

CHOICES

Using drama as a tool to prepare Year 6 students for the social and emotional challenges of Secondary School life.

Introduction

The move to secondary school can be both exciting and daunting. Alongside exciting new challenges, year 6 students will also be faced with a far larger learning environment and exposure to older and perhaps more streetwise students. This, coupled with the natural urge to seek independence in adolescence, can make young people particularly vulnerable.

In 2015 Peer Productions, a leading peer education theatre charity, were funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey and The Surrey High Sheriff Youth Awards to deliver a series of drama workshops in schools designed to build year 6 students' resilience as they approach the move to secondary school.

These workshops explored healthy relationships with both peers and first boyfriends and girlfriends, bullying, antisocial behaviour, smoking, drinking alcohol, and taking drugs. They were designed to empower pupils to feel more confident and assertive to make positive and healthy choices. They were delivered by young, specially trained theatre artists (aged 18 - 20 years) who also served as positive role models to normalise pro-social and responsible behaviour in young people.

This teachers' pack is designed to give a non-drama specialist teacher some of the tools needed to replicate the positive outcomes from this work in their own classrooms and includes 4 lesson plans ready to be delivered.

Nina Lemon
Artistic Director

Find out more

Founded in 2006, Peer Productions is an award winning youth arts charity specialising in combining high quality arts practice with peer education.



Each year we reach 10,000 young people across the South East of England, enabling them to change the way they think and to make positive life choices.

Our work is made with, by and for young people and focuses on three interlinked strands of Identity, Crime Prevention and Health.

To find out more and to book workshops for your students visit our website.

www.peerproductions.co.uk

or email us at admin@peerproductions.co.uk

“We found the Peer Productions workshop to be imaginative and informative. It was well-managed and run by the team present on the day and had a positive impact on the children present, who were then able to apply their learning about different forms of bullying to their own drama work in class.”

Key Questions

* **Are our students too young to be exploring these issues?**

In today's internet age children are exposed to lots of conflicting information from very early on. Whilst we might want to protect our young students from topics like the ones covered here the truth is that year 6 students will already have lots of knowledge (not all of it correct) that they will be able to bring to your class. We believe that providing pupils with an opportunity to discuss these topics in an age appropriate and safe environment can help to expose some of their incorrect knowledge and help them to stay safe as they grow up.

* **What's the benefit of using drama?**

Taking part in drama activities can increase students' confidence, communication skills and ability to work in a team and it is these soft skills that can help young people to resist pressure from their peers to take part in risky behaviour. The additional beauty of using drama in this context is that it allows for the young people to hook their conversations onto the fictional scenarios without feeling embarrassed or pressured to talk about their own or their peers' experiences.

* **Do I need to be a drama expert?**

No. As primary school teachers you engage your students in kinaesthetic group learning every day and are already adept at encouraging your pupils to talk about different topics. Using this programme will simply provide you with some additional resources and approaches to add to your repertoire.

* **Do I need to do the whole programme?**

No, the programme is designed for you to do as much or as little as suits your curriculum and the needs of your students.

The Drama Classroom

Here are some quick tips to maintain discipline and focus.

Choosing a space - Few teachers will have the luxury of a specially equipped space and hall space is usually oversubscribed particularly in the winter months. For a space to work in you just need to ensure that there is enough space for students to safely move around so pushing desks to the side and stacking chairs is usually perfectly adequate. Be aware that if you are using a school hall or gym acoustics can be challenging so make sure students are near enough to hear and that you project your voice sufficiently.

The circle - Circles are important in drama as it is a equal space in which all pupils can be seen and heard. Using the circle effectively can also help you to maintain control of the room and keep activities on track. Establishing the convention that drama lessons always start with students sat in a circle can provide helpful and reassuring structure to your sessions. If you have a particularly challenging class you can implement a circle plan much like a conventional seating plan. You can ask students to remember where they are in the circle and warn them that, at any time, you might call circle time and then time them getting back into the circle by counting aloud. Students can then be encouraged to beat their previous time. “That took 15 seconds. Can you do it in 10?”

