

OUTSPOKEN SESSION PLANS

WELCOME

Outspoken was a performance and workshop project toured by TAG, exploring the story of a boy who stammers and his experiences through school. The project was the result of a partnership between TAG and the British Stammering Association Scotland, with main funding from the Scottish Arts Council and ScottishPower.

This DVD and downloadable session plans are aimed at Personal and Social Education classes in S1 or S2 and explore issues of citizenship, diversity, self esteem and respect. Choose and adapt whichever tasks best suit your needs. These are the Health and Wellbeing experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence that the activities develop:

I can expect my learning environment to support me to:

- Develop my self awareness, self-worth and respect for others.
- Meet challenges, manage change and build relationships.
- Experience personal achievement and build my resilience and confidence.
- Understand and develop my physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing and social skills.
- Learn about where to find help and resources to inform choices.
- Acknowledge diversity and understand that it is everyone's responsibility to challenge discrimination.

Mental and emotional wellbeing

I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave.

I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others.

I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support.

Social Wellbeing

I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all.

As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.

Plot summary

The main character in *Outspoken* is called Danny and the whole play follows him through primary and into secondary school. Danny is funny, down to earth and a great storyteller. He also has a stammer. The start of the play sees Danny being frustrated at not being able to speak easily at primary school and his teacher alerting his dad. Danny visits a speech and language therapist, Miranda, where he enjoys playing with the toys and games, but doesn't really see how this is supposed to help. Stammering continues to trouble him on and off, and becomes more of a problem in secondary school. On the first day of school, he runs into Big Graham and Wee Jamesy who bully him about the way he speaks until he sets his dog Stanley on them. Then they accept Danny who becomes 'one of the boys' and bullies lots of other people like they do. Another pupil, Sandra is keen on Danny but doesn't think much of his reliance on Graham and Jamesy. Then along comes new boy Cameron who stammers as well but has a much more relaxed attitude to it. Cameron is confident and smart. He likes reading out in class, he sticks up for himself, he successfully auditions for the school play and he gets on with Sandra. Danny hates him. Eventually he gets Graham and Jamesy to beat Cameron up, but things don't turn out quite as planned. Danny finds he has a choice to make – should he stay one of the boys or start to be his own man?

By selecting **DVD Section 8** you can watch the whole play (*lasting 40 minutes*). Alternatively the session plans below explore four key episodes. *Outspoken* features three actors who play a range of different characters with no costume changes and only using two chairs and a microphone.

SESSION ONE - 50 minutes

EXPLORING ATTITUDES

WHAT IS STAMMERING?

Ask the class and then give them the definition:

Stammering can be a serious communication difficulty. It usually starts in early childhood when children are learning to talk. It affects 5% of young children and 1% of older children and adults. People who stammer may repeat or stretch speech sounds or find their speech is blocked completely and they can't get a word out. This can result in forcing speech out in a tense way, changing words, saying less or not speaking at all. Many people who stammer feel embarrassed and frustrated that they can't express themselves as they want to.

AGREE, DISAGREE

Present the statements below to the class. Those who agree raise a hand. Those who disagree keep their hand down. Those who don't know wobble hand in 'maybe/maybe not' motion. Tease out people's attitudes and beliefs.

- People stammer because they're nervous
- People who stammer are less intelligent
- People who stammer could stop if they tried hard enough

We're going to think about these statements again after watching the DVD. In this section we meet the main character Danny and two other boys, Graham and Jamesy. Does what you see confirm what you think about the above statements or change your mind?

Watch DVD Section 1 *(lasting 4 minutes)*

Re-visit the Agree/Disagree statements

- **People stammer because they're nervous** – FACT: *People who stammer are no more nervous than the rest of us, but thinking you might stammer can make you nervous.*
- **People who stammer are less intelligent** – FACT: *No, they're as varied as the whole population. Some very clever thinkers have stammered, eg, Charles Darwin and Isaac Newton.*
- **People who stammer could stop if they tried hard enough** – FACT: *No. The more you try not to stammer, the more it happens. Sometimes you can control your stammer but it takes a lot of concentration. Imagine you had to speak in a foreign language you didn't know very well all day – it would take that much concentration to control stammering.*

Whole Class Explore:

- What's Danny's attitude to his stammering? How does he deal with it?
- Danny talks about the 'food chain' in school where you have to bully someone or *be* bullied. How true do you think this is?

