

3 WORK HOLISTICALLY AND UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

"Quality of life is the combination of objectively and subjectively indicated wellbeing in multiple domains of life considered salient in one's culture and time, while adhering to universal standard of human rights."

J.L. Wallander

The voluntary sector partners who make up the Pupil Inclusion Network share a commitment to reconnecting children and young people to education, raising aspirations and improving school attendance, achievement and attainment. In working for change, projects and interventions seek to unpack presenting issues and work across home, school and community environments.

The social context within which children live and learn has always been central to the sectors responses, this means agencies work to support learning about challenging and complex issues.

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PEN PICTURE: TESSA: Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis

TESSA is Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis's Youth Project for young people of secondary school age which aims to raise awareness of issues surrounding internet safety, cyber-bullying and grooming. It also seeks to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

We deliver a range of age-appropriate interactive workshops to schools, parents groups and youth clubs. These workshops are designed to be interactive and fun while still giving information, tips and hints on how to keep safe on and off-line. In addition to the workshops available for mainstream pupils TESSA - Supported Learning offers 1-2-1 pupil-lead interactive workshops for vulnerable learners. Using visual, audio, and arts and craft materials these workshops are designed to help express feelings and emotions in a safe manner, helping young people to explore the dangers of the Internet, sexual bullying and abuse in a sensitive way.

In today's world, access to the Internet is easy. Simply switching on your mobile phone, tablet, laptop or gaming console will place you in a world where anything is possible. This digital environment has created a difficulty for young people as consequences of poor judgment or behaviour may not initially feel real. It is much easier to say things to someone when they are not in front of you and it can also be easier to be convinced to do things you would never dream of doing in public, such as taking naked pictures of yourself and sending it onto a boy/girlfriend or to someone you think you are having an online relationship with. This can often start as harmless fun and it can seem that no one else will find out about it. Unfortunately, young people can find themselves in situations where they are being blackmailed into taking more explicit pictures and films or being convinced to meet up with someone they think they know because they have been chatting to them online for a while.

When young people have found themselves in these situations the impact on their lives can be devastating. They are afraid of what family, friends, peers or teachers will think of them. Some young people can become reclusive and not want to mix with anyone, sleeping patterns may be disturbed causing concentration and attention to be affected, this can appear as though they no longer care and get into trouble at home and school. Exclusion from school for poor attendance or behaviour will then have a knock on effect on their education and the outcome of adult life.

TESSA use a range of materials to show young people how easy it is to get into difficult situations online. Whilst exploring this we ensure each pupil is aware that there are several ways to access help and support should they need it. An example of the resources we use are the CEOP films (Child Exploitation Online Protection). These short films are designed specifically for young people and during the workshop we discuss what is happening, ask if participants can see similarities to the way they behave and explore how they can make their online life safer.

Links to a sample of films:

Caught in the web www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTYZMdbq8PE

CEOP Jigsaw www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8auwnJtqE

CEOP Matt thought he knew www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JpyO5XlfCo

PEN PICTURE: I AM ME

I Am Me Scotland is a community charity that works in partnership with Police Scotland to raise awareness of Disability Hate Crime - one of the most under reported crimes in the UK.

Research indicates that many offenders of disability hate incidents are young people. We know that changing attitudes and behaviours is best achieved through empathy and peer learning. It is therefore essential to engage with young people from an early age to encourage acceptance of diversity and empower young people to know how to report concerns in a safe way that does not compromise their personal safety.

I Am Me Scotland has two key initiatives: **I Am Me** and **Keep Safe**.

I Am Me is a suite of resources developed in collaboration with young people and disabled people; this includes the award winning I Am Me film. The film focusses on a young adult who has a learning disability and autism and encourages the audience to acknowledge the effects that disability hate incidents can have on not only an individual, but also the wider community. The resources are designed for use in schools, businesses and communities and are available to download from www.iammescotland.co.uk

Keep Safe is an award winning initiative which was developed in partnership with Police Scotland. The initiative works with local businesses to create a network of 'safer' places for anyone feeling lost, scared or vulnerable when out in the community. Keep Safe cards are available which details information about the card holder, including any health concerns, communication requirements and who to contact in the event of an emergency. If someone requires assistance, they can enter a Keep Safe place where staff are trained how to assist.

I Am Me Scotland is committed to working with young people to design resources and to discuss new innovative and engaging ways to work. As a result, a Keep Safe Ambassador programme has now been developed, based around a training event delivered by I Am Me and Police Scotland, which trains young people how to recognise and report incidents to the Police.

A new Cine-Bus has recently been converted to enable the charity to deliver training and awareness sessions directly to schools, groups and harder to reach communities. The bus is a mobile cinema unit which doubles as a classroom for delivering lessons and training days.

Children and young people have received the project with enthusiasm and feedback has evidenced that 99% of respondents have enjoyed I Am Me and the sessions have raised their awareness of disability and disability hate crime.

<http://www.iammescotland.co.uk/>



PEN PICTURE: Show Racism the Red Card

Show Racism the Red Card works with a variety of learners and the majority of those engaging with our anti-racism educational opportunities are children and young people in the context of formal school settings. These participants will be representative of the school population across Scotland and therefore 96% will identify as white British or white Scottish and therefore won't be experiencing disadvantage/exclusion because of racism.

In all of our educational work we encourage young people to think holistically about racism by reflecting on their own perceptions of experiences of inequality. This is a powerful way for young people to conceptualise social injustice. We also recognise that young people experiencing social exclusion are often more susceptible to the misconceptions and 'othering' which can lay the foundations for racist actions. Our work attempts to challenge those misconceptions and give a voice to young people who often don't have an outlet for the frustrations they may feel.

The impact of our work for excluded young people can be illustrated through a project recently delivered in Crieff, Perthshire.

The school had a number of pupils who were not being presented for the new National 4/5 exams. Despite classes being suspended for exam leave, these 'unpresented' pupils still needed to be timetabled for activity within school. The young people had not been consulted in this process and many were experiencing social disadvantage and exclusion from education. Show Racism the Red Card staff communicated closely with the school and offered an opportunity for these young people to be involved in an educational anti-racism programme. Through creative activity the project supported the group's exploration of the dangers of racism to both victims and perpetrators and offered a voice to young people who often felt disenfranchised in their community. Reflecting on their participation one of the young people told us what they got from their engagement:

"At first we weren't sure what the Show Racism the Red Card project would be all about but after becoming involved we were really inspired and pleased that people cared what we had to say about the issues. We had to present our project at two different events with Perth and Kinross Council and with first year pupils and we never imagined we would be able to stand up in front of people and talk. I would definitely challenge racism now if I heard my friends using it"
SRtRC, Participant

From the perspective of Show Racism the Red Card it was very important to ensure that the pupils valued participating in this project. It can be very easy for adults to dismiss young people's voices, but we value young people as being key players in the struggle against racism and it is important to amplify their views and feelings around prejudice and discrimination in order to educate peers as well as older generations. The pupils involved in this project exemplify just how passionate they are about this subject.