Freeze - A healthy drama classroom should be quite noisy so it can be a challenge to get the students’ attention so that you can move onto the next instruction. You can obviously use what ever behavioural tool you usually use, but it may be worth trying to use the instruction freeze in the drama classroom. This involves saying the word freeze loudly whilst raising your hand in the air. Pupils have to stop talking and moving instantly. We find, regardless of age, school students enjoy the novelty of freezing and it is not phrase which is associated with the negativity of “stop” or “be quiet.”

“Very knowledgeable input from the leaders and excellent pace and behaviour management. Great! Thank you!”

Drama Techniques

The programme uses some simple but effective drama techniques to explore the issues.



Tableaux - Sometimes called freeze frames, this technique involves students working in small groups and using their bodies to create still images. Tableaux are useful as they provide an interesting visual image often involving a clear power dynamic upon which to base discussion. Working with tableaux also helps students to build up their physical discipline, focus and concentration as well as their understanding of body language and facial expression.

Thought tracking - A simple technique where pupils voice the thoughts that their characters are having. This technique is useful as it allows students to begin to consider the discrepancy between what a character says and does, and what they are really thinking.

Script work - Short scripts are provided in the pack royalty free for you to use as a basis for discussion. All scripts have gender neutral characters to avoid stereotyping and allow the children to make their own interpretations.

Forum Theatre - Forum theatre is a technique you can use while acting out a scene. The group watching is encouraged to stop the action when they think it necessary, to suggest a different action. At other times, the actors themselves can stop the action, and ask for help. Sometimes someone else can step in and take over a role - or even introduce a new one. This allows things to keep moving and in this context allows students to try out different behaviours in a safe and supportive environment.

Structuring Your Session

There is no reason why you cannot use drama on an ad hoc basis, within schemes of work or by picking and choosing the exercises in this pack that work for you. However, if you are creating a session that is entirely drama focussed you may wish to consider using the following structure.

Intro

Organise students into a circle. Establish the theme of the workshop and remind them of any specific rules. i.e Freeze.

Warm up - Physical, vocal, mental

Drama is a physical subject and students should be encouraged to warm up their bodies and voices. The warm up can also be used to change the mood in the room and to prepare the students mentally for the work ahead. For example, to calm down overly excitable children or to energise a flat group. (See games and exercises).

Main exercise(s)

Usually made up of a series of short tasks and discussions designed to develop the students' understanding of the topic and often culminating in the opportunity for students to show back their work.

Plenary

With students back in their circle this is an opportunity for students to reflect on learning and for the teacher to reinforce key learning points.

“Excellent!! I think it’s really beneficial to the children’s personal development and preparation for secondary school.”



<h2>Bullying</h2>	
Key Objective	To identify the different types of bullying and how to seek help if bullying occurs.
Intro	Introduce topic of workshop and Freeze rule
Warm up	Take your pick from any of the warm up exercises. Aim for one physical exercise, one vocal and one mental.
Tableaux	<p>Ask the class to identify the different types of bullying (physical, emotional, verbal and cyber). Split the class into four groups assigning a different type of bullying to each and get them to create a tableaux.</p> <p>Get each group to show their tableaux and ask the rest of the class to identify what they think is being represented. Ask questions like:</p> <p>“What do you think is happening here?” “How do you think X’s character is feeling/thinking.” “What type(s) of bullying can you see here.” “Who do you think is the most powerful character here.”</p>
Script Work	<p>Organise the children into groups of four. If you have an awkward number allow one child to direct. Ask the students to read through Bullying Scene (see resources) and then act it out.</p> <p>Invite one or two groups to show their scene to the rest of the group and ask the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the different types of bullying you can see? - How do you think A is feeling? - Why do you think D is behaving like this? - What do you think C is thinking? - Who could change the outcome of this scene and what could they do?
Forum	<p>Forum Theatre.</p> <p>Show the Bullying scene again and get the children to change the outcome. What could victim and bystander do differently? Can they improvise a different outcome?</p>
Plenary	<p>What did you learn?</p> <p>How might you behave differently in the future?</p>

