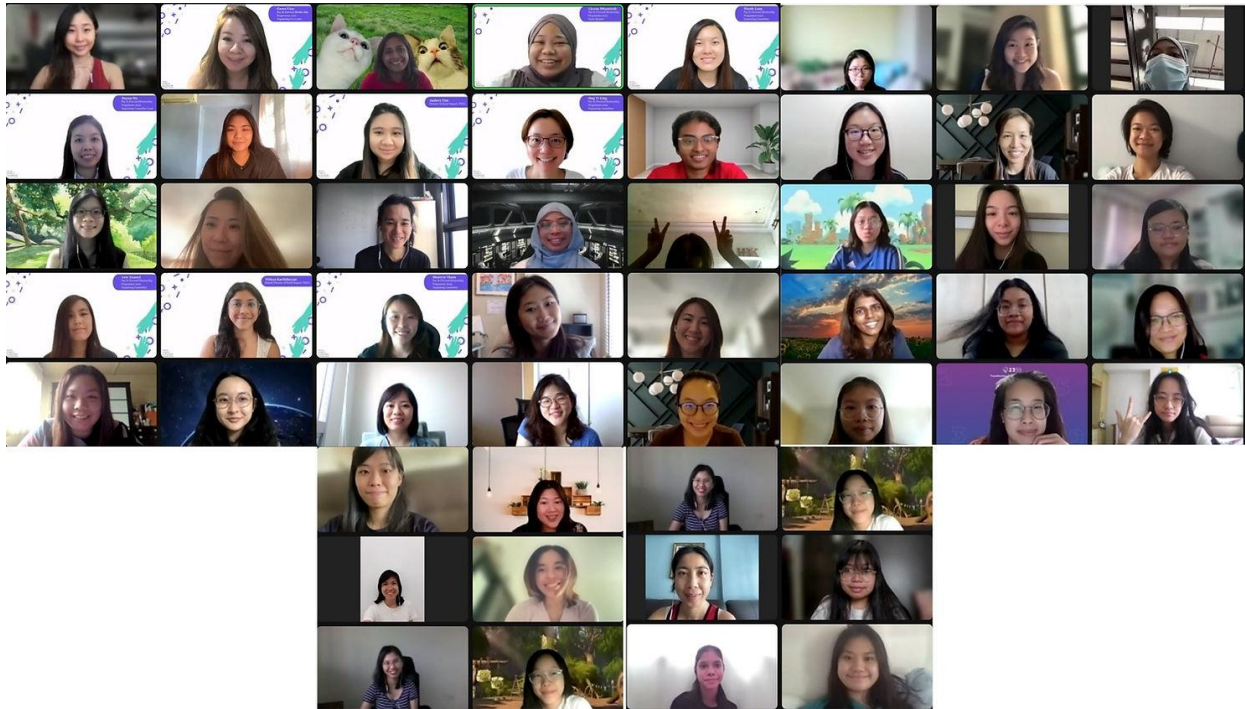


The mentors and mentees from Pay-It-Forward (PIF) Mentorship Programme's 2022 cycle started their journey with a Confidence Building workshop on the 4th of June with Liyana Dhamirah. A woman wearing many hats, Liyana is the Founder of Virtual Assistants Singapore, Assistant Manager at AWARE, and an accomplished author of the book titled *Homeless: The Untold Stories of a Mother's Struggles in Crazy Rich Singapore*.



Liyana's life journey was slightly different – she became pregnant at the age of 16, was homeless at 22, and divorced by the time she was 26. The options she had during her darkest period were not enviable. She had reached rock bottom several times, thinking that there is no way out of a bleak life.

Liyana faced the daunting challenges courageously and was determined to overcome her difficulties. Here are the key takeaways that she shared during the workshop:

1) Start your self-development journey by understanding the root of your confidence

We will face scenarios where we will need to take a step back and reflect on our lives.

Despite the many challenges she faced, Liyana embraced her life and worked on self-development. For example, she found reading helpful and enriching, incorporating it into her routines.

At the same time, she started working on her growth mindset because she believes that one cannot conceptualise things until they have visualised them in their minds. It became a habit to look inwards through self-reflection to take stock of her life and her various situations. Journaling has also helped her to verbalise the thoughts in her head. This 'me time' has become an everyday routine where she takes time to pen down thoughts, recall her learnings, and jot down reflections.

2) Life doesn't have to be what life needs to be

Nothing is perfect in life. In her memoir, Liyana shed light on the difficult situations people go through and the structural barriers that hinder opportunities and mobility for some. All of us have our own challenges and will go through various phases of self-discovery in building our self-confidence.

3) We are the sum of the 5 people we're closest to

Liyana makes it a point to declutter her life and surround herself with people who can groom, motivate, and challenge her in different ways. She believes it is important to reflect on how another person does things differently and to learn from these differences.

4) Self-esteem is different from self-confidence

A person can be very confident about some of her abilities but still have low self-esteem. Having confidence in a particular area of life won't necessarily translate into higher self-esteem.

Instead, self-esteem is our opinion of ourselves. It's common for people to have low levels of confidence occasionally, but people with low self-esteem are unhappy or dissatisfied with themselves most of the time. It takes self-awareness and practising healthy habits to boost low self-esteem. Hence, it is important to be kind to ourselves so that we can improve and regulate self-esteem regardless of our level of self-confidence.

5) Stop worrying about what other people think about you

Someone else's opinions won't pay your bills. Everyone wants to be a diamond but few are willing to get cut. Ensure that your ego doesn't get in the way of achieving your shine!

YWLC's PIF Mentorship Programme is a 6-month mentorship programme in partnership with the International Women's Forum (IWF) and ITE College Central. YWLC members mentor young women from IWF and ITE that are driven to learn. Mentor-mentee pairs from this programme consistently learn together and bring out the best in each other.

This article was written for Young Women's Leadership Connection. View the original article [here](#).