

Gender Respect Project

Published by:
The Development
Education Centre
South Yorkshire



For further information see:
<http://www.decsy.org.uk>
OR

<http://genderrespect2013.wordpress.com>

Boys' Talk

Age group: Secondary

Format: Series of lessons

Main curriculum / subject area: PSHE

Other curriculum links: Drama

Objectives:

- To understand the concept of sexual harassment
- To get pupils to think of the possible links between not respecting women and harassment
- To give boys some tools for standing up against language which is disrespectful to girls and women

Teaching activities:

Lesson One: Harassment

This lesson is based on the PowerPoint 'Harassment - Boys' Talk', which is downloadable from the Gender Respect website.

Display the word 'harassment' and ask pupils if they can explain what this word means or give an example. Show the meaning and examples from the PowerPoint.

Next display the phrase 'sexual harassment' and ask pupils if they can explain what this means or if they can give an example. Show the meaning and examples from the PowerPoint.

Look at the statistics from 'Everyday Sexism' (Appendix 1). Ask pupils to read them through with another person, and use the following questions to create discussion:

- A) Are there any that surprise/shock you?
- B) Why do you think it is like this?
- C) How many of these cases do you think were reported to the police?

Read the article about the woman who reported a builder for wolf-whistling: <http://metro.co.uk/2015/04/29/wolf-whistling-builder-and-father-of-one-says-its-a-compliment-and-has-snagged-so-many-girls-off-the-back-of-it-5173104/>.

Ask pupils to:

- A) underline her point of view and how she feels
- B) underline his point of view and how he feels

As a class ask individuals to comment on who they agree with and why?
Decide whether you think this example shows a respect or a disrespect for women?
Is this an example of sexual harassment?

The article 'Wolf whistles silenced' from the Daily Telegraph could also be used as a comparison, and to consider how attitudes have changed or not since the 1970s.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/9369145/Wolf-whistles-silenced.html>

Lesson Two: Forum Theatre

This activity was inspired by the paper 'The beer talking: four lads, a carry out and the reproduction of masculinities' by Brendan Gough and Gareth Edwards (1998)³ which looked at how males can use derogatory language about females when in an all-male group.

This activity aims to use a dialogue to examine issues of 'banter' and peer pressure and try to give young men the skills and confidence to make a stance for respect and equality.

The technique used is Forum Theatre.

A background to Forum Theatre⁴

This was developed in the early 1970s by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre director, writer and politician.

An audience is shown a short play in which a central character encounters oppression or an obstacle which s/he is unable to overcome; the subject-matter will usually be something of immediate importance to the audience, often based on a shared life experience.

After discussion the play is then restarted, but this time, whenever an audience member feels the protagonist might usefully have tried a different strategy, s/he can stop the action, take the protagonist's place, and try his or her idea.

The event becomes a kind of theatrical debate in which experiences and ideas are rehearsed and shared, generating both solidarity and a sense of empowerment.



Image: Pixaby (2015)

Using the script (see Appendix 2)

Kevin and Dwayne seem to be comfortable with using derogatory language towards girls. Gary is more ambivalent, but does not seem to be able to confront his two friends.

You will need to use two confident actors to play the parts of Kevin and Dwayne, as when the play has been read through once using an actor to play Gary, at different points in the dialogue (most likely those indicated with an * in the script) other members of the audience can step into the role of Gary. Kevin and Dwayne will have to continue in role, unscripted. They can use the intervention prompts sheet (appendix 3) to help.

You may like to adapt the script to be more appropriate for the context of your school or the young people you are working with (e.g. the use of the word 'estate' could be replaced with the name of a local neighbourhood).

Follow Up

After the Forum Theatre activity, you may like to have a discussion about how easy it is to stand up for others, what some of the challenges of peer pressure are and how to overcome them. Young people could be encouraged to share examples of when they have encountered this in real life or fiction.

They could develop further role plays to enact or develop guidance for others on how to stand up for equal rights and against prejudice.