Healthy Relationships (Friends)

Key Objective	To explore what qualities we look for in a good friend, how to be a good friend and what to do if friendships go wrong.
Intro	Introduce topic of workshop. Introducing the leaders Key Objective of session as above Introduce rules - Freeze + circle in 10 seconds with demonstration
Warm up	Take your pick from any of the warm up exercises. Aim for one physical exercise, one vocal and one mental.
Group discussion	Split the group into small groups (4/5) assigning a leader to each group. Talk about what qualities you look for in a good friend. Write a list/spidergram.
Improvisation	Create a 1 minute advert for your perfect friend and show back.
Group discussion	Talk about what can go wrong in friendships. Write a list/spidergram. Feedback
Improvisation and Forum	Create a scene in which someone is a bad friend. Show back and discuss how the friend should have acted. Ask a student to try out the new behaviour in the scene.
Plenary	Group discussion

“The workshops were well pitched for our pupils and were delivered with passion and enthusiasm. The children benefitted from the discussion and the drama, which challenged their thinking and promoted positive relationships.”

Healthy Relationships (Boyfriends & Girlfriends)

Key Objective	To encourage the group to consider what they might look for in their perfect partner and what a healthy relationship might look like.
Intro	<p>Introduce topic of workshop and Freeze rule.</p> <p>Explain that the session is going to be about boyfriend and girlfriend relationships and your expectations are that they will behave maturely and respectfully.</p>
Warm up	<p>Take your pick from any of the warm up exercises.</p> <p>Aim for one physical exercise, one vocal and one mental.</p>
Group discussion	<p>Get into groups of 4/5</p> <p>Discussion - What would you look for in your perfect boyfriend/girlfriend?</p> <p>Feedback as a group. Which qualities are most important?</p>
Improvisation	<p>Imagine you are a group of mad scientists and you are going to build or invent the perfect boyfriend of girlfriend. What qualities do you put into your spell/recipe? Create a scene.</p> <p>Show back scenes.</p>
Script Work	<p>In groups of 2 ask the students to read through the Boyfriends and Girlfriends scene. If you have an awkward number allow one child to direct.</p> <p>Invite one or two groups to show their scene to the rest of the group and ask the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where do you think the characters are? - What is A and Bs relationship? - How long do you think they've been in a relationship? - Is this behaviour normal/acceptable within a relationship? - Who has the most power in the scene? - Do you think they should stay in the relationship? - Can you identify all the things they do wrong?
Plenary	<p>What did you learn?</p> <p>How might you behave differently in the future?</p>

Drugs

Key Objective	To raise awareness of the different types of illegal drugs and the broad consequences of using them.
Starter	Introduce topic of workshop and Freeze rule
Group discussion	What drugs have you heard of and are they legal or illegal?
Warm up	Take your pick from any of the warm up exercises. Aim for one physical exercise, one vocal and one mental.
Walking around the room	Ask the students to walk around the room in silence. When you say freeze they must freeze. When you say a number they must get into groups of that number. When you shout something out they have 30 seconds in their group to build a tableaux showing what you have shouted. Shout out the phrases on the consequences resource (See Resources) For an added challenge you can ask them to do this without using words and/or in a shorter period of time. You can also get them to transition between tableaux. How smoothly can they move?
Tableaux	Explain that each of the pictures(tableaux) that they made were some of the consequences of taking illegal drugs. Split the class into small groups and assign a consequence to each. Get each group to refine a tableaux of that consequence and add sound, words or a few sentences. Ask each group to perform their tableaux then ask the class to consider whether this consequence is positive or negative or maybe both. You may want to use a diagram to illustrate this. The aim is for students to understand that the negative consequences outweigh the positive and that consequences that initially appear positive can be negative. For example, having a good time with friends is a positive thing but how strong are those friendships if you need drugs to do that?
Improvisation	In small groups improvise a scene in which someone is trying to persuade you to take drugs. Try and come up with as many things as you can argue against that person. As a whole group write a list of all the responses you could give to avoid being pressured into taking drugs.
Plenary	What did you learn? How might you behave differently in the future?



