

clueless

Resource pack & workshop activities



About M6

M6 Theatre Company specialises in creating dynamic, high quality and relevant productions for children and young people.

M6's work is driven by a passionate belief in the power of theatre to enrich, challenge, inspire and even transform lives.

From the company's base in Rochdale, M6 reaches audiences of over 15,000 per year.

'Clueless' by Mary Cooper is one in a series of powerful, contemporary, single voiced plays for audiences aged 13+.

2016 has seen the scale of child and adolescent mental health issues in the UK reach crisis point:

- 850,000 children and young people in the UK have a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by the age of 14.
- 3 children in every classroom or 10% of the population of children & young people in need of help and support.

“Without schools and mental health services working more closely together, and without good early intervention, we will never address young people's mental health” Sarah Brennan, Chief Executive, Young Minds.

Commissioned by **NHS Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale CCG** in partnership with **Pennine Care NHS** and **Healthy Young Minds Rochdale**, this film and accompanying resource is designed to support young people to:

- Gain more understanding of issues surrounding mental health.
- Develop confidence and emotional literacy through discussing sensitive issues and sharing their views.
- Experience deep emotional engagement, feelings of empathy and increased self esteem.
- Know where to get further help and support.

The Story

Laura is talking to a counsellor about her sister Hannah, who is in hospital recovering from a suicide attempt.

Laura discovered her sister when she returned home from travelling with her boyfriend. Hannah had taken an overdose and left a note that simply said 'I'm sorry'.

Despite her initial reluctance, the counselling session allows Laura the chance to talk. It reveals a range of complex feelings about her sister and what she has done, as well as the back story that has led up to Hannah's desperate action.

How to use this resource

This film is designed to be shown to young people aged 13+ with the support of a facilitator. Owing to the sensitive nature of the drama, we recommend you read through this booklet and watch the film yourself before showing it to your students.

It is important that you are familiar with your school's safeguarding policies and protocols to ensure support for any students who are affected by the issues explored in the film.

Before they watch the film, explain to your students that they are going to watch a short, single-voiced play, told from the point of view of a character called Laura, who is talking to a counsellor.

Before commencing with any follow up activities, emphasise that the play is based on research and interviews, but is not based on the story of any one person.

Listed at the end of this booklet are some organisations and useful sources of information which may be helpful, for you as a facilitator or for the audience of the film.

The exercises and group activities have been written and designed to follow a showing of the film. Some may work better for your group than others, so please adapt or modify the exercises for your own group.

The facilitator tips on the next page should help you deliver the activities.



Facilitation Tips

If you are facilitating the discussion or workshop following a screening of 'Clueless', you may find the following tips helpful.

Introduction

You may want to give an outline of what is going to happen, why, and how it is going to be done. Try and make sure everyone agrees with the way things are going to be carried out.



Active listening

You should listen attentively to what is being said by each participant in the group, summarise it briefly and feed it back to them. You could then add an interpretation and explore the point further by asking an open question. (See below).

You can show active listening by making eye contact, making sure your body language is positive and open (e.g. not turning your back on the group, or folding your arms etc) and responding in an affirming and reasoned way.



Open Questions

These are questions to which there is not a 'yes' or 'no' answer or a right or wrong answer. They encourage the participants to say more. For example 'Why did Laura feel that way?'



Reflections

You might want to take the last phrase or part of a sentence and repeat it back, perhaps raising the tone of voice slightly to turn it into a question.

E.g. 'I think Laura feels guilty about what has happened to Hannah' 'You think Laura feels guilty?'



Commands

E.g. 'Tell me more about that' can be a useful sentence. It helps to explore further what a participant might mean when they have first responded.

'I wonder what you feel about' is another useful way to begin a question.



Empathy

This is best thought of as 'trying to understand'. The facilitator is trying to understand what the participant thinks and feels and can be particularly useful when the subject matter being explored is sensitive or when there is a level of personal sharing.

E.g. 'There are a lot of pressures on young people aren't there?' or 'Sometimes it might feel difficult to find the right person to talk to'



Linking

It is a useful skill to be able to refer one participant's comments to another e.g. 'What you're saying is a bit like what Sarah said earlier, about feeling angry about what's happened'

This gives a quality of completeness to the discussion.

Facilitation Qualities



Paraphrasing

Taking what has been said and using different words can sometimes broaden a discussion.

E.g. 'Laura was away at University, so she didn't know how Hannah was feeling.'

to:

'Laura has got a lot of responsibility hasn't she? Even though she is away at University, studying, she still worries about her sister.'



Summarising

During the course of a fast moving discussion, when there is a natural lull, it might be useful to take the opportunity to summarise the points made so far. It can also help move the group forward to mention points that haven't yet come up.

A final summary is recommended and is a good way to end a session, bringing proceedings to a conclusion.



Respect

Respect is crucial. It demonstrates that the facilitator values the person making a contribution to the discussion. The facilitator can show this by listening to, responding to, and valuing each person's response.

