

SMASH LIFE

"OVERCOMING LIFE'S HURDLES TOGETHER"



OUR SERVICES

TALKS • TRAINING • MENTORING • CONSULTATION



07944 415 475 / 07508 497 066
info@smashlifeuk.com

smashlifeuk.com



OUR STORY

Andy and Matt Smith are brothers and Directors of Smash Life who were abused "after" being placed by social services into the care system. This took place over an eight-year period from 1990-1998.

As a result of this life wasn't all plane sailing, with both brothers experiencing lots of pent up anger, low self-esteem, feelings of loneliness and suicidal thoughts originating from the abuse that they had suffered during childhood. This culminated in brushes with the law, failed relationships, huge debt, violence, anxiety, depression, OCD and also impacted on the brothers own sibling relationship.

After years of having to deal with the effects of their traumatic abuse the Smith brothers have gone on to have great success at university, employment, various sporting teams, numerous music projects and in life.

In 2018 the brothers united to found the company "Smash Life". Drawing on the hard lessons that they had learnt from their own abuse and experience of the care system; as well as their combined 38 years professional experience working with young people and families, they set about building an organisation to help those in similar situations.

Offering their own inspirational talks and training to young people and organisations the brothers are able to provide a unique insight into real life lived within the care system.

Their hope is that Smash Life can be used as a support tool by Education, Organisations, Parents, Councils and the Care System, to help prevent children and young people from ever having to experience what they went through.

Smash Life is now an **AWARD-WINNING** company which offers:

- Inspirational Talks
- Mentoring with an Accredited Qualification
- Life Story Work / Mediation
- Group Work / Smash Life Experiences
- Training For Professionals
- Consultancy to Organisations

Book a talk to educate your team and you will discover how the brothers found the resilience to turn such a negative experience in those early formative years to become the men they are today, bucking the traditional story of adverse childhood experiences.

Smash Life believe that despite what life may throw at you, you can turn your negatives into a positive and aspire to be the person that you want to be - 'Smashing Life'.

'OVERCOMING LIFE'S HURDLES TOGETHER'



WHY CHOOSE SMASH LIFE?

In our experience many young people often ask professionals "What do you know?" and question what qualifies you to know how they are feeling in a given situation. This is where our service differs from the majority of others, as Matt and Andy have both lived a life within the care system without a mum or a dad for the majority of their lives.

This personal experience combined with our vast professional knowledge and qualifications, enable us to offer a **"shared life experience"** providing advice and guidance to young people based on "real life" experience and not just information learned from reading a text book.

We find this resonates with young people because we as adults are able to open up to them, they in turn open up to us.

CLIENT FEEDBACK

Don't just take our word for it though, below is a selection of feedback that we have received from various clients about our services.

ABOUT TRAINING

I found this training incredibly informative and engaging. The positive energy and their commitment to children and young people was really refreshing. I feel fortunate to have been a part of this training/ presentation so thank you.

CARE PROFESSIONAL

ABOUT TRAINING

I found the training extremely useful and informative, it was very powerful to hear the brother's experiences and their positive quotes from their own experiences. Everyone who works with young people should attend a session with them.

CARE PROFESSIONAL

ABOUT ONLINE TRAINING

...it was excellent, the enthusiasm of the trainers, the content was thought provoking and relevant to my job role, having their lived experience to relate too made the training much more effective than any normal training.

CARE PROFESSIONAL



SMASH LIFE SERVICES



INSPIRATIONAL TALKS

Smash Life offer inspirational talks catering to both young people, and industry professionals and trainees. The talks have been very successful and have been delivered to enthralled audiences up and down the UK.

Each talk can be catered for young people, professionals, organizations, training days and conferences and will focus on adverse Childhood experiences, abuse, complex trauma, safeguarding and much more.

The benefit of the talks in a professional context is to provide continued professional development by helping them to understand children and young people's behaviour, change approaches and perceptions and bring a reality to practice that can't be obtained through books.

For young people they will receive a motivational, hard hitting, factual story that will help them to understand that they are not alone with their own trauma's and can build up their own skills and resilience; following the positive example set by the Smash Life brothers.

We now have an array of *talks we can offer to young people & professionals face to face or virtually.

*A menu of talks detailing their subject matter can be found on **Page 8** of this brochure.



MENTORING

Our bespoke and unique shared life "one- to-one" mentoring sessions are for young people who need a positive role model, guidance and a listening ear.

Smash Life is creative on its approach to mentoring, enabling young people to open up to us so that we can really focus on their voice. We have found that it is limiting to sit in a room and ask a young person to just "talk about it" as this can be oppressive and daunting for some individuals. [\(continued on next page\)](#)

SMASH LIFE SERVICES



MENTORING (continued)

By bringing sport, music, games, walks, and trips to expand on the Mentoring we have achieved better results and the young people actually enjoy and look forward to the sessions. We believe that showing our own vulnerability will inspire those we mentor to share their own.

