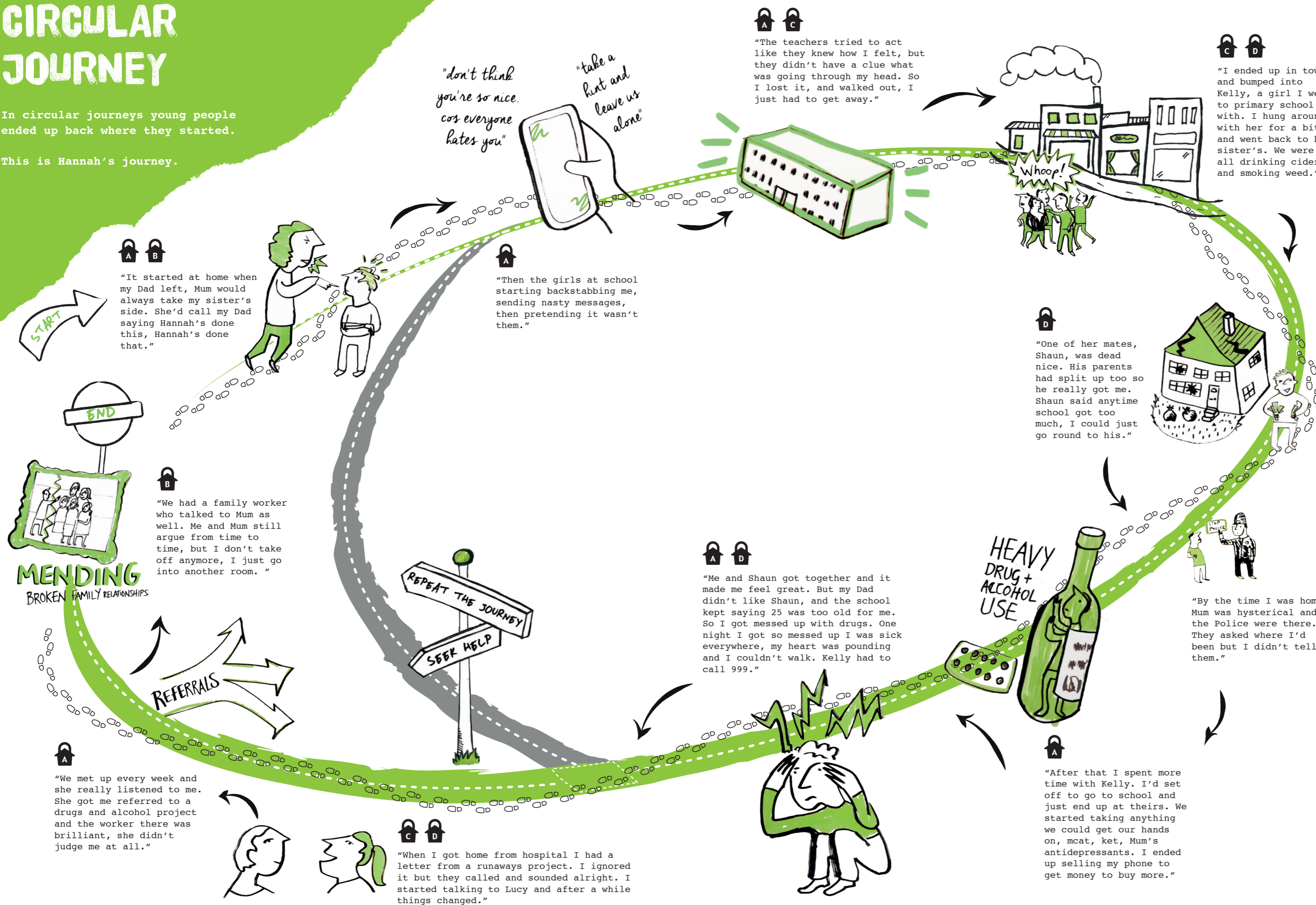


CIRCULAR JOURNEY

In circular journeys young people ended up back where they started.

This is Hannah's journey.



A B

"It started at home when my Dad left, Mum would always take my sister's side. She'd call my Dad saying Hannah's done this, Hannah's done that."

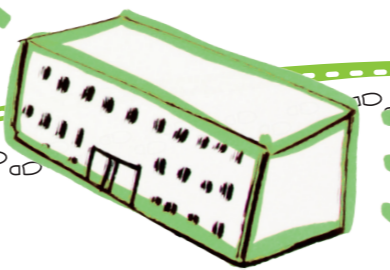


A

"Then the girls at school starting backstabbing me, sending nasty messages, then pretending it wasn't them."

A C

"The teachers tried to act like they knew how I felt, but they didn't have a clue what was going through my head. So I lost it, and walked out, I just had to get away."



C D

"I ended up in town and bumped into Kelly, a girl I went to primary school with. I hung around with her for a bit and went back to her sister's. We were all drinking cider and smoking weed."



D

"One of her mates, Shaun, was dead nice. His parents had split up too so he really got me. Shaun said anytime school got too much, I could just go round to his."



A D

"Me and Shaun got together and it made me feel great. But my Dad didn't like Shaun, and the school kept saying 25 was too old for me. So I got messed up with drugs. One night I got so messed up I was sick everywhere, my heart was pounding and I couldn't walk. Kelly had to call 999."



"By the time I was home, Mum was hysterical and the Police were there. They asked where I'd been but I didn't tell them."

A

"After that I spent more time with Kelly. I'd set off to go to school and just end up at theirs. We started taking anything we could get our hands on, meat, ket, Mum's antidepressants. I ended up selling my phone to get money to buy more."



C D

"When I got home from hospital I had a letter from a runaways project. I ignored it but they called and sounded alright. I started talking to Lucy and after a while things changed."



SAFE PLACES

We found that these things could prevent the journey or make it safer. The points at which they could help are shown on the map.

A

Having the right people around you, either socially or within services.

B

Being able to access family support or mediation.

C

Knowing about services that can help.

D

Having good life skills and awareness of risk.

WE RECOMMEND:

01. A national programme of youth work should be developed and funded to provide safe spaces for all young people, but especially those who are disengaged from school and statutory services.
02. The role of pastoral workers and PSHE classes in school should be valued and protected.
03. Information about runaway services should be displayed in public transport hubs and shopping centres, alongside phone charging points so that young people can ring helplines and other people who may help them.
04. Local authorities should make sure that young people get a chance to talk to an independent person about why they ran away. Young people (and parents, if appropriate) should be offered follow up support that meets their needs.
05. Commissioners should ensure that services are funded for long enough to enable young people to develop positive relationships with workers, and that young people have a say in shaping services.

Journey illustrations provided by Sandra Howgate