

Actionwork Evaluation
Actionwork's Silent Scream Roadshow
5th November – 7th December 2007
Copyright © www.actionwork.com

Introduction

This creative roadshow consisted of a 4-part package: the show "Silent Scream", a creative workshop, a follow-up lesson plan and a brand new anti-bullying resource dvd. A high impact roadshow tackling bullying and victimisation, providing an important focus for schools' anti-bullying campaigns, policy and related PSHE work. *Silent Scream* allows schools to make a strong statement of non-tolerance towards bullying, while giving their students the chance to explore the issues, and the importance of their own role in combating it. *Silent Scream's* dual goal is awareness-raising and empowerment and was developed specially for anti-bullying week 2007.



The play offered no solutions. Within the workshop we asked the audience to



join us in exploring some of the paths that the central character could choose to take, and give them a chance to confront his situation creatively. The message that we are all responsible for tackling issues of bullying was central.

The lesson plan was a basic resource to help teacher's follow-up the visit within a 40-60 minute lesson.

The dvd contains an anti-bullying film, anti-bullying tips and tricks, resources, classroom ideas, previews, contacts and a lot more.

Overview

This was one of our largest national tours to date, working with close to 40,000 students nationwide. We had three teams going out to a wide variety of schools, colleges, pupil referral units, and special needs units across the country, that included: Doncaster, London, Avon, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire, Wales, Gloucestershire, Cambridge, Kent,



Actionwork Evaluation Continued..

Suffolk, Torbay, Somerset, County Durham, Warrington, Norfolk, Birmingham, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, West Midlands, Peterborough, Cumbria, Surrey, Merseyside and Hull.



The tour was an overwhelming success. This tour was fully booked within weeks of it being announced. Schools that were too late in booking received a complimentary copy of our anti-bullying resource dvd.

67% of students felt they learned something about bullying within our sessions and over 81% of students told us that they had a good time during our work with them. Over 88% of teachers felt that the show was either good or excellent and over 89% of them thought the workshops were either good or excellent.



Actionwork Evaluation Continued...

Statistics - Part One

1) Total number of schools' sessions on this tour	200
2) Total number of audience members who watched the show	25,000
3) Total number of workshop participants	13,407
4) Total number of students worked with on this tour	38,407
5) Total number of students who participated in the evaluation	12,000
6) Total number of teachers who participated in the evaluation	101
7) Additional letters written by teachers post tour	4

Statistics - Part Two

1) Percentage of students who felt they learned something about bullying during the sessions	67.75%
2) Percentage of students who enjoyed the sessions	81.73%
3) Percentage of students who would like more anti-bullying training	47.75%
4) Percentage of students who know about their schools anti-bullying policy	27%

Statistics - Part Three

1) Percentage of teachers who thought the show was excellent	45.71%
2) Percentage of teachers who thought the show was good	42.86%
3) Percentage of teachers who thought the show was fair	3.81%
4) Percentage of teachers who thought the show was poor	4.76%

Statistics - Part Four

1) Percentage of teachers who thought the workshop was excellent	51.43%
2) Percentage of teachers who thought the workshop was good	38.10%
3) Percentage of teachers who thought the workshop was fair	6.6%
4) Percentage of teachers who thought the workshop was poor	3.810%

Actionwork Evaluation Continued..

Problems and difficulties

This tour was not without its difficulties, in particular there were four teachers in four different schools that did not like the work at all. Their responses were very similar and included the following:



- Two teachers did not like the language used in the play, saying that it was inappropriate
- Two teachers felt the audience got too 'rowdy' while watching the show.



- One school complained that we did not include details of how to deal with knife crime
 - Three schools complained that the story was difficult to follow and had no resolution.
 - One school complained that during the show the actor spent some of the time lying on the floor.
 - Three of the schools complained about the use of a small television in the production
- Three of the schools complained that the workshops were too large.
 - One school complained about the actors lack of skills
 - One school complained of poor sound quality

Comments and action on the difficulties

- 1) Inappropriate language in the show. In the show the words 'goolies' and 'crap' were used in the context of a bullying situation. When schools booked the show they were informed that this show was recommended for years 5 and up. Some schools asked if the younger ones could see the show and we stated that this was possible, but please to bear in mind that some of the content may be inappropriate for them.



Actionwork Evaluation Continued..

2) Rowdy Audience. The show was a high impact energised production. The audiences usually got involved in a positive fun way. One or two teachers did not like this as they wanted their students to remain quiet and still during the whole production.

