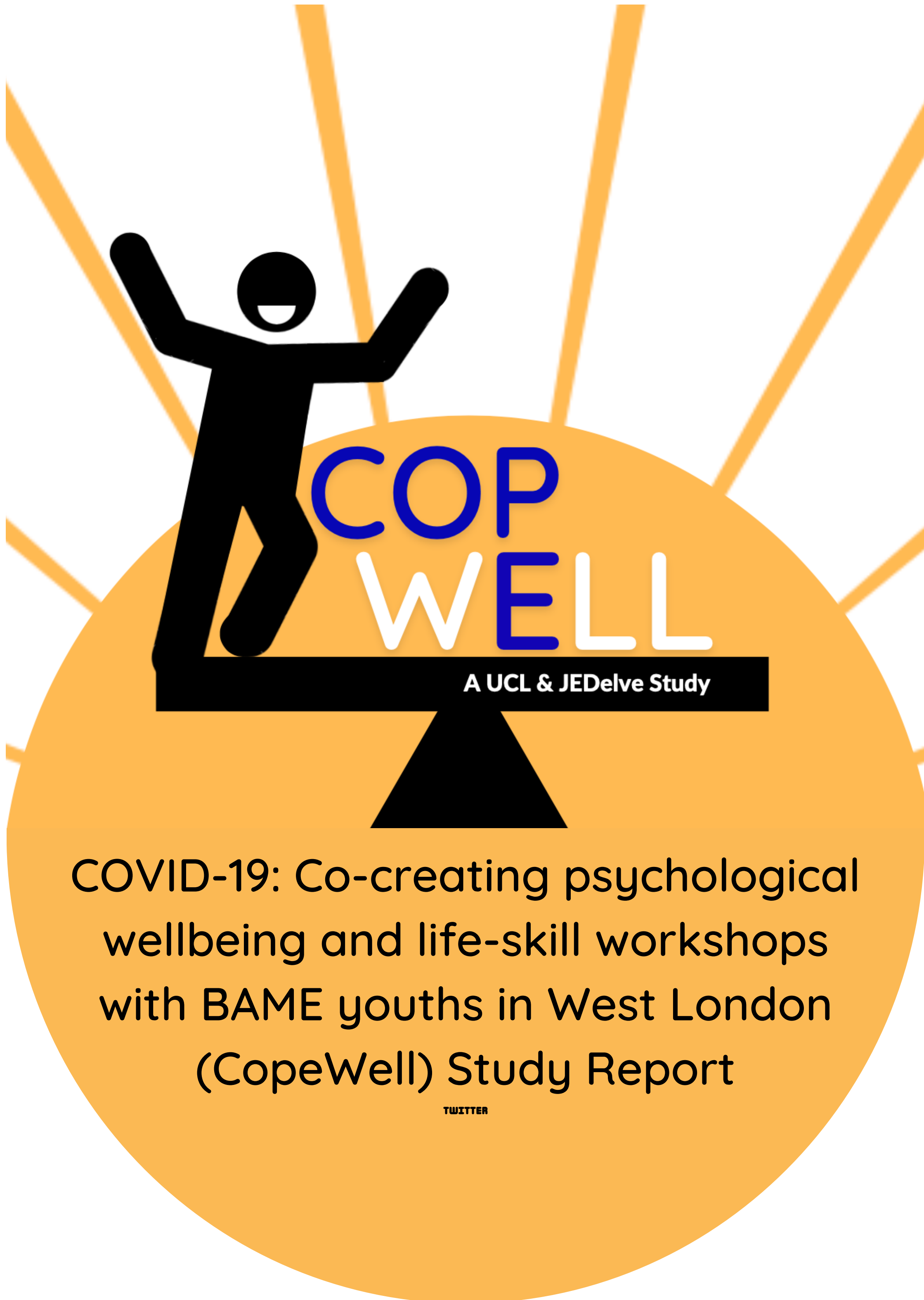




# UCL



Research  
England



CopeWellStudy



[CopeWellStudy.com](https://CopeWellStudy.com)



[contact@copewellstudy.com](mailto:contact@copewellstudy.com)

The CopeWell Study is a collaboration between University College London (UCL) and London-based Jamal Edwards Delve (JEDelve) charity. Funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Research England, this collaborative research explores the disparities in health – both mentally and physically – between black, asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) communities and non-BAME groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through focus groups, 1-on-1 interviews, and co-created life-skill workshops, we highlight the good and lessons learned through young people's lived experiences. This knowledge exchange partnership enables charities, academics, and young people to come together and to support each other during these challenging times and beyond. Importantly, we also explore possible avenues of improving the prospects and wellbeing of young people from BAME groups during the pandemic and beyond.

This report documents what the CopeWell Study Team have learnt and the topics covered in our co-created workshops with young people in supporting their mental health, career aspirations, social representation, and expressive and creative outlets. We hope this knowledge shared with members of the public and the academic community will be informative for policies in education and public health.

**Report reference:**

Wong, Keri Ka-Yee (2023): Co-creating psychological wellbeing and life-skill workshops with BAME youths in West London (Cope-Well) Study Report (Wong, 2021). University College London. Presentation.  
<https://doi.org/10.5522/04/21805782>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keri Wong'.

**Dr Keri Wong**

Principal Investigator  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Department of Psychology and Human Development  
IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society



# Interviews

## The Young People, COVID-19 and Mental Health

### WHAT WE DID

The impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities was disproportionate, both in terms of physical and mental health. Increased financial, educational and social worries particularly affected ethnic minority groups and young people.

To understand BAME youth's experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic and how best to support them, we conducted interviews with the young people of the JEDelve Community Centre.

### YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED

- To feel heard in society
- To learn about maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- Mental health resources and support
- Artistic outlets for self-expression
- To learn about contemporary issues and get actively involved
- Careers advice, information about work experience



### QUOTES

*Sometimes you just need an ear. You just need someone to listen. I feel like that would really help actually. And it would've helped I think back then.*

*- 16-year-old*

*No one is listening. So I have to shout it out loud so everyone can listen.*

*- 15-year-old*

*In school, it's very much like,...once in a blue moon ask us if we're alright and that's it.*

*- 15-year-old*

*In this generation and age there are so many misconceptions about teenagers, especially me as a black female teenager.*

*- 16-year-olds*

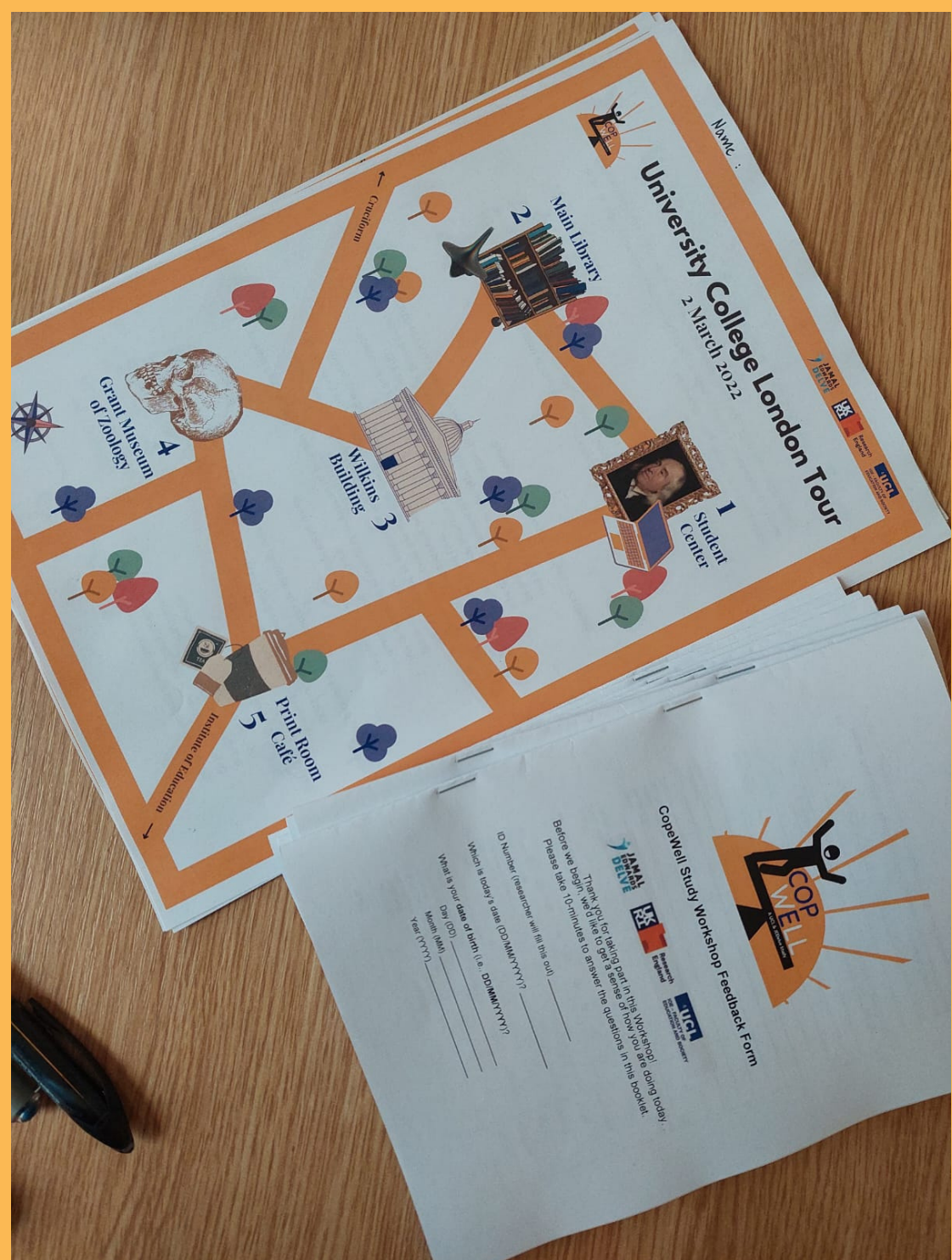
*I would have like hugs from my friends. (...) When it's like hardships and stuff, it just like helps a lot because even the simplest thing, like love can do a lot.*

*- 13-year-old*

Read more about our [data collection](#) and [focus group](#) processes.



# WORKSHOP 1





# Workshop 1

## Exploring University Life at UCL

### YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED

- A tour of UCL
- To get a glimpse of university life
- Information on accessing university
- To speak with professors



### WHAT WE DID

We brought the young people to UCL's campus to get to know life at university. A guided tour of UCL showed them all the major features of student life such as the library, student centre, lecture halls, social spaces & museums on campus. We then had the pleasure of hearing from Evi Katsapi, Dr Matthew Reeves and Rebecca Mason on their journeys into higher education, having overcome many obstacles along the way.

### QUOTES

*It was lovely to show the young people around campus-- they were incredibly engaged and eager to see what student life is like. Watching their faces process the amount of books (& the diversity of topics) in the Main Library was definitely a highlight for me. If only we could have stayed longer! - Ella Boutros (Research Assistant)*

### TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- Going to university is an achievable goal
- Students and professors are not so different from me
- University is a place to pursue my interests





