

In our exclusive *Spotlight* feature, we highlight women who are doing good things in their community. They're not always seen but we think they should be.

SPOTLIGHT

Frederique Lambrakis-Haddad

Frederique is the Co-Founder of Flourish Mentors, rooted in empowering young women to “believe, belong and become.”

I have made three wishes in my life. My first came at six, walking to school past charity boxes in shop windows. I silently wished for world peace and, moved by the conviction of a child who takes herself very seriously, began donating my pocket money. A year later, my parents gently suggested the shop owner might have been keeping it. (I admit some had already been redirected to sweets. We were both, it seems, quietly helping ourselves.)

My second came at 18, during a part-time job in a local school. There I met a mother who would not allow her daughter to interact with male teachers; a woman clearly shaped by her own history of trauma, fiercely protective, yet in need of support herself. I was moved by her love and her pain in equal measure. It stayed with me, and I made a quiet commitment: that before I died, I would work alongside those who had suffered in these ways.

My third wish came in my early 20s. As a young woman navigating the 80s and 90s, I encountered female role models who, to put it kindly, were products of their time. One told me she was “toughening me up” for a man’s world. I promised myself that, when I was older, I would mentor younger women rather differently.

Two of these wishes became Flourish Mentors.

Our mission is simple: to make sure no young woman is invisible. Co-founded with Cathy Chesson, whose calm empathy and artistic eye balance my fire, Flourish Mentors supports young women (LGBTQIA+ inclusive) aged 16 to 25 in Brighton & Hove. Today, over 60 mentors support more than 70 mentees with free, one-to-one, therapeutically matched support for up to two years.

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I have been a psychotherapist for over 30 years, specialising in trauma and adolescent mental health. By 14, I had lived in 6 countries and changed schools 9 times. That experience taught me how deeply change shapes us, and how skilfully young women can mask their struggles. I have seen this often: distress quietly internalised, invisibility disguised as “being fine.”

Flourish Mentors supports young women to: Believe. Belong. Become. We welcome anyone who would like to be involved: as a mentor, supporter, or ally. Come check us out!

As for my first wish? I’m afraid world peace remains a work in progress.

flourishmentors.com