



# The Mental Health and Wellbeing Awards 2024



## Inspirational Story Entry Form

Inspirational story (under 18) - lived experience – an individual who has overcome their own mental health difficulties

Ilhora-Lee Louison BCyA

Provide a short summary (max 150 words) of the individual and their contribution for use if they are shortlisted.

Ilhora-Lee, 10-years-old, is a multi-awarded winning kidpreneur, youth ambassador and international speaker on children's mental health who positively impacts diverse communities in the UK and beyond. She emphasizes journaling and a positive mindset, especially post-COVID when the world was uncertain and frightening for many young people. At four, Ilhora-Lee arrived in the UK from France, with her family native to Martinique. Despite the obstacles, she exhibited immense bravery and determination, embracing the challenges of starting school and mastering the English language. By six, Ilhora-Lee discovered journaling, creating her own as a guide for children navigating emotions. Her Self-Development Journals promote personal growth, instilling confidence and success in young minds. Ilhora-Lee embodies the boundless potential inherent in every child, encouraging them to believe in themselves and to cultivate self-kindness and self-love. Through words and actions, she reminds every child to believe in themselves because they are all full of potential.

Introduce the context or background of their story in the space below

Ilhora-Lee's journey began when she was just four years old after her family moved from Paris to London. The transition was spurred by her mum's decision to pursue better career opportunities abroad, a choice filled with hope but also full of challenges. As a young child, Ilhora-Lee was deracinated from the comfort of her family, her language, her neighbourhood, friends, and the only lifestyle she had known.

Arriving in London, the contrast between her old and new life was stark. She was suddenly immersed in an environment where everything was unfamiliar. This shift was disorienting for Ilhora-Lee; School used to be a place she loved, but it turned into a confusing maze of social and academic challenges. Ilhora-Lee had a hard time understanding what her teachers and classmates were saying. The language barrier was a major hurdle, making her school days confusing and lonely.

This period of her life was not just about geographic relocation; it was a fundamental transformation of her identity and her understanding of the world. As the initial excitement of the move gave way to the daily realities of adjustment, Ilhora-Lee faced the immense task of finding her place in this new world.

Describe in the space below their mental health or well-being story.

Ilhora-Lee's initial excitement about moving to a new country quickly faded as she encountered the harsh realities of language barriers.

Ilhora-Lee found herself struggling to adapt to her new surroundings without being able to communicate effectively. This language barrier left her feeling deeply lonely and sad, reinforcing her feelings of isolation, and making her school experience increasingly distressing. Her days at school, once a place of joy and exploration, turned into periods of confusion and social isolation. The constant effort to understand basic instructions and communicate with teachers and peers left her exhausted, discouraged and she often struggled to participate in class, which took a toll on her self-esteem and overall mental health.

Each school day brought its own set of challenges, further isolating her in an environment that was once meant to be nurturing and supportive. The joy and curiosity that had characterised her learning experiences in France seemed a distant memory, replaced by confusion, frustration, and anxiety.

During break time, Ilhora-Lee often found herself on the periphery of playground activities. She watched her classmates interact with ease, laughing and sharing stories she couldn't understand. This exclusion extended into her classroom experiences, where she felt like an outsider looking in. She tried to follow along but often missed key points, leaving her unable to contribute meaningfully. Her teachers noticed her struggles, but with many students to attend to, they couldn't provide the help she needed to bridge the communication gap.

This persistent struggle not only stalled her academic progress but began to erode her confidence. Ilhora-Lee doubted her abilities and felt overwhelmed by the seemingly insurmountable task of catching up with her peers. These feelings of inadequacy were compounded by her anxiety, which manifested in sleepless nights and tears.

Describe in the space below how this story is inspirational (e.g. that they have had a massive impact on others or policy).

Ilhora-Lee's story is profoundly inspirational, demonstrating immense resilience and perseverance in the face of considerable challenges. When she moved from France to London, Ilhora-Lee encountered significant struggles that made her early days in the UK isolating and difficult. However, these challenging beginnings did not define Ilhora-Lee's entire story.

During this time, her parents played a pivotal role in supporting her emotional well-being by encouraging her to express her feelings through conversations, mindfulness activities, drawing and writing. These creative outlets allowed Ilhora-Lee to articulate emotions that she couldn't easily express due to the language barrier and her young age.

As she navigated her new environment, these forms of expression became vital tools for coping with her loneliness and anxiety. They not only provided her with a way to process her complex feelings but also helped her gradually build her language skills and confidence.

As she became more fluent in English, Ilhora-Lee began to form friendships. Her growing confidence allowed her to engage more with her peers and teachers, and she started to feel a sense of belonging. Her schoolwork improved, and she discovered a newfound resilience, proving to herself that she could overcome the initial obstacles and thrive in her new environment.

Seeing the substantial benefits that these practices had on her own mental health, Ilhora-Lee was inspired to extend this support to others who might be experiencing similar struggles.

Driven by her experiences and a deep empathy for others feeling marginalized, at 7 years old, Ilhora-Lee decided to create a self-development journal to help children and young people dealing with their emotions. She designed the journal to include the very tools that had helped her through tough times—activities to encourage self-expression, strategies for managing stress and anxiety, and exercises to build self-esteem and resilience. Ilhora-Lee's aim was to ensure that other children would not have to endure the sense of alienation she felt, providing them with resources to feel understood and supported.

Her dedication to helping others has led Ilhora-Lee to become a multi-award-winning figure in mental health advocacy. Her work has had a wide-reaching impact, supporting children not just in the UK but internationally. Ilhora-Lee has become a prominent voice for those who are often unheard, a mental health ambassador who uses her platform to raise awareness and a public speaker who inspires others with her story of turning personal adversity into a mission to help others.