# Workshop 1

*in photos!*

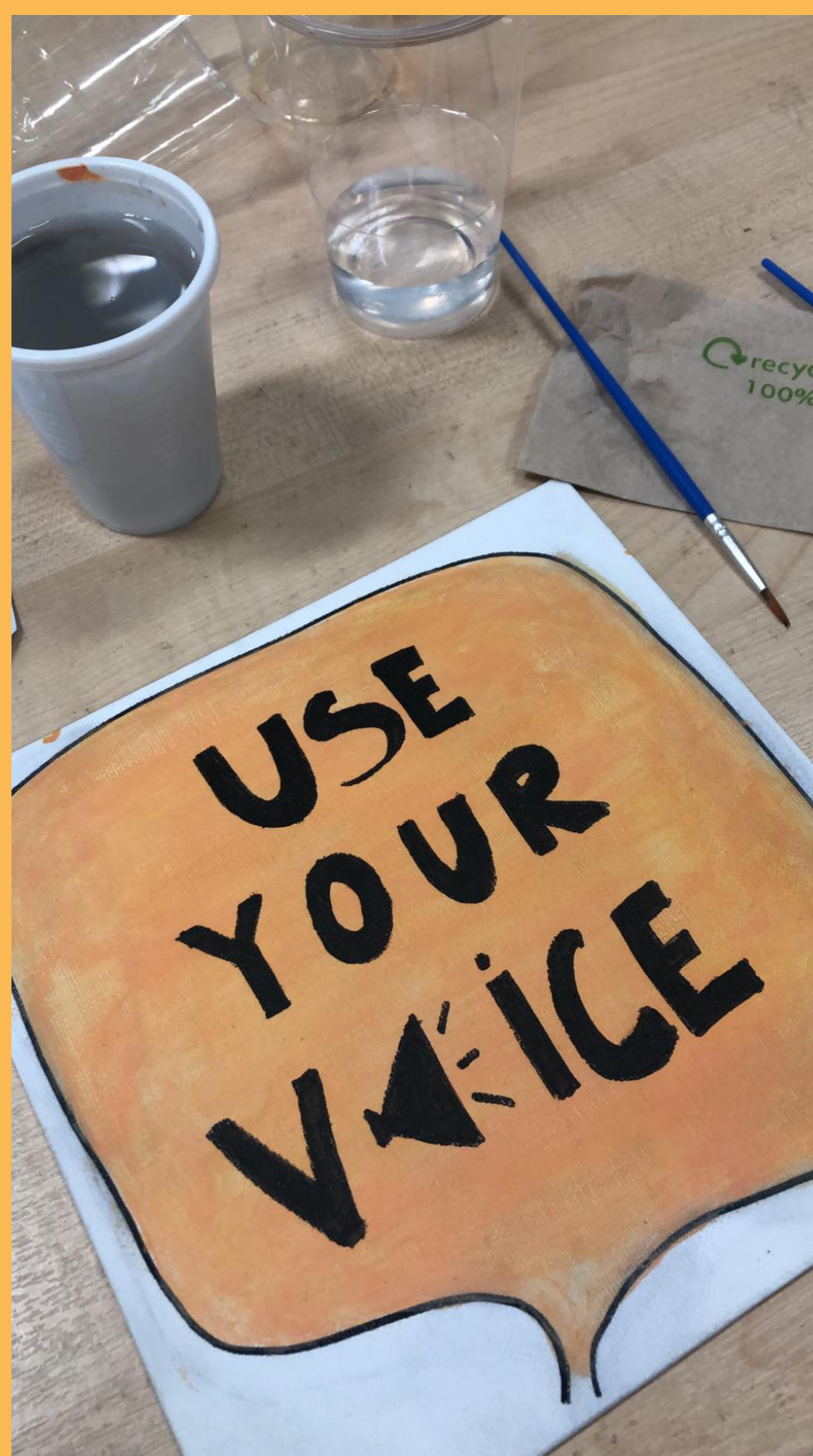


Exploring the famous  
UCL portico, meeting  
Jeremy Bentham and  
enjoying Italian cuisine!





# WORKSHOP 2





# Workshop 2

## *The Power of Young People's Stories*



### YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED

- To feel that their voices were being heard
- Active participation
- Involvement in discussions around current affairs
- To learn about practical career experiences

### WHAT WE DID

BBC journalists Amie Liebowitz and Isaac Fanin led a session on news reporting and storytelling, inviting the young people to experiment with pitching a news story to an editor. They were then encouraged to use their voice to speak up about topics they are passionate about, including but not limited to human rights activism, women's safety, incarceration and representation!

### QUOTES

*I was really struck by the empathy and respect the guys have for each other. Speaking about so many complex issues that would be tough for most adults to comprehend we were able to have thought provoking, important conversation and it was a few hours in which I'll cherish.*

-Isaac Fanin, BBC journalist

*It gave me a lot to think about in terms of what young people care about, where they get their information and what communities need.*

-Amie Liebowitz, BBC journalist

### TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- Speak up, your voice deserves to be heard
- You can achieve anything you put your mind to





# Workshop 2

*in photos!*



Young people heard from two BBC journalists, Amie Liebowitz and Isaac Farnin about their career in media and communications, overcoming challenges, and the role of 'story telling' and 'story pitching' to editors.



# WORKSHOP 3





# Workshop 3

## Managing Difficult Emotions about Ourselves

### YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED

- A mental health workshop
- Tips on managing difficult emotions
- To improve their relationships with their bodies (combatting social media's influence)



### WHAT WE DID

Dr Amy Harrison (clinical psychologist) and Denise Sanderson-Estcourt (specialist in body confidence) were kind enough to lead a workshop on body image. The young people participated in various activities aiming to reevaluate our relationships with our bodies. Dr Harrison also shared various tools from her clinical practice to help manage difficult emotions about oneself.

### QUOTES

*I was particularly impressed with the openness and candour of the young people about their experiences around body image and the perceptions of others. They were wise to ideas that social media images aren't accurate and were also really interested in strategies to tackle negative thoughts and thinking styles about their bodies.*

- Dr Amy Harrison (Clinical Psychologist)

### TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- Emotions are impermanent and can be changed
- Our bodies deserve more credit and love than we give them