3) Knife crime. This production was about bullying, it was not about gun and knife crime. To have covered all types of violence within one production would not only have been inappropriate, it would have been confusing and have meant giving out a very diluted message.

4) Story resolution. This show was sold as not preaching or providing answers, but just to 'tell it as it is'. The show does not have a Hollywood ending. Themes and issues that were brought up in the show were explored in the workshops that followed the play. We cannot provide magical solutions for schools, but just plant initial seeds, that teachers then need to follow-up and help germinate. We also left schools with an example lesson plan that could be used to help start this process off.



5) Lying on the floor. At the start of the show the actor spent 45 seconds lying on the floor as part of a character ritual which was accompanied by music and percussion.

6) Television. A small component of this production was the use of a small television, used on three separate occasions for about 30

seconds each time. The television was never used in isolation but complimented some of the action happening in the show at the time. In future, if we are going to use alternative media like television screens we will either use larger ones or make use of a film projector and large screen.

7) Large workshops. When booking, teachers were given the choice of large of small workshops. It was also stated to schools prior to booking that large workshops will always be less interactive than small workshops. Schools that had large workshops did so out of choice and the vast majority of the large workshops went very well.

8) Lack of skills. All our actors were highly trained performers and workshop facilitators.

9) Poor sound quality. In the show our actors use radio mics. During two of the performances these microphones broke, replacements were then used.



Actionwork Evaluation Continued..

It is not possible to please everyone in a production of this nature and size. Schools have their own way of doing things and have varying expectations. There are of course many theatre-in-education companies to choose from.



One of our anti-bullying messages is that 'what will work for one person will not necessarily work for another', this is true of creative programmes too – what works for one school will not necessarily work for another.



It appears that teachers in the schools who complained had either misread the booking confirmation sheet or had not had the correct information passed to them by the teacher who booked. In any case it seems that there has been miscommunication regarding the details of these few bookings.

Future changes

In light of the feedback we will be making a few changes to future touring productions:

- 1) Pre-visit school tour sheets. Although we take all bookers through extensive programme details when they book, we feel that it would be useful to provide schools with an additional sheet, at least one-week prior to our visit that will help schools prepare for our visit. This will include reminders on recommended age ranges, language, seating, creative learning, theatre basics and other important issues relating to our visit.



- 2) We will also include a section on how our large and small workshops differ.

Actionwork Evaluation Continued..



Schools Anti-Bullying Policy

It has been a legal requirement for some time now that schools have an anti-bullying policy in place. The majority of key providers and stakeholders recommend that it is essential to involve students in the creation and updating of a schools anti-bullying policy. This is good working practice. Our survey

shows that only 27% of students actually know about their schools anti-bullying policy, it therefore follows that even fewer would have worked on their schools anti-bullying policy. Most of the schools we worked with recognised this and said they would do more work with their students promoting their policies and developing them with their students.

The current lack of student involvement is something we will continue to highlight with the Government, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and other anti-bullying organisations.



Is bullying a serious problem in schools?

It is hard to find statistics on levels but bullying appears to be on the increase in our society. Our survey shows that over 81% of young people think that bullying is a serious problem in their schools and over three-quarters of young people know someone who has been bullied.



The UK is seen often as growing into the American model of gangs and killings. Day by day stories are heard of new levels of violence in housing estates around the UK's inner cities, usually blamed on young men. The reasons often quoted for this violence include;

alcohol abuse, drug misuse, racism, poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, boredom, the media and frustration. One word particularly on the increase is

Actionwork Evaluation Continued..



'rage'. We have 'road rage', 'shop rage', computer rage, and 'air rage' to name but four examples. There appears to be an explosion of rage with no way of structuring it. It is also suggested that there is a gender bias, and that it is 'natural' for young men to react in violent ways. There is currently an increase in the reporting of violence among women, which means we really have to ask if

there is a biological basis for this or whether violence and bullying are learnt mechanisms taught to us by society?

We need a lot more research done in this area and I suggest that schools and other community groups need to be open to trying and implementing a wide range of strategies for dealing with bullying. Just saying 'no' to bullying or just 'punishing' bullies is not enough.



Most schools say that their students should tell a teacher if they get bullied, most students tell us that when they tell a teacher, the teacher is either too busy or does not have the skills to deal with it. It then follows that in addition to having a wide range of strategies, schools and other organisations need to implement regular anti-bullying training for their staff.