Warm Up, Games and Exercises - Physical

1,2,3 - Ask the children to walk around the room in silence and listen for your instructions. This would be a good time to try out the freeze rule. Then introduce the following rules:

- When you say 1: Jump in the air and shout “woo”, then keep walking
- When you say 2: Touch the floor then keep walking
- When you say 3 - Spin on the spot and say “weee”, then keep walking

Stretch it out - Starting from the top of your body and working downwards calmly stretch out. Instructions you could use include:

- Head and Neck - Look up (opening your mouth slightly), look down, look forwards, look over one shoulder, look over the other shoulder
- Shoulders - Roll your shoulders backwards for a count of four and forwards for four
- Back - Bring your hands up high over your head and stretch up. Now flop over forwards and come up slowly one vertebra at a time so that your head is the last thing to come up.
- Waist - With legs apart, stretch your right hand over your head and bring your arm and body over to the left. (Repeat on other side).
- Hips - Make a figure of 8 with your hips.
- Knees - Take a big step forwards and lunge. (Repeat on other side).
- Ankles - standing on one leg circle the raised ankle 4 times in one direction and 4 times in the other direction (Repeat on other side).

Shake it out - Shake each wrist very fast 8 times whilst counting loudly then do the same with each ankle. Repeat 6 times, then 4 times, then two times then once - right wrist, left wrist, right ankle, left ankle.

Tap it out - Get the group to copy you as you tap different parts of your body. Working quickly move between body parts.

Goldfish bowl - Ensuring each pupil has sufficient room ask them to imagine that they are in a goldfish bowl. They must use two hands and one foot (at a time) to paint the bowl. They must ensure the whole bowl is painted. Encourage them to take physical risks and make interesting shapes with their bodies.

Show me how you get down - This exercise is best suited to a more confident group and teacher. The aim is to discourage physical inhibitions and have some fun. The group clap together and chant the following:

Teacher - “Hey Emily”

Emily - “Hey Mrs Wren”

Teacher - “Show me how you get down”

Emily - “No way”

All - “Show us how you get down”

Emily - Ok

Emily then proceeds to do a silly dance for four counts

Emily - 1,2,3,4 that’s the way you get down

All (copying Emily’s dance) 1,2,3,4 that’s the way you get down.

Emily - (Picking someone else in the group) - “Hey Joe”

Joe - “Hey Emily” etc.



Vocal

Magic toffee - Ask the children to imagine that they have a toffee in their mouths and chew it. Then ask them to keep chewing it whilst the toffee gets bigger and bigger making them stretch and contort their facial muscles. Then get them to keep chewing whilst the toffee shrinks until it is tiny and then swallow it.

Prune and Banana - Repeating the words prune and banana make your face as tiny and scrunched up as possible whilst elongating the word prune then as large as possible whilst saying the word banana.

Consonant Train - In a circle get the class to copy you as you take two steps forward and two steps back to a steady rhythm - Forward (right left), back (right left). Aiming for the rhythm of a steam train work your way through the consonants. Students listen to you first and then repeat. You can play with dynamics of volume, pitch and tone. Emphasised tone is underlined.

Teacher: ba bababa ba bababa ba bababa ba
Class: ba bababa ba bababa ba bababa ba
Teacher: ca cacaca ca cacaca ca cacaca ca
Class: ca cacaca ca cacaca ca cacaca ca etc.

Tongue aerobics - Warm up the tongue by issuing the following instructions.

- Stick your tongue out as far as it will go.
- Now make it flat like a pancake, now pointy like a sword. Now switch between the two - pancake, sword, pancake sword.
- Point your tongue upwards - Can you touch your nose?, now to one side, the other side and down.
- Stick your tongue out and write your name with your tongue.
- With mouth closed run your tongue slowly across all your teeth.

Tongue Twisters - Tongue twisters can help your students to speak more clearly and really warm up the mouth. Some good ones include:

- Red Lorry, Yellow Lorry (Repeat)
- She sells sea shells on the sea shore (Repeat)
- Peggy Babcock (Repeat)
- Irish Wristwatch (Repeat)
- Unique New York, New York Unique (Repeat)
- I like New York, unique New York, I like unique New York.

