourite chocolate or sweet treat

What happiness would look like for you

An outfit that you would wear

A pair of trainers

Dream car



BE CREATIVE:
DRAW GLIMMERS

Glimmers are the tiny moments of joy that arise from the simplest of things.

Can you fill this page with Glimmers? They can be anything you want them to be.

Our list of glimmers

- A hug
- Someone saying they are proud of us
- Making a friend
- Stroking Mabel at Anstee
- Making cookies
- A cup of hot chocolate
- Cheese on toast
- A sausage roll from Greggs
- A beautiful sunset.
- Walking in park with lots of flowers and trees
- Laughing with a friend or family member
- Giggling while watching a TV show
- Hearing a funny joke
- Listening to a great piece of music

Add yours





GLIMMERS OF YOUR FUTURE

Can you draw what you hope will bring you joy in the future?

Our list of glimmers

- More laughter and happines
- A pet to hug when we are feeling in need of one
- Sharing our news good and bad with a friend
- Travelling and seeing other places
- Having a safe space to call home
- Enjoying time with friends and family
- Being the best of me that I can
- Someone telling me they are proud of me
- Trying a new food and enjoying it

Add yours

BE CREATIVE:
WRITING FROM ANSTEE

Poems from our students

A poem of perfection

Perfect is hanging out with friends,

Happy and joyous,

My cat Bobby, doing what he wants,

Pollo pasta from pizza express with
no red onions or mushrooms,

eating it in Montana with my horse Hondo,

Riding on Hondo in the mountains,

A raspberry sprite and someone
to hold my stuff,

Perfect is giving me hairbands and
someone to hold my bags,

Perfection is subjective.

A poem of perfection

Perfect is going to my old park with my family

Happy and at peace,

My mum inspiring me as she
is nothing like me and

Inspiring is my little brother, because
he's the most precious thing to me.

Angel cakes and Turkish coffee with family

Perfect is never made for me.

The Oak Tree

Standing in the dirt with roots
steady and wide reaching

The trunk an anchor, branches big
and kind hugging their leaves

Each different and unique,

This tree of omniBenevolence home to many,

A saddened sparrow, squirrel of stress

A stag beetle with no were left to go,

A door mouse bullied away, hedgehog
who have never really fitted in,

A woodpecker scared to
leave his hold, a lonely

Badger and an anxious owl.

They found shelter at the great oak.

The creatures felt safe in the
oak, they were cared for

Their woes became lessons.

Although the trees inmates
may leave overtime

The saddened sparrow found joy in
a new best friend a less lonely

Badger, the squirrel overcame his stress, the

Wooderpack bravely left his
hole and eventually felt

Comfortable with others

The stage beetle found shelter in the
woodpeckers hole. The doormouse learnt

How to trust again. The hedgehog finally
felt like he fitted in and gained some

Confidence and the owl had tamed
his thoughts and although

They all moved out, the oak still held
a special place in their hearts,

They might come to visit but they were still
always a little creature indeed of the oaks'
love and is why the great oak is home.



BE CREATIVE:
IDEAS TO WRITE

17 word story

Tell a story in 17 words about the best adventure you have yet to have.

50 Word Story

Write a story in 50 words about hope.

Recipe for a happy place

Write a recipe to create a happy place. If we did one it'd be something like this

Ingredients

- A warm smiling face
- Hot chocolate and hugs
- A sprinkle of glitter
- The sound of a guitar
- One Mabel dog
- Chattering young people.
- How to make:
- Open the door.
- Add them all in.

Ingredients

BE CREATIVE:
WRITE AN AFFIRMATION POEM

Our affirmation poem is a way of thinking about the elements that make up our personalities. To make up yours, answer the questions below. There's no right or wrong and you can write as little or as much as you like! Don't worry about making it rhyme or using 'poetic language', just see what comes out!

