

CRAFT IN MIND

Young people talking about mental health and well-being through craft

Craftspace 

A creative project that brought together young people aged 14-22 from Birmingham who both had and had not had experience of poor mental health-

- to develop understanding of mental health issues through guerrilla craft and craftivist activities



Who are we?

Craftspace is a leading crafts development organisation based in Birmingham. We initiate creative and public engagement programmes which stimulate critical enquiry, thinking, curiosity and understanding of social and cultural issues through contemporary craft. It does this through socially engaged creative interventions, participatory projects and action research, promoting creative learning, transformation, well-being, skills development, progression and social cohesion

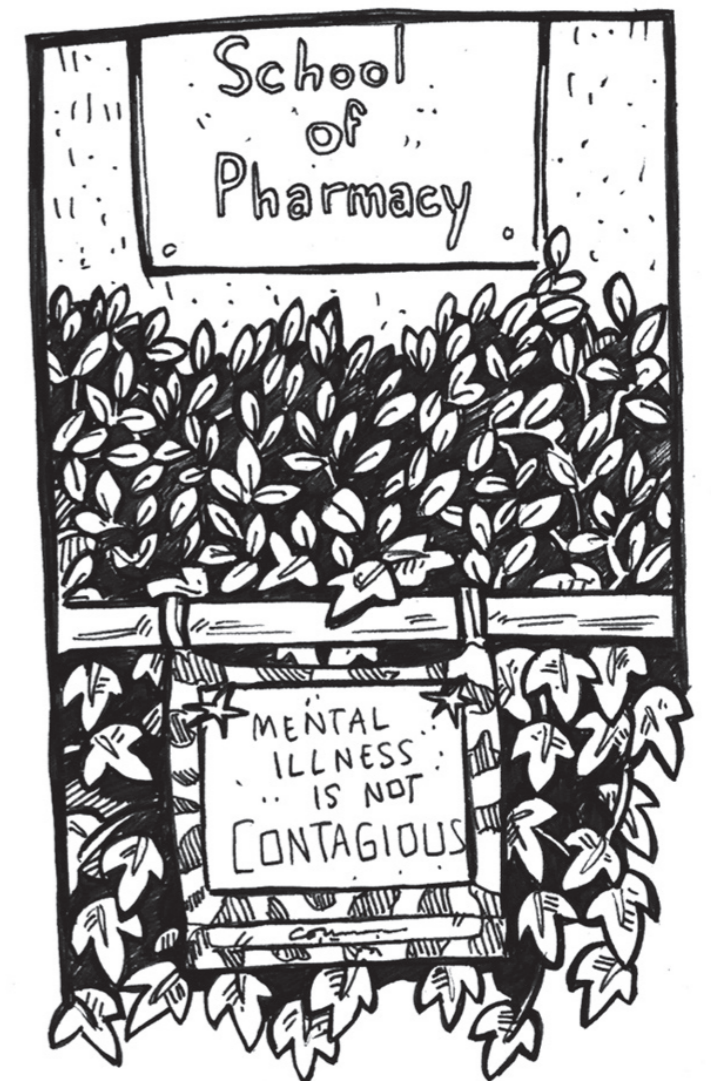
www.craftspace.co.uk

What were we interested in?

Introducing young people to the ideas that underpin Craftivism (craft + activism) and investigating how this could be used to explore mental health.

Exploring how engagement in making processes can help create non-threatening social spaces where conversations can happen and understanding and compassion can build.

Using guerrilla craft activities to present positive messages in new and engaging ways.



What did we do?

For two days a week during April and May 2013 the group worked with three artists to explore some of the complex issues and misconceptions which surround mental health:



renegade potter
Carrie Reichardt



comic illustrator
Maeve Clancy



and filmmaker
Nicola Paton

Young people did this through an active, creative approach which included

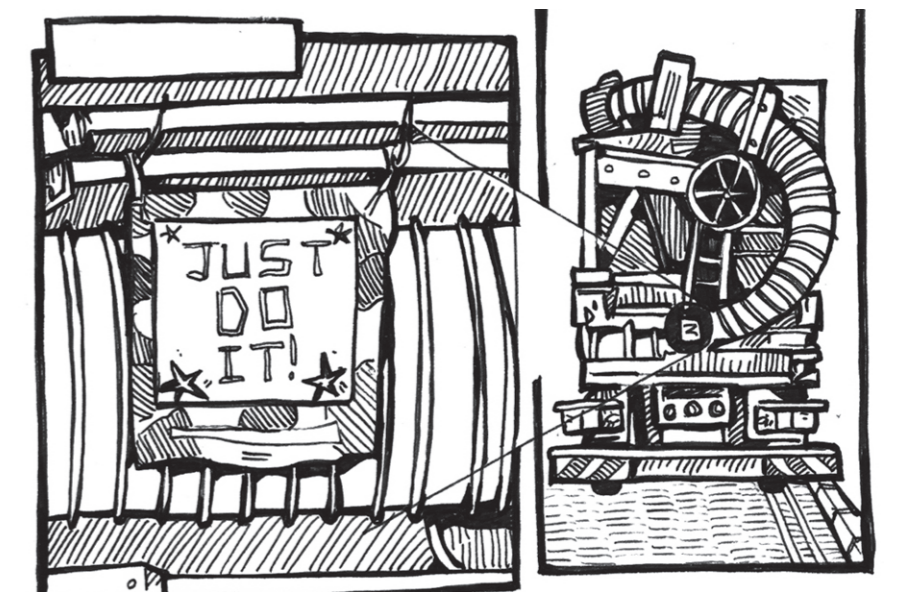
visits to exhibitions



making and drawing sessions



and guerrilla craft missions



Where did we go?

Custard Factory, Digbeth, Birmingham
Djanogly Gallery Nottingham
Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, Birmingham
6/8 Kafe, Birmingham
Queensbridge School Birmingham



Young people created a series of interventions at 6/8 Kafe and Irwin Mitchell Solicitors for Mental Health Awareness Week 2013...

...and delivered a mental health workshop using a craftivist approach to Year 7 pupils at Queensbridge School, Birmingham.

What did we achieve?

All the young people taking part grew in confidence and were more able to explore their own experience. At the end of the project they talked to camera about the process and how it had benefited them.



Amazing commitment from young people. At least 16 attended the project throughout.

Young people leading on the interventions at 6/8 Kafe and Irwin Mitchell solicitors and developed and ran the pilot for the schools workshop.

Six young people have developed their own portfolios and are soon to achieve their Arts Awards, an accredited qualification.

Created a documentary comic about the project and a comic for young people to use as the starting point for conversations about mental health.

Increased social skills.



What next?



Deirdre Buckley
Project Co-ordinator

Craftspace would like to work with young people to develop the youth led pilot workshop for Year 7 pupils using making as a mechanism for exploring difficult issues and ideas. We are interested in working with young people who might be at risk of self-harm.

Craftspace are currently developing ideas for a new piece of action research looking at care leavers and craft.