The 'Smash Life Experiences' promote a hobby or help build a young person's aspirations. We know that not all young people have the opportunity to have the same involvement and exposure to some positive activities that we may take for granted. This is due to the reality that they may find themselves in growing up.

Our mentoring service provides learning and enriches lives through fun activities and engagement. We are flexible and can tailor a mentoring programme to meet a young person's individual needs.

'Smash Life Reports' are an additional "add on" service. If requested, they can be written after each session in order to identify needs, pass on any concerns, share positive steps and capture the young person's voice. This ensures that the young person is continually heard and their needs acted upon swiftly by fellow professionals working with them. As mentioned above, the reports are optional and will be discussed with you during the referral stage.

We also offer **'Virtual Mentoring'** for young people who may benefit from this form of communication. This can apply to those young people with severe anxiety or to a young person who we cannot get to because of geographical reasons, thereby expanding the reach of our Mentoring service.

Featuring the same high-quality mentoring as our traditional face-to face service, we use a secure virtual platform to carry out the sessions. So far they have proved very popular to those young people who have already benefitted from the service.



LIFE STORY WORK

Smash Life offer 'Life Story Work'. We believe this is a vital and important piece of work for young people in the care system. Having experienced life story work ourselves whilst growing up, we know first-hand how important this service is. It can provide young people with a wider knowledge as to who they are and why they are in care, help them to move forward whilst also teaching them how to adapt to their new surroundings.

We are able to use our creativity and work alongside young people to create something that they can keep and look back on in years to come.



QUALIFICATION

We offer a Smash Life **'NOCN Qualification'** that young people aged 11-18 can complete alongside our bespoke mentoring sessions! This qualification provides a way for the young person to learn new skills that they will be able to take into further education, training or employment.

SMASH LIFE SERVICES



GROUP WORK

In our group sessions we provide a safe space for young people to listen, discuss, share and learn about difficult topics or issues that have been identified by you or them e.g. drugs, alcohol, masculinity, gang culture, future aspirations and promoting positive / healthy relationships plus lots more. We combine these issue focussed group sessions with sport, games, music and creative expression, to make them fun and engaging for those taking part.

As an extension to our group work and mentoring services we also provide 'Mediation'. We have seen many examples of how low-level conflict can quickly escalate into bigger issues for the individuals involved and at a cost to services (NHS/Police/Courts) and sometimes families and the local community. We will attend a meeting in any setting to try and resolve issues between two parties or individuals. Sometimes a neutral mediator can provide a safe platform for individuals to work through their differences without violence being used, whilst at the same time learning how to talk instead of acting through fear or responding to threats of intimidation.

We firmly believe that by providing a space to air grievances that can be listened to and resolved peacefully at 'ground level', we can help to tackle some of societies bigger issues – like the rise in knife crime and other criminal / anti social activities. We are all about 'proactive, early intervention' work that can help to create communities inhabited by people who are emotionally intelligent. Of critical importance is the service that we offer for sibling relationships that have broken down due to past events. We help them to reflect, repair and move forward together.

We also offer training to groups of professionals working with young people as part of their ongoing professional development. This will not only help to improve practice but also create better outcomes for the young people and families that we all aim to work alongside and empower.



CONSULTATION

We are able to use our experience of growing up in the social care system and working within it, to provide advice and guidance so that your organisation is a young person centred service.

We can observe your practice or meet with your staff teams to discuss solutions to problems faced and create a safe space for staff to open up and be honest about the challenges they may face so you can identify any further training needs to empower them. We can also advise on things like policies and procedures, safe working practices and ideas on hearing and capturing the voice of the child throughout the structure of your organisation. This service can also be provided under the guise as a "mystery customer" or undercover independent examiner in order to provide your organisation with "true life results" professional feedback on how you are doing in areas that you want to find out about.

Consultation is also available to young people who may be within your organisation and require assistance in specific areas or career advice / guidance.

ABOUT MENTORING

"What a breakthrough.....he has told you more than he would've shared with carers or me on the first meeting"

SOCIAL WORKER

ABOUT MENTORING

Andy has provided our most vulnerable students with support that they would not be able to access within school.... This is an excellent example of use of pupil premium funding."

TEACHER

ABOUT MENTORING

Since I have seen you I am not arguing with the teachers, its good to know someone has been there and understands.

YOUNG PERSON



SERVICE BENEFITS

Our courses, mentoring and talks have had proven results for our young people in the following areas:

- ✓ Driven down exclusion rates of young people in education.
- ✓ Improved behaviour within education and home settings.
- ✓ Promotion of a positive and healthy lifestyle – through exercise, good routines and a healthy diet.
- ✓ Steering young people at high risk of criminal activity away from entering the Criminal Justice system, thereby reducing crime rates.
- ✓ Providing Qualifications through mentoring to help Young People gain employment.
- ✓ Helps to reduce anti-social behaviour in young people.
- ✓ Providing positive mental health and diversions to reduce waiting lists within the mental health sector.
- ✓ Maintaining Foster and Adoptive placements, saving local authorities costs and hours of crisis intervention.
- ✓ Helps to keep young people safe and free from abuse.
- ✓ Promoting positive diversions and building relationships with community organisations and businesses.