- Describe an important person in your life- what is their character trait? What do they look like? (Start your sentence with I am)
- Describe your favourite food and when you like to eat it- how does it make you feel? (Start your sentence with I am)
- Describe your favourite song and when you like to hear it- what's the beat like? What are the instruments used? (Start your sentence with I am)
- Describe the things you have enjoyed and loved doing. (Start your sentence with I have been)
- Describe your favourite memory from a place you have been that made you happy? (Start your sentence with I have been)
- Describe your favourite sport or hobby- why do you love it? When do you do it? You can list a few if you like! (Start your sentence with I am)
- Describe three good things about you (Don't be too modest, start your sentence with I am)
- Describe something you've always dreamed to do (Start your sentence with I am)
- Describe something you're grateful for (Start your sentence with Grateful for)
- Describe something you're hopeful for (Start your sentence with Hopeful for)

Here's an example!

I am my mother
Strong and brave
I am chips and mayonnaise,
Dark chocolate and random flavours.
Eclectic tastes.

I am Whitney Houston
A powerful voice
I have been singing in the shower
dancing in my bedroom
I have been the sound of laughter
while sharing a pizza with friends.

I am kind, honest and fair
I am the dream of a great story I've yet to write
I am grateful for my family.

I am hopeful for good health.

YOU ARE
SURROUNDED BY
LOVE AND HOPE

YOU ARE IN OUR TRIBE

We all have had moments in life where we feel like we don't fit in - until you realise you were just standing with the wrong people. We love having one day a week where we can just step back, hang out and realise we found our people.

We can't wait for you to join us!

Here's snippets of the reasons why we all found Anstee - as students, supporters, artists and patrons who are part of the Anstee tribe.

The bravest first step I've ever taken was admitting I was struggling with my mental health. I recognised that I needed to talk about this, rather than pretending I was fine. It doesn't come naturally to everyone, I think you have to practice being emotionally strong

Anstee Bridge Student

During my time at secondary school, I must have missed hundreds of days. I was a perpetual truant. It was easy for me to do as I was so shy and introverted that I was virtually invisible. Nobody noticed whether I was there or not.I would either hang about with my sister and a friend in the local shopping centre or go home. After leaving the warmth of a fantastic primary school the new school felt like a cold, impersonal prison.

The only subject I enjoyed was Art. There was a fantastic art teacher there called Mr Moffat, who made me believe that I could become an artist. I managed to get through my GCSE's and A levels to get into art school.

After leaving art school I have managed to build a career as a community artist, specialising in working with schools, groups, and councils to put quality community art into public settings.

Anstee Bridge Student

I did well academically but I didn't have many friends. I was the odd one out. The best piece of advice I was ever given was that 'It's OK to feel sad and confused. All feelings are fine. And all things pass. Good and bad.'

I didn't fit into the 'popular' group. Most creative people don't. I liked writing and being in the school play. I used to go to the music rooms at lunchtime and found friends there. We would play the piano and sing. Make up songs. Now, Music. Nature. My children. My cat and dog are the things that bring me joy.

I believe strength comes from taking one step at a time. One breath at a time. You don't have to solve everything today. You don't have to do anything today. Just take it easy. You'll get there eventually.

Friend of Anstee Bridge

I used to think all the other kids were smarter than me, and then I worked out that (unlike me) - they were doing their homework - and perhaps learned differently. As a young Canadian I decided to go back packing by myself in Europe (this was long before mobile phones or internet).

It was hugely outside of my comfort zone, but empowering to know that every decision I made impacted me.

I've learnt you need to build upon your strengths one step at a time - It's not always easy, but this creates the scaffold that helps you climb to your goals.

I eventually learned that you get good at things by working hard and focusing - not by being born good.

Today I love learning, I have 2 masters degrees and I've published academic research.

Yet joy comes from sometimes just sitting on the floor and sorting out the buttons in my button box, creating cosy spaces I can share with friends and family, watching my tomato plants grow, seeing beauty in nature, hugging my children.