Actionwork and ipoweri have been calling on the Government since 2003 to



make anti-bullying training a core part of teacher training. Although we have the support of over 100 MP's, the Government still do not want to create this provision. See our online petition here:

www.antibullyingweek.co.uk

Actionwork Evaluation Continued..

Conclusion

This was a very successful tour. This success was achieved without any funding from Government or other sources. Although not pleasing everybody, over 81% of students were engaged positively in this work and over 89% of teachers really liked the work we did for them. We note that three quarters of young people know someone who has been bullied and think that bullying is a serious problem in their schools.



Bullying is not an issue that will go away and needs to be continually revisited. Nobody can provide magical solutions to dealing with bullying, and one show or workshop will not make all your problems disappear. School anti-bullying policies need to be updated annually with the involvement of young people, and teachers need adequate training to deal with the issues effectively.

We will be implementing the above changes into future tours, most importantly the 'pre-visit tour sheets'.

Andy Hickson, Director of Actionwork said: "schools like working with us because we listen to them, are sensitive to the needs of their teachers and we bring something a bit different to the school. Students enjoy participating in our shows particularly as we don't preach or condescend and provide an innovative fusion of arts and creativity that is not only great fun, it is also dynamic, energised and educational".

Actionwork Evaluation Continued...

A selection of comments

"Fantastic performances and key messages in the workshops" Jackie Remnant, Peterborough City Council

"Pupils were enthralled and were telling us about it at break time" Anne Greening, Stocks Green School



"The pupils were not engaged during the performance, this became obvious when staff had to spend all their time on 'crowd control' Jen Harvey, Hoddern School

"Very interactive, worked very well for our young people" Jane Marshall, Ashford School

"Excellent programme, it was great that you reinforced good practices" Damni McCulloch, Christs Hospital School

"Great participation with our students, they had a voice – keep up the good work. Thank you" Tracy Bowen, Ruskin Mill

"Very good show and workshop, staff and pupils all very appreciative and enjoyed the whole experience" Andrea Rider, Cannock Chase High School

"Really enjoyable, our girls responded well and were very engaged. This was an interesting take on bullying" Claire Howard, St Philomenas School

"The performance was excellent and the students learnt a lot about how to deal with difficult bullying situations" Amanda Cottrill, Worle School



Actionwork Evaluation Continued...

"Approachable, friendly, child orientated and appealing to a young audience"
C Switsur, St Faiths School

"A poor performance, our students gained little if anything from it" Linda Barstow, Clevedon Community School

"Actors were incredibly flexible and a pleasure to work with". L Ward, Farlingaye High School

"Great day, especially the workshop! Nicola Chambers, Priory School

"It really made the students think about bullying and it's effects", M Enefer, Chichester School

"Excellent balance of show and workshop" M Temple, Windlestone School

"Brilliant – really enjoyed it and I could see the students were empowered"
Ross Williams, National Star College

"Invigorating, really helps us as a school to impress the mesage of anti-bullying" Diane Llewelin, Cardigan School

"Fab! The children were entranced" Iris Emily Reed, Wallisdean School

"Your team really encouraged the students to get involved and were very supportive towards them" Kelly Corcoran, Colnhouse School

"Fantastic, really friendly atmosphere", Rachel Kelly, Denbeigh High School

"Brilliant – Many thanks. Our pupils loved it" Melanie Turner, East Hill School

"I liked the 'no contact' rule" Nick Hodge, Aston Tower School

"A super activity to support our work on anti-bullying. Pupils were given many strategies for dealing with bullying" Mrs Clark, Ladypool School

Silent Scream was written and Directed by Andy Hickson. Performed by Hannah McKenzie, Sam Morris, and Roanna Bond. Stage Managed by Kia Pettifer and Lisa Hollinshead. Assistant Director Rose Eastaugh. Produced by Cath Davis. Thank you to Bath Rugby, Dunelm of Weston-super-Mare, Proper Job, Penny at RSPCA, Weston Hospice, Dolphin Leather, Wilkes, Bristol Youth Theatre Studio, Sidcott School, John Cashel, Glenn Dallas, Sue Jennings, Pam Burke and Danny Grewcock.

For more information about future tours, anti-bullying programmes, anti-bullying week and Actionwork in general please see our website www.actionwork.com or phone: 01934 815163



Actionwork is a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)