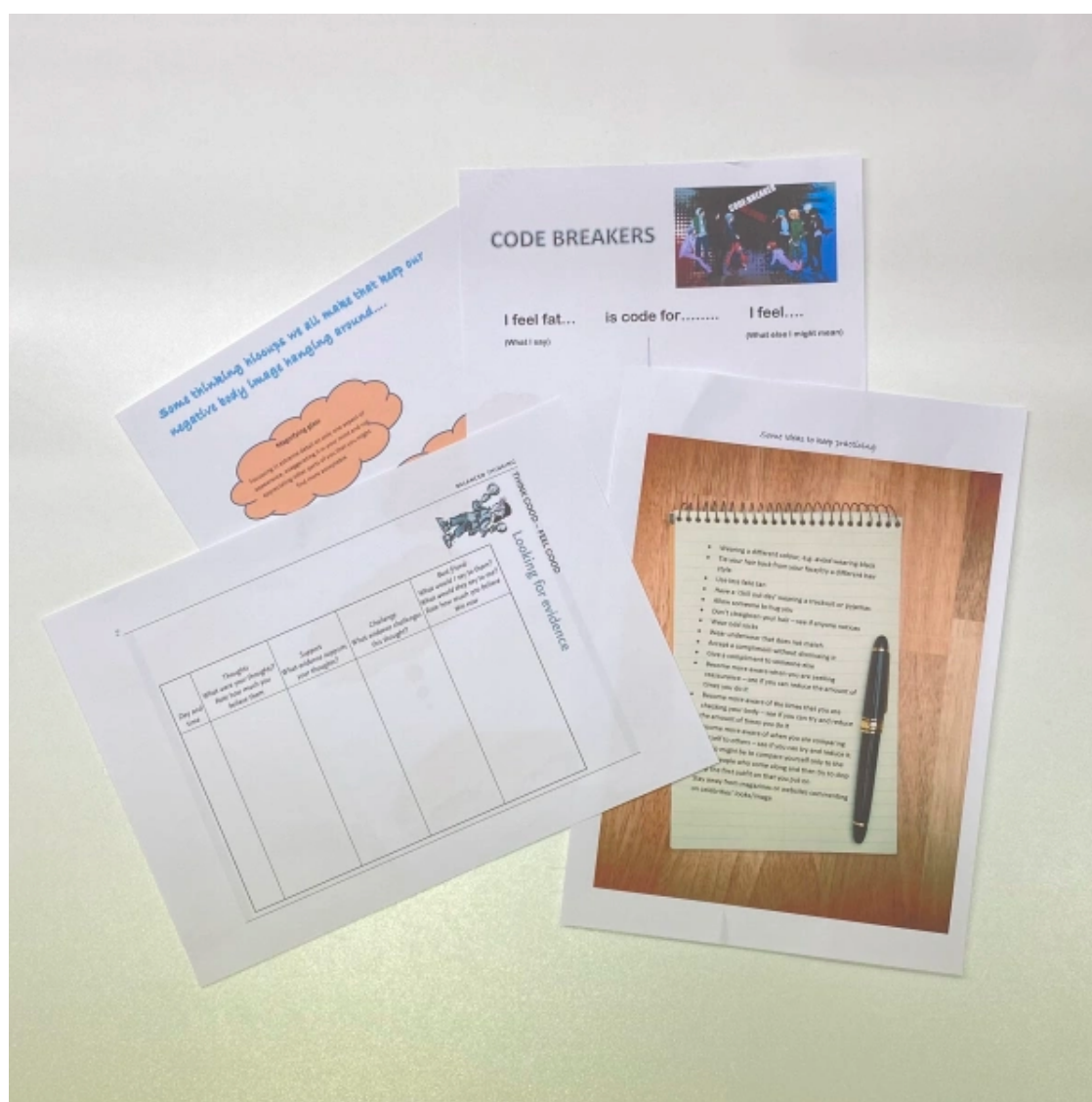
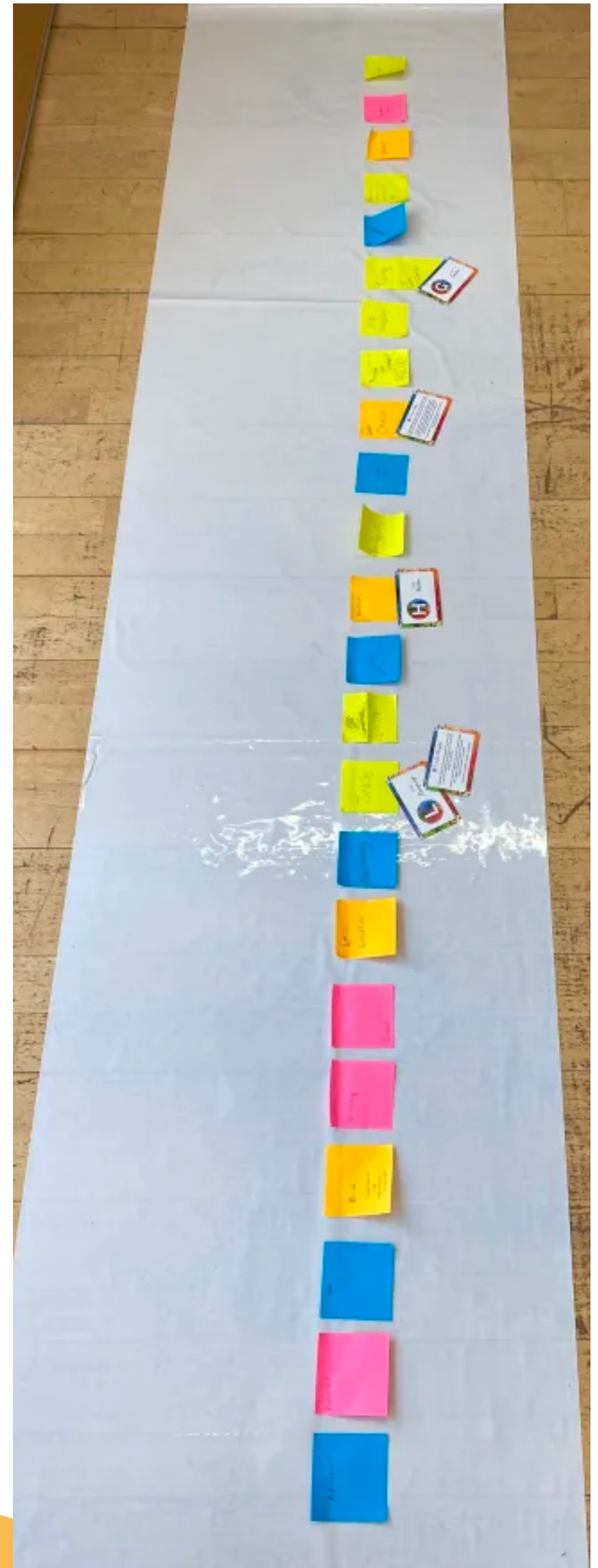


Read the full [Blog summary](https://copewellstudy.com) on [copewellstudy.com](https://copewellstudy.com)!



# Workshop 3

*in photos!*



Young people learnt about our relationships with our bodies, body image, and what 'healthy thinking' looks like with Dr Amy Harrison and Denise Sanderson-Estcourt of [bodyconfidencecards.com](http://bodyconfidencecards.com). Young people felt more confident understand the body-mind connection.



# WORKSHOP 4





# Workshop 4

## *Understanding Individual and Group Identities*



### WHAT WE DID

Dr. Panos Rentzelas of the IOE led a session focused on stereotypes, individual identities and social identities where the young people critically discussed their experiences. We then visited the Wellcome Collection for its “What It Means to Be Human” exhibit. An outdoor picnic was originally planned, but due to the rain, this was changed to a short nature walk through the UCL campus.