MENU OF TALKS

All talks can be delivered as live events or to virtual audiences and can be adjusted to suit both young people and professionals.

01

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD IN CARE - ARE YOU REALLY LISTENING?



This hard-hitting presentation will tell the very real journeys of Andy and Matt throughout the care system that will promote more empathy and understanding for professionals from a child's point of view. Audiences will be given key messages throughout to improve practice around capturing the young people's voice, building better relationships, being curious and above all being child centered.

02

OUR LIFE GROWING UP IN CARE - A PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING OF COMPLEX TRAUMA AND HOW IT CAN AFFECT YOU



A personal journey of growing up in the care system and how Adverse childhood experiences, abuse and trauma can affect children and manifest into certain behaviors, mindsets, emotions within education and later life. This will help professionals understand the real impact of abuse/trauma and also remind them that "your job is someone's life". It is also designed to motivate and help professionals understand the impact they can still have supporting and caring for those they support going forward.

03**YOUR JOB IS SOMEONE'S LIFE - SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

This moving presentation will help you learn from a real life lived experience as we tell our very real abusive journey throughout the care system. It will highlight the importance of chronologies and how good practice shapes our understanding of situations, and how we can adapt our approach to meet these needs. You will also learn why it is important to read and write reports which capture the young person's voice and ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of your agenda. It will also help you evaluate your current language and practice, to help capture any key information that may usually be missed to keep young people and families safe from harm.

04**UNDERSTANDING THE REAL WORLD OF CHILDREN IN CARE - SCHOOL STAFF CPD**

Children in care thrive when they are understood, cared for and have teachers who believe in them. This talk will help staff understand the real worlds children face before they go through the school gates and why sometimes learning is at the bottom of their agenda. This will help you understand certain behaviors as a result of trauma, the importance of being curious not judgmental and how your approach and understanding can make the difference to a child's life. It is also designed to allow staff to reflect and adapt their own practice to achieve better outcomes.

05**SMASHING GCSE/A LEVELS - HOW TO DEAL WITH EXAM STRESS**

Sometimes we all need to be reminded to work hard to give yourself the best platform to succeed in life. This interactive presentation will encourage young people to evaluate their life choices, role models and their overall application to learning. This inspiring presentation will remind young people that achievements in life come as a result of hard work, accountability, routines, discipline and self-belief. It will also give young people tips to help them navigate through stressful periods of education like exams and how to deal with the pressures of these to give themselves the best possible chance of success.

06**SMASHING UNIVERSITY - PUSHING YOURSELF TO ACHIEVE MORE**

Andy and Matt tell the story of their post 16 university experiences, what they learnt, what support they had and needed during these years. This Inspiring presentation will give you mantras and key messages as you navigate or support young people throughout higher education. Despite early life trauma and the low percentage of children from care going to university, Andy and Matt were able to have an aim and push themselves to achieve in life proving everyone wrong, even those that abused them.

07

OUR LIFE IN CARE - WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE RESILIENT IN LIFE



This honest and thought-provoking presentation will encourage young people to think/reflect about their life journey and how it may impact on their current performance in education and their future life aspirations. This talk will remind children the importance to have a focus, dream or aspiration and to remember to use any failure as fuel to drive them to succeed in their life and to not give up at the first hurdle.

08

GROWING UP IN CARE TO RUNNING MY OWN BUSINESS - USING OUR HURT TO HELP OTHERS



Sometimes being in care can be a label and people can have opinions without understanding your journey. This uplifting presentation will help people to understand that despite growing up in care you can use all of that hurt and pain to thrive and more importantly SMASH LIFE using your past to make you better not bitter and to ultimately make a positive difference to the lives of others.

We are continually adding new curriculum and expanding our inspirational talks to suit various training and learning requirements.

Please visit our website smashlifeuk.com for more information or get in touch with us by emailing: info@smashlifeuk.com

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MORE CLIENT FEEDBACK

ABOUT TALKS

"Just heard the most inspirational speech from these lads. Absolutely amazing and they should be very proud of themselves and their achievements"

CARE HOME MANAGER

ABOUT TALKS

"Incredible. Thank you for sharing your story and advice"

CARE PROFESSIONAL

ABOUT TALKS

I was lucky to hear Andy and Matt present earlier this year and their story must be one that has resonated with me the most. Ever. It has informed our practice and we now weave our therapeutic web into colleges and schools offering trauma informed care training even further. Thank you Andy, Thank you Matt

YOUNG PERSON

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"Smash Life is an award winning company having won the Mayor of Shrewsbury Gold Award for the Overall Winners in the Youth Category 2019. They have also been nominated for the National Community Organisation Award for AGE at The National Diversity Awards 2020 in association with ITV news and have been mentioned in Telford & Wrekin Council Outstanding OFSTED report in 2020."

GET IN TOUCH TODAY

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