The next section of the DVD introduces another character, Cameron, who also stammers but has a different attitude to it. What does Danny think of him? Right at the end of the section we meet Sandra, what's her reaction to Danny and his behaviour?

Watch DVD Section 2 *(lasting 4 and a half minutes)*

CAUGHT IN THE MOMENT

When Cameron is being forced to move from his seat by Graham and Jamesy he asks Danny, 'What do you think I should do? Do you think I should move?'

Draw an outline of Danny on the board. Ask pupils, *at this moment*:

- What is Danny *feeling*? Write comments inside the body part of the outline.
- What is Danny *thinking*? Write comments inside or around the head.
- What are Danny's options here?
- Imagine you were Danny in this situation. What would *you* do?
- What are the pros and cons of being pals with Graham and Jamesy?

GOING AGAINST THE CROWD

Think of a time when you, or someone you know, decided NOT to do what the rest of the crowd were doing. List the qualities you need to be able to do this.

The third section of the DVD starts with Danny telling us he's set up Graham and Jamesy to beat up Cameron in a park. But in this scene Danny has a change of heart. Why do you think this happens?

Watch DVD Section 3 *(lasting 4 minutes)*

Pairs explore:

- Why do you think Danny shakes Cameron's hand instead of punching him?
- What do you think the other characters' reaction to this would be?

Watch the fourth section of the DVD where Danny talks about going back to see Miranda, his speech and language therapist. Think about what's changed for Danny from the beginning to the end of the play, in terms of:

- how he feels about himself
- how he feels about other people
- how he feels about his stammering

Watch DVD Section 4 *(lasting 2 minutes)*

So what *has* changed for Danny? Look back at the qualities you listed in Going Against the Crowd. Which characters in the play have them, do you think?

SESSION TWO – 50 minutes

EXPLORING DIFFERENCE

FITTING IN OR STANDING OUT?

Danny wanted to fit in, not stand out. As a whole class explore the question: when is it okay to be different? You might talk about:

- What kind of differences *are* okay?
- Who decides what is and what isn't 'okay' - who makes up the rules?
- Why do people *not* want to stand out?
- Can you think of some famous people who are not afraid to stand out/be different/do things their own way?

Here are some well known characters who were, or are, real individuals: Charles Darwin, Marilyn Monroe, Winston Churchill, Tiger Woods. Did you know that something else they all have in common is that they had / have a stammer?

WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT?

(Optional extra activity)

Personal writing - could be an interconnected writing task carried out in conjunction with the English department. Explore what makes you different - in a positive way - to everyone else in the room. Think about personality traits, physical characteristics, special skills, abilities.

Having a different way of talking was sometimes difficult for Danny. Listen to some young people who stammer talk about their own experiences of being a bit different. Is there anything they say that surprises you?

Watch DVD Section 5– People's Experiences *(lasting 4 minutes)*

YOU TOO

Working in pairs, see if you can remember a time when:

- you didn't want to read out in class, for whatever reason
- someone spoke to you as though you weren't as smart as them
- someone made fun of what you said or how you spoke

Focus on one of the situations above. How did it make you feel? Is there anything you could have done to make things better for yourself?

Good communication skills are not just about you communicating to other people, but about making sure other people feel valuable and able to join in too. For some tips on how to do this watch the next section of the DVD. What do you think is the best bit of advice?

Watch DVD Section 6 – Advice *(lasting 2 minutes)*

YOU'RE THE EXPERTS

In pairs/groups you're going to write a short leaflet for P7's called *How to Survive Socially at Secondary School*. Thinking about Danny's story, the experiences of these young people and your own experience – what are the key bits of advice you'd want to give?

Before you start, listen to some ideas from people who stammer:

Watch DVD Section 7 – Being Yourself *(lasting 3 minutes)*

Remember DVD Section 8 is the whole play!

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT STAMMERING...?

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Funded by The Scottish Arts Council, Glasgow City Council, ScottishPower, Nancie Massey Trust, W. M. Mann Foundation, The Rayne Foundation, Sylvia Aitken Charitable Trust and The Saints and Sinners Club of Scotland.