### QUOTES

*It was my absolute pleasure to be invited to lead a workshop on identity and stereotypes at the CopeWell project. In an interactive workshop, we had the opportunity to discuss how social psychology theory and research can help us understand the formation of stereotypes and how stereotypes impact our behaviour and understanding of who we are. - Dr. Panos Rentzelas*

### YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED

- Appreciation of having a social identity
- Better understand their identities
- More nature-based activities as a group
- Tour of the UCL Campus

### TAKE HOME MESSAGES

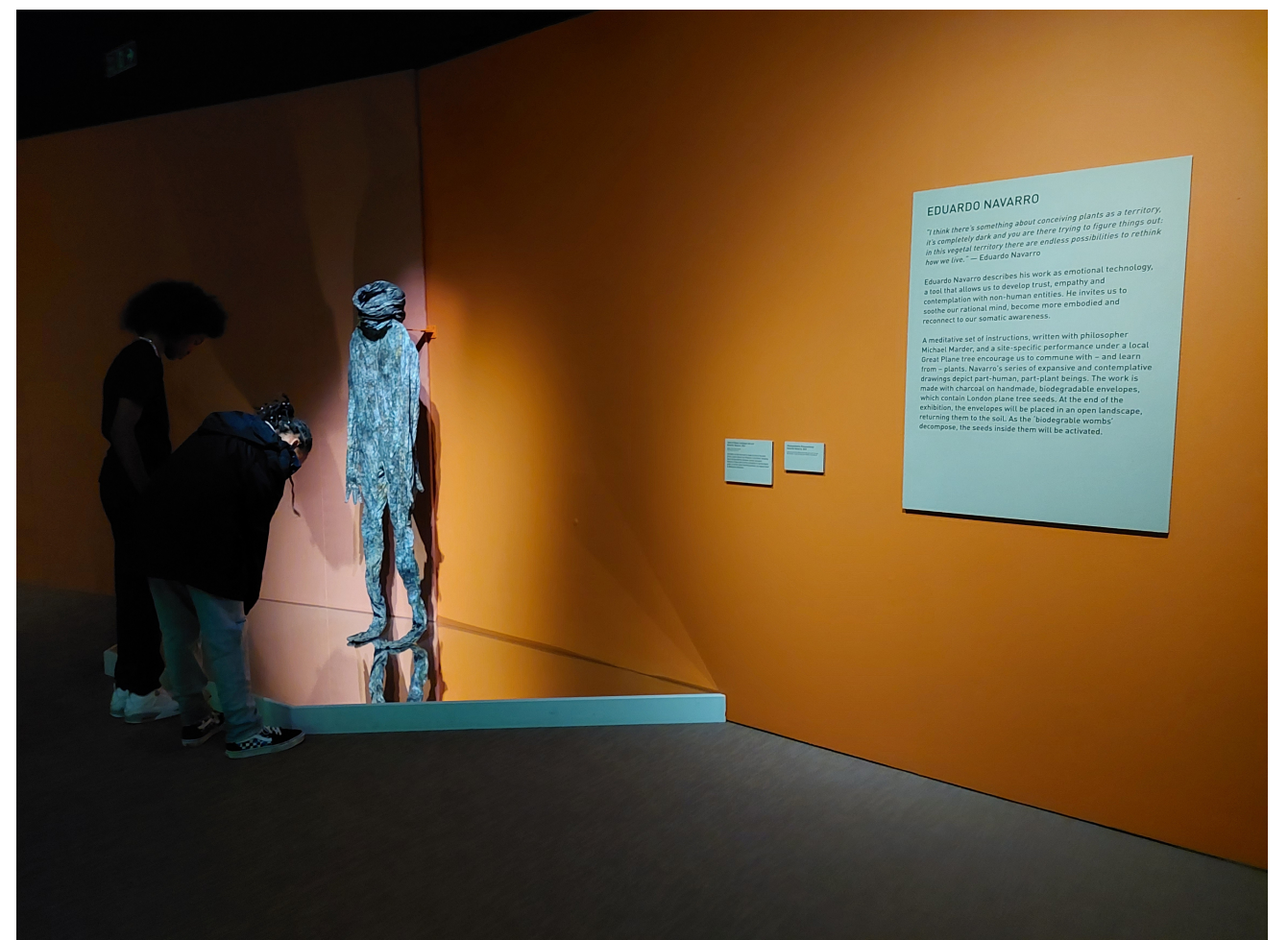
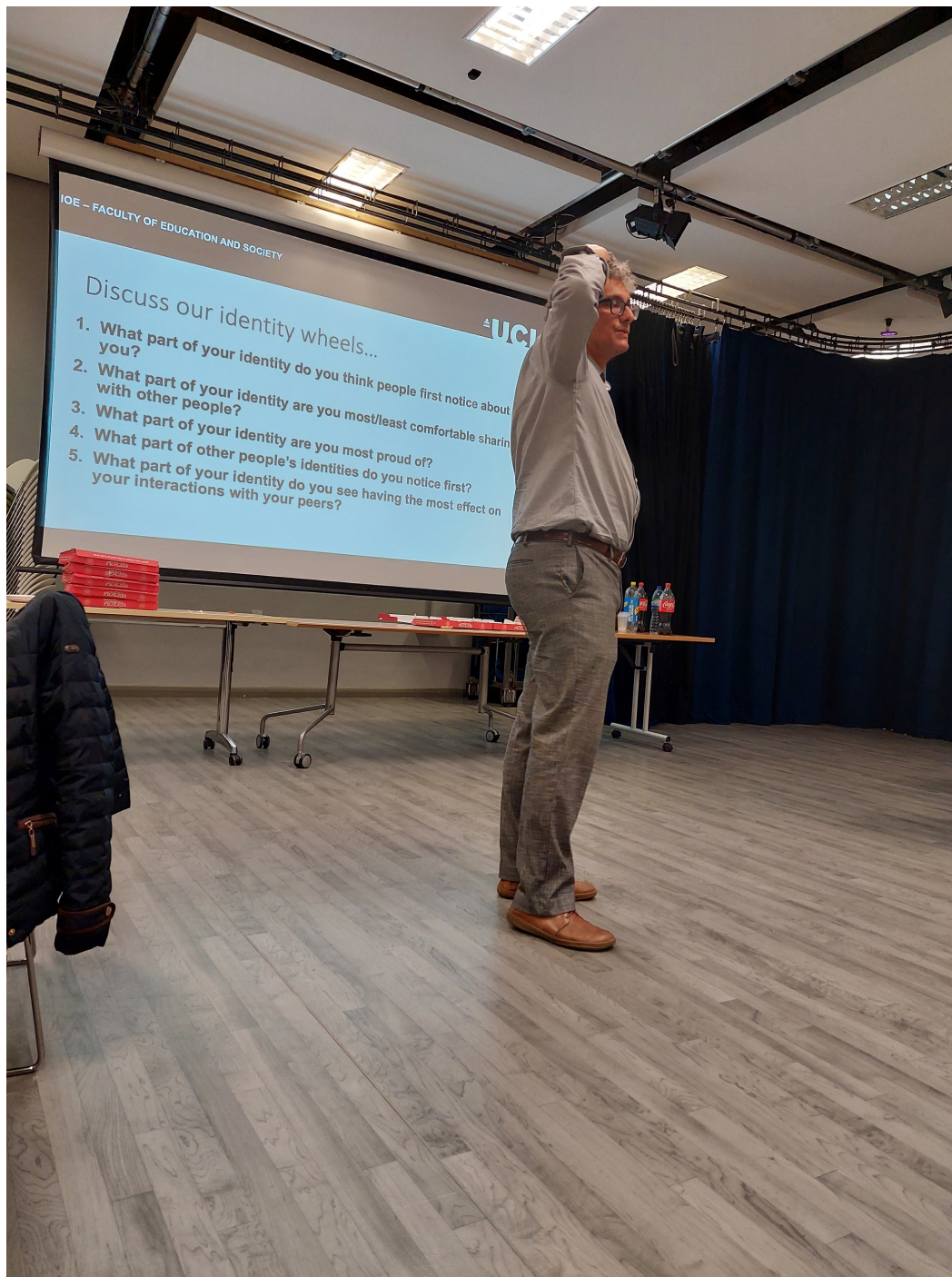
- Having a supportive community can help us feel less lonely
- Importance of being active