“The presenters were really lively and they pitched the work at the right level. The children were all engaged and they really benefitted from the workshop.”



Mental

Do as I say not as I do - This game is a version of Simon Says designed to ensure your students are paying attention. You tell them to follow your verbal instructions whilst putting them off with visual clues. I.e - Say "tap your head" and you tap your knees etc.

Cross and circle - This exercise is counterintuitive so really gets their brains working. Ask the group to raise the index finger on one hand in the air and draw in the air a cross a few times. Then get them to do this on the other hand. Then get them to do both hands at the same time. Do the same with getting them to draw a circle in the air. Then get them to draw a circle with one hand and a cross with the other. You can do the same thing but with miming chopping and sawing wood.

I say 1, you say 2, I say three - This exercise can help students to concentrate. In pairs get the children to count to 3 over and over again as quickly as they can.

Student A- One
Student B - Two
Student A - Three
Student A- One
Student B - Two
Student A - Three etc.

Then ask student A in each group to replace the number one for a sound and action of their choice. For example

Student A- Hiya (with karate chop)
Student B - Two
Student A - Three
Student A- Hiya (with karate chop)
Student B - Two
Student A - Three etc.

Keeping your replacement number one get student B to replace the number two with a different sound and action. Then finally student A to replace the number three with a third sound and action.

Lets Make A...- This is a silent game designed to improve students' non verbal communication skills. With the students in small groups shout out an object, place or animal and then give them ten seconds to use their bodies to create that object, place or animal as a group. They can be still images or animated and with or without sound effects. Tried and tested suggestions for this include:

- A washing machine
- A flying dragon
- A classroom
- A working car
- A three headed dog



Bullying Scene

A secondary school playground. A and B are walking along chatting. C and D are watching them. D carries some books. As they pass, D bumps into A forcefully and the books fall to the floor.

D: Oi! What are you doing?

A: What? Err nothing, sorry.

D: I can't believe you just did that. (To C) Can you believe that just happened?

C: I can't believe you'd do something like that.

A: It was an accident.

D: Are you arguing with me?

A: No. I didn't do it on purpose.

C: Are you talking back to him?

B: Look, we don't want any trouble.

D: Then you should tell your mate that they should look where they're going.

C: Do you realise his Dad's in hospital?

D: Yeah. My Dad's in hospital. You're well out of order.

A: Right. Ok. I'm sorry.

D: Great an apology. That's all I needed.

A: Right. Ok then.

D: So pick 'em up

A: What?

C: He said pick them up.

A goes to pick up the books C takes a photo of him on the floor using his mobile phone.

D: I can't believe he's actually doing it.

They look at the picture and laugh.

C: Wait till everyone sees this.

D: You're well funny you are.

They leave.



Heathy Relationships (Boyfriends and Girlfriends) Scene

A: There you are!

B: Here I am.

A: I didn't know where you'd gone.

B: I was just talking to people.

A: What people. Do I know them?

B: I doubt it.

A: Look, can we go?

B: Oh what?

A: It's just I don't know anyone here.

B: This is so typical of you.

A: What?

B: You're always doing this.

A: What?

B: Ruining everything. You're so controlling.

A: I'm not. You'd been gone for ages. I felt really stupid sat here on my own.

B laughs.

A: What?

B: Oh dear. Did you feel all lonely. Bless.



Consequences List for Drugs Workshop

Taking risks

Feeling sad

Having a good time with your friends

Feeling like part of a group

Feeling confident

Feeling ill

Upsetting your friends

Getting in trouble with the police

Feeling confused

Death

Feeling happy

Upsetting your family



Further Information - Where to go to find out more

- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/
- www.bullybusters.org.uk/kids/
- www.fearless.org/drugs-alcohol
- www.talktofrank.com
- www.brook.org.uk/your-life/category/relationships
- www.teenissues.co.uk/FriendshipAndRelationshipsCategory.html
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.pshe-association.org.uk/