As I find the best advice comes from songs. I love "You've got to make your own kind of music. Sing your own special song. Even if nobody else sings along

Anstee Bridge Student.

I hated school, but in many ways, it was a safe haven for me. My home life was very difficult, and as soon as I had the chance, I left.

My father struggled with mental health issues and alcoholism, which made my early years challenging. But I always believed that my life could be better, despite those difficulties. I was determined to work hard, build my own path, and create a future that was different.

At 16, I applied to be a Police Cadet and left home to start a new chapter. I found myself among 20 other like-minded young people, and I absolutely loved the camaraderie. We supported each other, worked hard, and I pushed myself to succeed passing exams and promotion processes along the way. It was a challenging but rewarding experience that shaped who I am today.

Coming from a very poor family, I was eager to start working and earn my own money, to build a better future for myself.

I left school with only 3 O levels. I was in the 'top' set at school but did not do any revision. I regretted that later so I went to college later to gain more qualifications.

I became a Senior Detective in charge of Central London where policing was both complex and demanding. The role required strong leadership, quick decision-making, and the ability to navigate high-pressure situations. But despite the challenges, I thrived on the responsibility, the teamwork, and the opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives

That drive pushed me forward, shaping who I am today and reinforcing my belief that resilience and determination can change everything. I am grateful that he made me stronger and more able than most. I didn't think like that growing up, but I do today. My mum was an incredible woman who always reassured us of how loved we were. Her strength and unwavering support helped us through the toughest times. She was the foundation that kept our family together, and her love gave me the courage to face challenges and strive for something better.

Anstee Bridge Patron

A LETTER FROM AN ANSTEE BRIDGE STUDENT

Hi,

I want to share my story with you to make sure you know you are not alone & reassure you that people are around you and supporting you.

I'm dyslexic, have ADHD, on the borderline of being autistic and I have very bad anxiety. I have struggled with mental health due to school. I've always noticed that teachers and peers never understood how much support I needed & how much I was struggling.

People don't really know how much dyslexia can completely change your life. When I am reading, it can feel like the words are flying around the room. It can affect your pronunciation of words. Sometimes I can say and I have to repeat it because I have said it wrong. Dyslexia is not just about spelling, you can struggle with mishearing or misreading stuff. So if someone sends me a message, sometimes I can misread it and add my own words.

I was bullied a lot.

I always felt like I was alone and I didn't really know what to do with my life anymore.

I would get told by family and friends and Katherine that you are just at a dark place at the moment, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel for you.

I noticed that from my bullying I would go in my room and I would put music on and I started along and I noticed it kind of made me open up. I never had the

energy to talk with people, see people, but somehow I always had the energy to sing.

When I started singing I used to hide myself so they couldn't see me. I find it very interesting how I can sing when I struggle pronouncing stuff. Since coming to Anstee Bridge, I started doing singing lessons with Aaron which has made me get the confidence to be able to sing in front of people. Now I can show myself singing in front of 250 people.

I still think everyone will have bad days, as I know I have bad days, but I have learnt how to open up to family about how I am feeling and I get support for it. So, I am able to manage the bad days.

Since starting singing I have found music helps me when I am overwhelmed, anxious, or having a really hard time.

I have a plan once I leave school that I am going to college to do Early Years Child Care Level 2. I am going to get a job working in a hair salon as well as working in a nursery. I am going to carry on with my singing and hopefully do some busking.

So, if you are reading this, don't give up on yourself. There really is a light at the end of the tunnel.

You can do it.