# Workshop 4

*in photos!*



The young people visited the Wellcome exhibition and discussed issues of social identity, discrimination, and first-impressions with Dr Panagiotis Rentzelas.





# WORKSHOP 5





# Workshop 5

*CopeWell with Art: A UCL, JEDelve & ARTSMH Collaboration*



*\*Not the full stencil, please refer to the blog*

## WHAT WE DID

We planned out a physical stencil with the Arts for Mental Health (ARTSMH) team to incorporate a mix of everyone's ideas into a physical representative for the youth club. The young people could either colour in a stencil or create their own piece reflecting on their experiences within the past 4 workshops. Each young person could then take their individual art piece to keep for themselves.

## QUOTES

*This stencil was designed by ARTSMH based on 3 of the programme workshop themes, namely: future career, story-telling and self-care. This collaborative artwork draws a close to the programme while more importantly encourages the young people to draw out their future through reflecting on what they have learnt throughout the programme. - Aiko Leung (ARTSMH co-founder)*

## YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED

- Self-expression through art
- Spontaneous activities (surprises for them)
- Being active rather than passive
- Representation of being a youth club together

## TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts
- It is important to find one's own form of self-expression

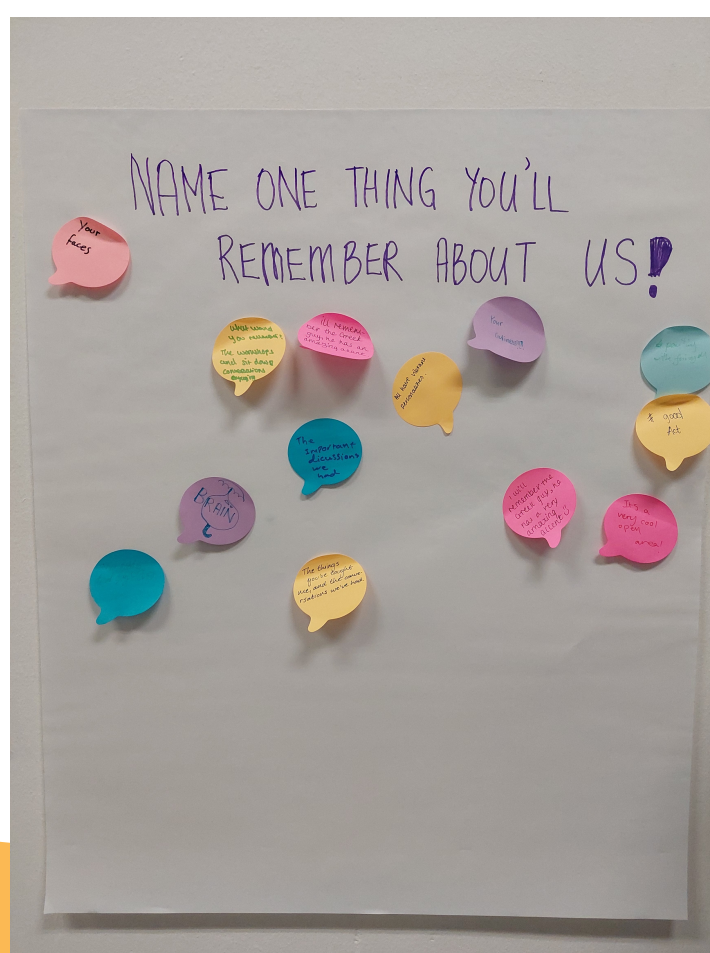


Read the full [Blog summary](https://www.copewellstudy.com/blog/summary) on [copewellstudy.com](https://www.copewellstudy.com)!