Resources:

- 1) Harassment / Boys' Talk PowerPoint (download from Gender Respect website)
- 2) 'Everyday Sexism' by Laura Bates¹ : 'Vital Statistics', P154 (Appendix 1)
- 3) Article about the woman who reported a builder for wolf-whistling²
<http://metro.co.uk/2015/04/29/wolf-whistling-builder-and-father-of-one-says-its-a-compliment-and-has-snogged-so-many-girls-off-the-back-of-it-5173104/>
- 4) Article from the Daily Telegraph 'Wolf whistles silenced'
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/9369145/Wolf-whistles-silenced.html>
- 5) Boys' Talk activity sheets: Script (Appendix 2) and Intervention Prompt Sheets (Appendix 3)

References:

- 1 Bates, L (2014), *Everyday Sexism*, Simon and Schuster: New York.
- 2 McAteer, O (2015), 'Wolf-whistling builder' and father-of-one says it's a 'compliment' and has 'snogged many girls off the back of it', *The Metro*, Available (Online), <http://metro.co.uk/2015/04/29/wolf-whistling-builder-and-father-of-one-says-its-a-compliment-and-has-snogged-so-many-girls-off-the-back-of-it-5173104/>, accessed Tuesday 25 August 2015.
- 3 The Sociological Review, Volume 46, Issue 3, pages 409–455, August 1998
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-954X.00125/abstract>
- 4 See also <http://dramaresource.com/strategies/forum-theatre> Global Network with UK contacts www.theatreoftheoppressed.org Theatre of the Oppressed Augusto Boal, Theatre Communications Group 1985; *Games for Actors and Non-actors* Augusto Boal, Routledge 2002
- 5 Image: Pixaby (2015).

Appendix One: Vital Statistics, p.154 of Everyday Sexism by Laura Bates

43 per cent of women in London aged 18 to 34 experienced sexual harassment in public in the past year.

[YouGov, 2012](#)

87 per cent of American women aged 18 to 64 have been harassed by a male stranger.

[Penn Schoen Berland Associates, 2000](#)

More than half of American women aged 18 to 64 have experienced 'extreme harassment', including being grabbed, touched, rubbed or followed.

[Penn Schoen Berland Associates, 2000](#)

83 per cent of Egyptian women report experiencing sexual harassment in the street.

[Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, 2008](#)

95 per cent of women in Delhi feel unsafe in public spaces.

[International Center for Research for Women and UN Women, 2013](#)

More than 80 per cent of Canadian women have experienced male stranger harassment in public.

[Macmillan, Nierobisz and Welsh, 2000](#)

Appendix Two: Boys' Talk - the script

Kevin: Did you see Gary talking to Chantal at break time?

Dwayne: I think Gary fancies her.

Kevin: How could you fancy her, she's a right slapper.

Dwayne: Just like her mate Jodie.

Kevin: All the girls from that estate are slags.

Gary: * That's a bit much – what about Kerry, she's OK.

Kevin: She's just a lesbian – look at how she dresses!

Dwayne: Gary thinks he's friends with her.

Kevin: Can girls be friends? They're only good for one thing...

Gary: * Oh come on, what about Rachel then?

Dwayne: She's up herself and she's a boffin.

Gary: Just because she wouldn't go out with you.

Dwayne: Don't be daft – she's not my type.

Gary: What is your type?

Dwayne: Well you know, girls who know about..., you know...

Gary: * 'Slags' you mean?

Dwayne: No, well you know, they know about sex...

Gary: So you think they all have to be like porn stars?

Kevin: Gary just sticks up for girls, 'cos he is one.

Gary: * Piss off – let's go and play football.

Appendix Three: Intervention Prompts

Intervention Prompts

5



Boys' Talk intervention prompt: Stereotypes

Think about where you could make an intervention by Gary in the dialogue that draws attention to the fact that Kevin and Dwayne are dealing in unacceptable stereotypes about girls: E.g. 'You can't write off all girls...'



Boys' Talk intervention prompt: Friendship

Think about where you could make an intervention by Gary in the dialogue that draws attention to the fact that Kevin and Dwayne are making the assumption that girls and boys cannot be just friends. E.g. 'What's wrong with a boy being friends with a girl?'



Boys' Talk intervention prompt: Respect

Think about where you could make an intervention by Gary in the dialogue that draws attention to the fact that Kevin and Dwayne are showing a complete lack of respect for girls and by implication, women. E.g. 'Would you say that about all women, even your Mum?'



Boys' Talk intervention prompt: Equality

Think about where you could make an intervention by Gary in the dialogue that draws attention to the fact that Kevin and Dwayne do not seem to see boys and girls as equal. E.g. 'Don't you agree that boys and girls can do the same things?'



Boys' Talk intervention prompt: Fear

Think about where you could make an intervention by Gary in the dialogue that draws attention to the fact that Kevin and Dwayne seem to put girls down almost as a sign of fear of 'the other'. E.g. 'What are you so afraid of if you have to put girls down to look big?'



Boys' Talk intervention prompt:



Boys' Talk intervention prompt: