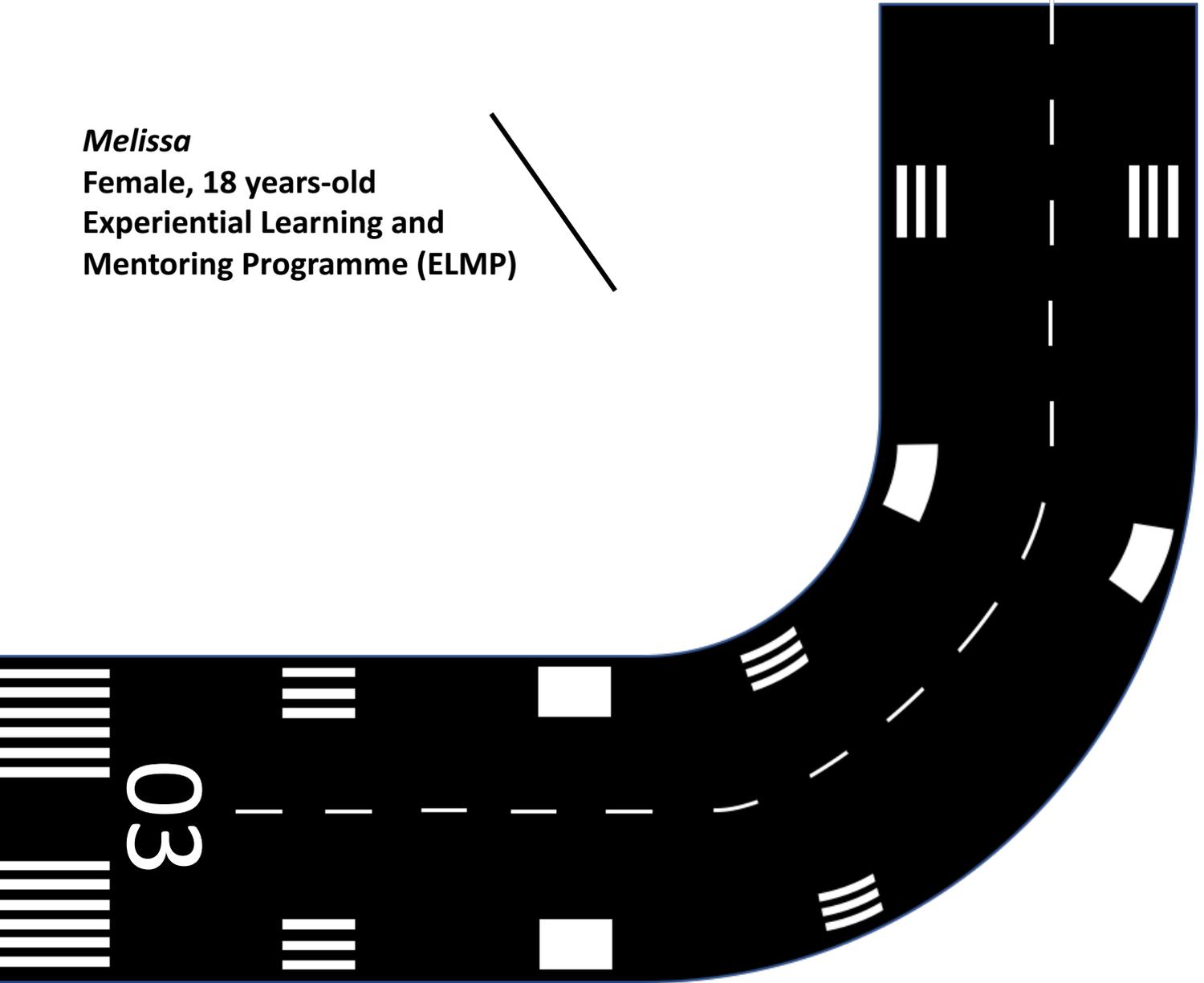


Melissa
Female, 18 years-old
Experiential Learning and
Mentoring Programme (ELMP)



“My older sister was the sweetest and kindest person that anyone could ever have as a sibling. I even told myself that I am ever so blessed to have a sister like her but little did I know that our time as sisters would be cut short so abruptly and our sisterhood would take a sharp turn for the worst so soon...”

As Melissa grew up, her family went through numerous ordeals. Issues piled up, and this greatly affected Melissa and her elder sister. The tremendous stress took a toll on Melissa’s sister and resulted in her developing a mental illness. All these emotional traumas culminated in the diagnosis of her sister’s mental illness.

“As my sister’s condition deteriorated, I slowly lost her, my role model. At 15, she regressed so far that she had the mental capacity of a 3-year-old. We could not even have basic communication with her anymore.”

Melissa's heart was broken, as she soon realised that her relationship with her sister would no longer be the same. It was challenging for the family to adapt and learn how to take care of Melissa's sister as if she was a toddler. At times, Melissa's sister might even harm herself or escape from them.

"It was extremely trying and excruciating for us to adjust to our new situation and our changed sister. When I was in a turmoil, a social worker from another agency was there for me at my darkest by offering her services and wise counsel to my family. She helped us to function again after the shocks. Without her, my mother would not have been able to find the courage to start working again and my brother and I would not have found the motivation to pick ourselves up and not give up on our education."

At the same time, Melissa was also involved in YGOS's Experiential Learning and Mentoring Programme (ELMP), where she found comfort and refuge in forming friendships with the staff and the youths.

"YGOS is like my second home and second family. I was mentored and cared for by YGOS staff and they offered the extra support and encouragement that I needed to push through the struggles. Their wisdom, concern, and love truly gave me the strength that I really needed. Because of all these guardian angels (i.e. the YGOS Social Workers) in my life, I had the support and love to build and restore myself again. It was a blessing in disguise that through losing myself in all these chaos, I found courage and purpose in life. I deeply aspire to be a social worker to inspire others too."