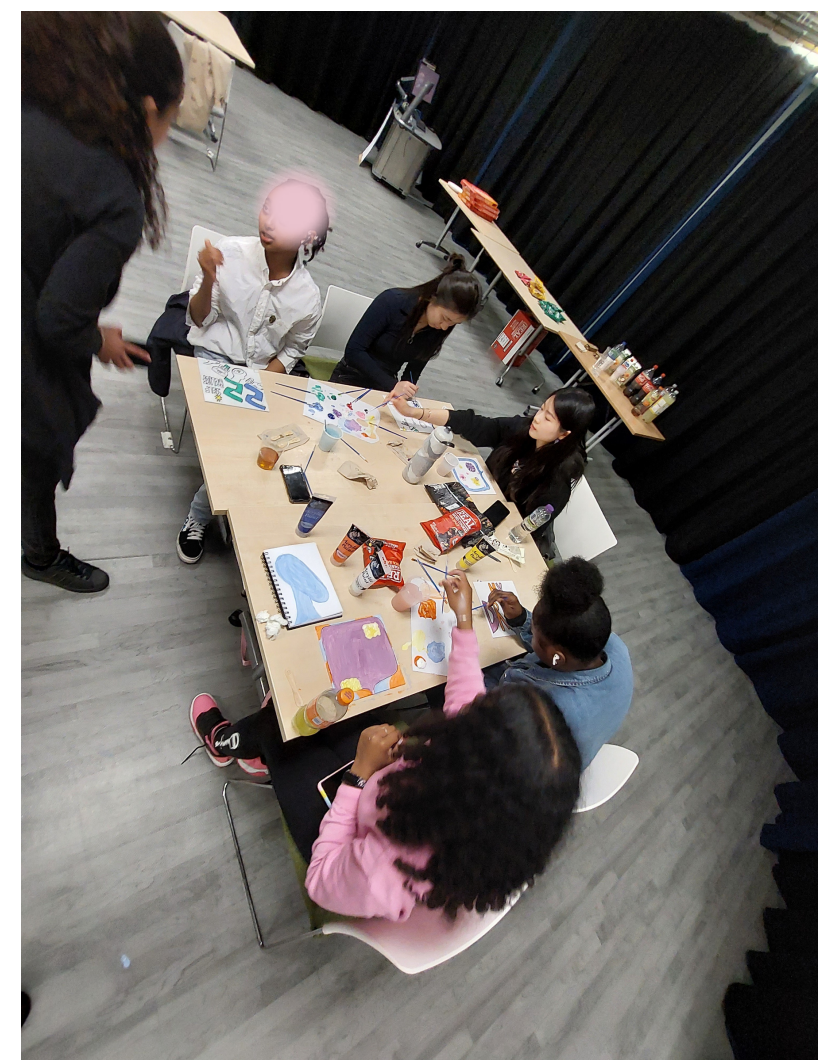


# Workshop 5

*in photos!*



For our final session, young people collaborated on creating a final 'summary art project' with the UCL student-led ARTSMH group. Say cheese for our final group photo!





# Quotes

## What the Young People thought about CopeWell!

“It is a really good experience. That regardless of the stuff that you do whether it piques your interest, it's something that will help you. Generally a good experience it is something that you wouldn't get otherwise.”

“I probably say the ones where we actually went into UCL. It was a new experience, and we actually got to go inside. We've never done that before, so it was cool.”

“Make sure that you are focused. Because they talk about how they got into their job and how they got into it. So you don't want to miss it. Ask loads of questions. It's better that you know more stuff. Cos if you ask questions, they will answer it and it may link to other questions that other people may have”

“It made me more open to university. Like little things, I found enjoyment in, and team work. [...] It was realistic to see, out in front of you, compared to hearing about it. I still want to go. It's kind of made it more real for me. Instead of everyone giving different expectations, just seeing it for a day.”

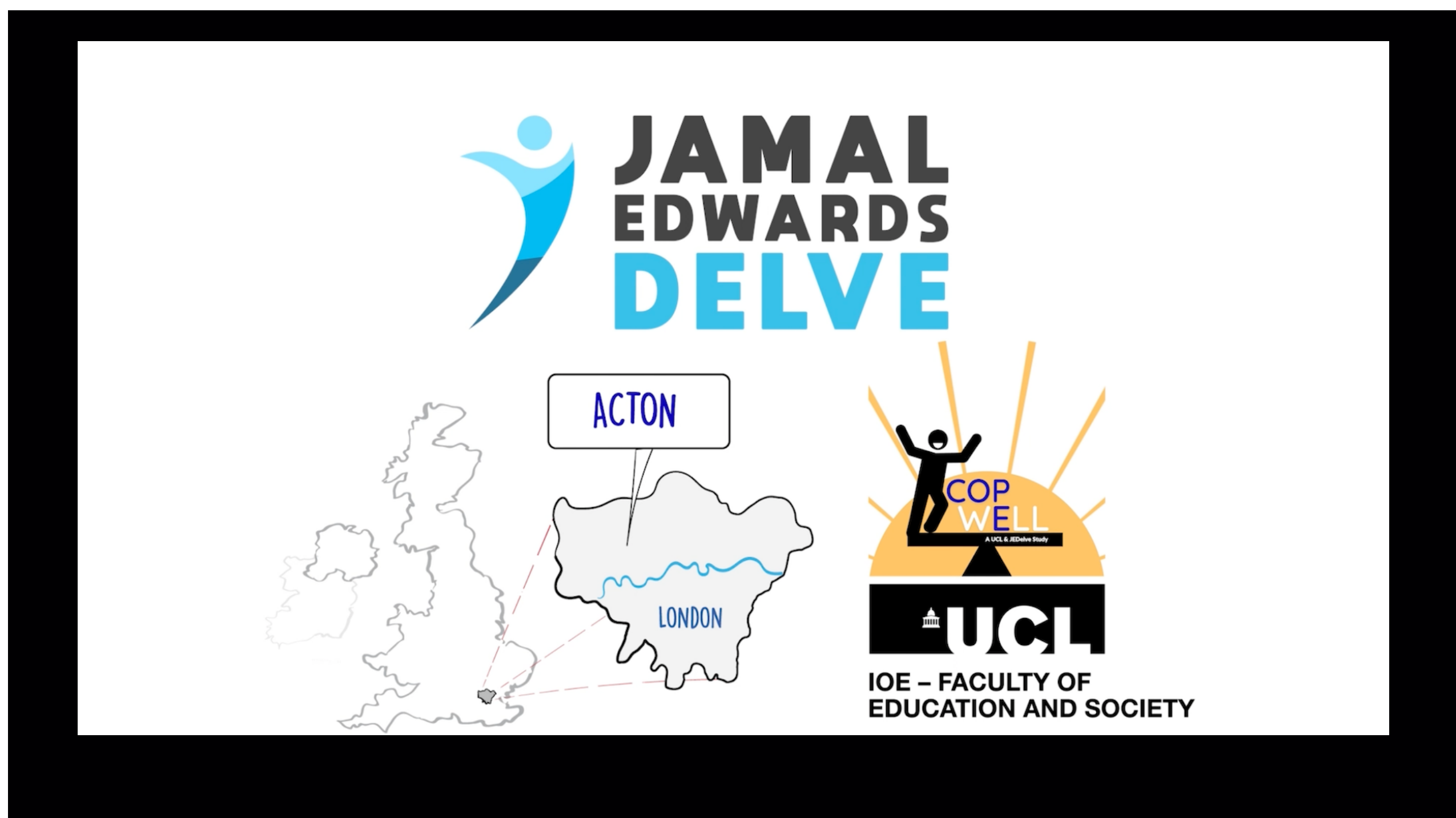
“With the body image one, the way of thinking. It helps because it allowed us to think about other people's pov, but also from my own. But in like, a positive way. So sometimes we might dwell on something that is not as big as it is and you think, if a random stranger was to see me, was that really going to be the first thing we notice about me?”