Everyone is proud of you.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

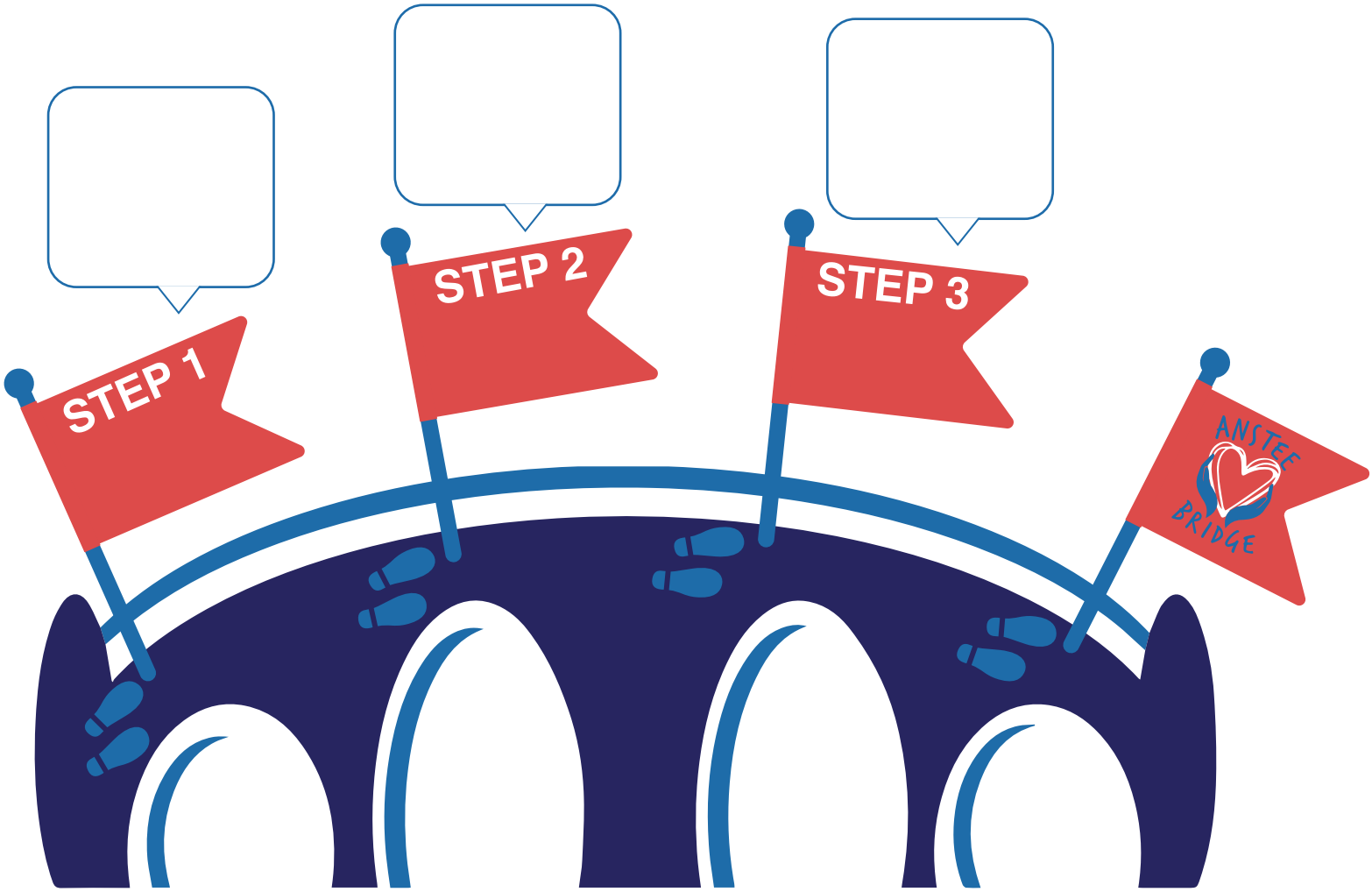
An Anstee Bridge Young Person



www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/pages/anstee-bridge

NEXT STEP: ANSTEE BRIDGE

Now you have worked through the Anstee building bridges book with me you are now ready for the next step as we move forward to you visiting Anstee and seeing our home



ANSTEE BRIDGE

achieving for children
Kingston & Richmond

anstee_bridge ansteebridge Anstee_Bridge