A simple 'thank you' can work wonders, and give the rest of the group confidence to participate. There are no right or wrong answers, just different points of view. Each view point is valid and a non-judgemental stance is called for, even if you personally disagree. Remember that participants may have valuable insights into the subject matter, so work with what they bring, not with what you think.



Personal Integrity

This could be defined as the facilitators ability to hear difficult things and diverse opinions but retain the ability to be objective.



Authenticity

This is the facilitators ability to be themselves. It involves honesty and sincerity, responding openly and naturally to all participant contributions.

Follow up Activities

Following the film, reassure the audience that it is natural to have an emotional response and allow them a moment to sit quietly or talk to the person next to them about what they have seen and how they're feeling.

Offer an opportunity for initial feedback.

How is Laura feeling?

How is Laura feeling?

With your group, create a list of the feelings Laura has displayed or talked about during the counselling session.

E.g. angry, upset, guilty....

Write up the feelings on a board or flip chart.

Why is she feeling these emotions?

Allow this to open up various issues.

E.g. Laura feels guilty about what has happened.

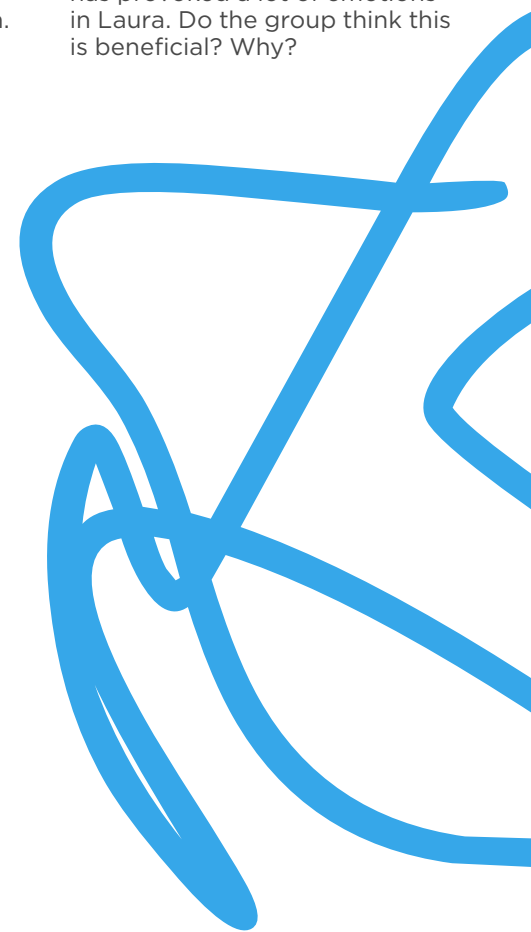
Because she didn't stop Hannah using drugs.....

Because she went away to University.....

Because she was off travelling.....

Has the counselling session been helpful for Laura?

The session with the counsellor has provoked a lot of emotions in Laura. Do the group think this is beneficial? Why?



Clueless?

Why did the playwright, Mary Cooper, decide on this title?

Were there any 'clues' that Hannah needed help?

It might be useful to write them up on the board as a reminder or create a spider graph.

E.g. Family breakdown, moving schools, unstable friendships, drug use, poor self image, increasing isolation, hearing voices, lack of parenting, Laura moving away...

Can the group think of other titles that might work for the monologue?

People in Hannah's life

This exercise will help you to discuss the relationships in Hannah's world and open up some further discussion.

Ask the group to try and remember the people in Hannah's life:

E.g. Laura, Mum, Gran, Dad, friends, boyfriend, Mr Knowles.

1. Use an Empty Chair to represent Hannah and place it centrally in the space.

- Ask for a volunteer to represent each character.
- Ask each one to place themselves near to or far from the chair, depending on how emotionally close they think they are to Hannah.
- Ask the group who are watching if they agree and encourage discussion about the closeness of the relationships.

2. Ask for a volunteer to be Hannah and to sit in the chair.

- Do any of the characters' positions need to change when looked at from Hannah's point of view.
- Allow the participants in the 'audience' to contribute to the discussion.

3. How have Hannah's relationships changed?

E.g. How close did Hannah feel to her Dad before he left and after?

How close did she feel to Laura before she went away to University and after?

Also look at Hannah's friendships, her boyfriend and her Mum.

4. What positions are the characters in at the point when Laura attempted suicide?

The picture will show Hannah's isolation. Who might have reached out to Hannah? How can cycles of loneliness be broken?



Opinion line

Agree

In an empty space, imagine a long line stretching from one end of the room to the other, with the opposite ends representing 'Agree' and 'Disagree'

Some or all of the statements are read out and members of the group go to the place on the line which best represents their opinion.

- Hannah didn't have any friends.
- Hannah was neglected by her Mum.
- Hannah was being bullied.
- Laura can't go back to University now – she needs to stay and look after Hannah.
- Hannah was weird.
- Hannah loves her Dad.
- Hannah was smoking to 'get away' from stress.
- Laura should feel guilty about what has happened.
- Hannah didn't feel she was good enough.