Ilhora-Lee's journey from a young girl struggling to find her place in a new country to an influential advocate for mental health is a testament to the power of resilience and the positive impact of supportive parenting. Her story continues to inspire and motivate those who hear it, demonstrating how personal challenges can be transformed into opportunities to profoundly support and uplift others.

What do other people say about this person?

***I purchased Ilho Sunshine's self-development journal for my daughter B. (8 years old). I am so impressed by its quality, and it has already helped with her feelings and so much more... Merci beaucoup pour la carte et les petits cadeaux! Nous te souhaitons beaucoup de succès pour la suite !" C.***

***"Great experience with Ilho 🙏❤️" Maryse***

***"Great experience and very interesting" C.***

***"I met the authors parents at the Cocoa kids' festival and the author herself, very inspiring. I'm buying the boys book for my son for when he is a bit older" SM.***

***"As a working mom, it's hard to find time for structured activities with my child. The Ilho Sunshine journal gives us a fun way to connect every day. My daughter loves the colours, affirmations, and the free expression pages, and I see her developing positive habits and self-awareness!" - Sarah, mother of a 6-year-old***

***"My son can be shy around others. The journal's well-crafted questions are helping him express himself more and become more confident at school. We're so grateful for this positive tool!" - David, father of a 7-year-old***

***"The Ilho Sunshine journals are a valuable addition to my classroom toolbox. They provide engaging activities that promote mindfulness, goal setting, and positive communication. My students love them, and I see a noticeable improvement in their social-emotional well-being." - Dave, primary school teacher***

***"These journals offer much-needed support for students facing academic and social pressures. The relatable topics and reflection prompts encourage open communication and self-discovery, which is crucial for my age group." - Mary, school counsellor***

***"I was looking for a unique and meaningful birthday gift for my niece. The Ilho Sunshine journal was perfect! It's creative, and educational, and encourages her to be her best self. She absolutely loves it!" - Aunt Karen***

***"My sister is always complaining that my nephew is always on his phone, so I wanted to gift him something different, something engaging and stimulating. The Ilho Sunshine journal sparked his curiosity and helped him focus on his creative talents. It's also the perfect gift for tech-savvy kids! lol " - Uncle Michael***

***Ilhora-Lee Louison (nine) BCyA, children's mental health champion, presented me with a copy of her self-development journal, something I will use in 2024!***

## Timeframe:

### **4 years old:**

Arrived in the UK. (August 2018)

### **7 years old:**

Ilhora-Lee said she wants to create her own journal to help children like her. (Avril 2021)

### **8 years old:**

1. Launch of My Self-Development Journal at the Ultra Education fair in Wembley Stadium with other young entrepreneurs. (April 2022)
2. Events:
  - a. Cocoa Festivals (August and October 2022)
  - b. UK Black Business Show 2022 (youngest exhibitor)-(October 2022)
3. Collaboration with Women of Microsoft and was invited to share her story. (September 2022)
4. TruLittle Hero Award winner in the Scribe Under 12 category. (November 2022)
5. Webinar with French Kidpreneur with Alan (Limonade Business) and Elena (Fashion Business)- (December 2022)
6. Bright future at Level 39 in Canary Wharf (Like dragon's den: investors/businesses who pitch) invited by Ultra Education (February 2023)

### **9 years old:**

7. Public speaker: Speaking at her School assembly and other schools.
8. Launch of French version of Journals at Entrepreneur event in Paris as a Guest of Honour. (May 2023)
9. Cocoa Girl journalist: Co-wrote the 5 A's of children and young people's development and support (Attention, Acceptation, Affection, Affirmation, Appreciation)- (May 2023)
10. Public speaker in Martinique (August 2023)
  - a. Spoke at the Literary Salon in Rivière-Pilote, about her journal.
  - b. Spoke to the young people of the National Federation of Structure and activities (Education, Social and Cultural) of Martinique.
  - c. Spoke at Cultural Event about her journal.
11. BCyA Award at Westminster Palace (October 2023)

12. Royal Award (youngest nominee and winner)- (November 2023)
13. Wrote an article for First news about Ultra Education Xmas Event in London. (December 2023)
14. Public speaker: invited by a French mayor to talk about her entrepreneurial journey. (December 2023)
15. Public speaker: spoke in a French Women in entrepreneurship Masterclass. (January 2024)
16. Translated another Kidpreneur's book in French. (February 2024)
17. West London Business Award (youngest nominee and winner) – (February 2024)
18. Spoke at Let's Talk Better (Improve Better Lives) First anniversary. (February 2024)
19. Interview on GB News (Mars 2024)

**10 years old:**

20. Public speaker: Speaking at her School assembly and other schools.
21. Public speaker in Martinique (April 2024)
  - d. Spoke in Schools
  - e. Spoke at Cultural Event about her journal.
22. BYITC Award (April 2024)
23. Presenter at the Royal Award 2024

**Links:**

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/ilhosunshine/>

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ilho-sunshine-bcya-a7a486308/?originalSubdomain=uk>

**Youtube:**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vxljohatle4>
- <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/njtm9najF-w>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0XLKwVrng0>
- <https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/martinique/ilhora-lee-louison-une-jeune-martiniquaise-inspirante-et-engagee-dans-la-sante-mentale-des-enfants-1442084.html>

Please return the entry to [awards@rootofit.com](mailto:awards@rootofit.com) before 30th May 2024.