“Hearing about everyone else's experiences [of covid]. Everyone had very different experiences about it was pretty nice.”

“I learned that people stereotyping is not very good. You can't really make a joke about it. Because it could be affecting someone's life at the end.”



## Listen to how CopeWell workshops have impacted our young people



Co-created with the young people, JEDelve team, the UCL team has summarised the CopeWell Study findings and impact in the 2-minute video below.

Animation by Russ Animates Ltd.



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## Study References

### OSF pre-registration

- Wong, K. K.-Y. (2021, December 4). COVID19: Co-creating psychological wellbeing and life-skill workshops with BAME youths in West London (COPE-WELL). <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/JCAK7>

### Current CopeWell Study report reference

- Wong, Keri Ka-Yee (2023): Co-creating psychological wellbeing and life-skill workshops with BAME youths in West London (Cope-Well) Study Report (Wong, 2021). University College London. Presentation. <https://doi.org/10.5522/04/21805782>



## Acknowledgements

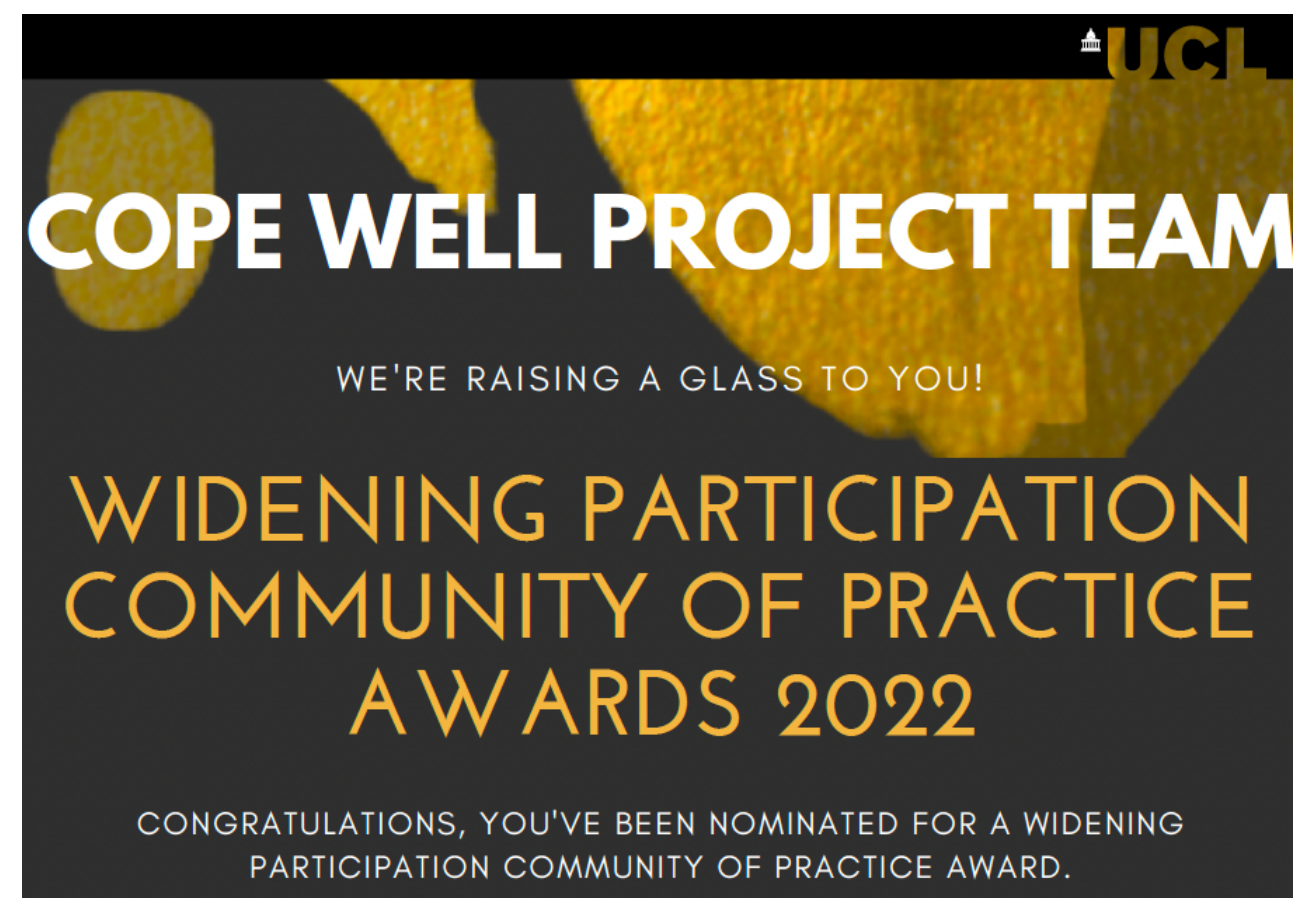
This project would not be possible without the enthusiastic support from all the young people and staff of **Jamal Edwards Delve**. A special thanks to **Yara, Sonny, Ami and Ayaka** for sharing their ideas and ensuring that young people's needs and support are met. The smooth running of each and every one of the workshops, the creative dissemination of research findings, the conversations had and relationships built between University College London (UCL) and Jamal Edwards Delve (JEDelve) charity would simply not be possible without the fantastic team of UCL student leaders: **Romane Lenoir, Ella Boutros, Eoin Mulholland, and Jaimie Leung**.

Thanks also goes to all the amazing guest speakers and student group **Arts Mental Health**, led by **Aiko Leung** and **Weiyi Xie** who helped make our workshops impactful, fun, memorable, 'life changing' for our young people: **Evi Katsapi (UCL)**, **Dr Matthew Reeves (UCL)**, **Rebecca Mason (UCL)**, **Dr Amy Harrison (UCL)**, **Denise Sanderson-Estcourt (bodyconfidencecards.com)**, **Amie Liebowitz (BBC Journalist World Services)**, **Isaac Farnin (BBC Journalist Sports)**, and **Dr Panagiotis Rentzelas (UCL)**.





Finally, we would like to thank our generous funders UKRI Research England for believing in, and realising this meaningful project which was nominated for the UCL Widening Participation Community of Practice Awards 2022.




Dr Keri Wong  
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IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society