Not Sure

- Hannah should have told someone what she was planning to do.
 - Hannah was lonely.
 - Laura should continue going to see the Counsellor.
 - People who attempt suicide are selfish.
 - Personal problems should be kept within the family.
 - We are all responsible for our own happiness.
 - Girls find it easier to talk about their problems than boys.
 - Being a teenager is the worst stage of your life.
 - It's always hard to ask for help.
- Take the time to ask the participants why they have chosen to stand where they have and encourage debate between different points on the line.
- The group can also devise some statements of their own.



Disagree



Laura said...


During her session with the counsellor, Laura said the following things.



The statements can be used to:



- Provoke whole class or small group discussion.
- Inspire work on freeze frames/tableaux to represent the underlying issues.
- Provide the first line of a 250 word short story/flash fiction.



 She had this thing that I was lovely Laura and she was horrible Hannah 

 She was always weird about her mates 

 She just stayed in her room and got out of her head 


 And it was all over a crappy haircut... and her eyebrows or something, well I know it wasn't really 



 I really love her but it doesn't stop me feeling mad with her 

 Just before I went off to Uni she said to me, Josh is talking to me 

 It wasn't easy for her 

 I can't get it right. They're not good enough 

 She seemed fine 

 You could tell what was going on with her through her music 

Writing Exercises

Offer a large piece of paper to groups of between 6 - 10 with the following words:

Dear Hannah,

The aim is to write a letter to Hannah in hospital from the group, with each member contributing one line each.

Based on the game of consequences, each participant folds over the paper to cover the line they have written before passing it on to the next person.

Ask someone to read out the letter.

Discuss any repetition or contradiction.

Is there anything missing from the letter that needs to be added?

A Wish for Hannah

Ask the group to think about Hannah on the day she comes out of hospital.

Give each participant a strip of paper to write a wish for her on.

Put all the wishes into a bag.

Take the wishes out 1 at a time and create a group poem.

If you have musicians in your group, this could also become the basis of a song for Hannah.

Create a personal profile for Laura and for Hannah

On a separate piece of paper, for each character:

- favourite music
- favourite book
- favourite TV programme
- favourite hobby
- fondest possession
- worst experience has been
- best experience has been
- strongest memories
- hopes and fears for the future

Improvisations

Use these lines from the play as the first line of an improvisation:

'If he/she dumps me, I'll kill myself'

'Why didn't she wait and talk to me?'

'I've always tried to help her'

Improvise an online chat

It is the night before a GCSE exam. You are worried about your friend.

Persuade a friend, who hasn't been joining in recently to leave their room come out

Your friend has been the victim of online bullying. Talk to him/her about it and offer some advice about what they should do.

School Friends

In small groups, ask your students to imagine they are a group of students from Hannah's school, discussing Hannah's story. Where could Hannah have gone for help earlier? What should Hannah focus on when she comes out of hospital? How could they help? What coping mechanisms could she use?

Pictures of Happiness

In small groups ask the participants to each think of a time when they were happy: this can be as simple as watching a film or being with family.

Allow time for each group member to create their own 'picture of happiness' in the form of a freeze frame/tableaux by directing their group mates into position and then placing themselves in the picture.

Ask them to title each picture:

E.g. 'Connor, at the fair with his mates'

They should practice moving from one picture to the next before sharing back all the pictures they have created.

The group could choose a song to be played underneath their pictures.

Further help and Information

Healthy Young Minds

Service for children and young people experiencing significant emotional and mental health problems.

healthyyoungminds.pennine.nhs.uk

#Thrive

Self referral service for children and young people who are experiencing emotional health and wellbeing issues, e.g. feeling stressed or worried.

Call 0161 716 2844

healthyyoungminds.pennine.nhs.uk/Thrive

Kooth Online Counselling

Safe, confidential counselling, advice and support online.

kooth.com

Early Break

Offers information, advice and support for young people with substance misuse related issues.

earlybreak.co.uk

Rochdale and District Mind – Listen Up Service

Dispelling myths surrounding mental health. 'It's time to listen up!'

rochdalemind.org.uk/young-persons-listen-up.asp

Five Ways to Wellbeing – Rochdale Borough

fiveways.rochdale.gov.uk

Feedback



I would tell Hannah that she is not alone. I would tell her I'm there for her

—
Student aged 13



I've learned talking to someone can help a huge amount

—
Student aged 13



Our most seemingly hardened, recalcitrant pupils showed empathy

—
Pastoral Key Worker,
Cardinal Langley
RC High School



This is excellent practice. Clueless had a huge impact on both the young people and adults present. It opened up conversations and raised awareness

—
Key Worker, Rochdale
Connections Trust



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In partnership with



Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale
Clinical Commissioning Group



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AGMA
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GREATER MANCHESTER
AUTHORITIES



Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale
Clinical Commissioning Group

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Produced by
M6 Theatre Company

Design by
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Filming and editing by
Double8 Moving Pictures

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Castleton Mill, Leeds

Raising awareness of emotional and mental health issues
and serious self harm. For young people aged 13+

m6theatre.co.uk/clueless


theatre company