

g* | paideia

harassment- boys talk

lesson plans



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Introduction to activity

This Lesson Plan looks at developing understanding of what is meant by harassment and goes on to look at how sexist language can undermine respect for women

Learning outcomes:

- 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

Key vocabulary: Sexism, sexual harassment, wolf-whistling, banter, derogatory

Resources needed: Harassment PowerPoint, Appendix

Time: 45 min

Lesson Plan Development

STARTER ACTIVITY

Display the word 'Harassment' and get pupils to explain what it means and give examples, then show definition & examples. Do same with 'Sexual harassment'.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Look at the statistics from the Everyday Sexism project regarding women in public spaces. Read them through with another person.

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

Read the article about the woman who reported a builder for wolf-whistling

i) Note down / underline her point of view and how she feels

ii) Note down / underline his point of view and how he feels

Whose side are you on and why?

Do you think it shows a respect or a disrespect for women? Is it sexual harassment?

Activity 2

Forum theatre (see notes on 'Forum Theatre' and 'Using the script' below):

Choose 3 actors to read through the script; give them time to read it through to themselves then ask them to read it through together.

Inform the class that they are going to read it again and that anyone can step into the role of Gary at the indicated points to change the dynamic of the conversation.

Try this once and see what interventions there are.

They can then look at the 'Intervention prompts' sheet to help to get some more ideas (there are two blank spaces for their own ideas). Get the actors to read it through again and see what interventions there are.

Ask the class what they think of the dialogue and the activity. Have they heard boys talking like this? Why does this happen? (You may find that boys deny engaging in such talk when girls are in the room too, so you may like to check with the girls when the boys are not there).

Forum Theatre: Background for Teachers

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.

For more information see

Interactive Theatre in the Classroom: Forum Theatre University of Southampton
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/pre_reading_material.pdf

Augusto Boal (1985) Theatre of the Oppressed Theatre Communications Group

An example of Forum Theatre in action from Mount Royal University, Calgary, Canada (9 mins 43 secs) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbYx01re-ec>

Forum Theatre: Boys Talk activity

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

Using the script

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 then have to continue in role, unscripted. They can use the intervention prompts sheet (Appendix 3) to help.

You may need to adapt the script to be more appropriate for the context of your country / culture as well as the 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).

Reflection / Evaluation

What have you learned today about harassment? What have you learned about sexual harassment? What have you learned about use of language? What have you learned about peer pressure? How will it affect your behaviour?

You may like to give pupils out two small pieces of paper / post-it notes and ask them to write down: One thing you have learned today + One thing you are going to do as a result of this lesson and then share some of them.

Suggested follow-up activities

Discuss 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.

Investigate how language is used in your school / community / in the media – does it promote gender equality or sexism? Do boys and girls perceive it in the same way?

Look at how gender neutral or not dictionaries are in your language.

See article about removing sexist definitions from dictionaries in English

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-51738824>

If they are sexist, can you start a campaign to change them?

Ask pupils to look at the work of the Everyday Sexism project <https://everydaysexism.com/> (NB This website is available in versions for 25 countries and 16 languages).

What so they make of the testimonies from women of different ages?

What sort of support is there in your school / town / country for people who have been abused in some of these ways?

What encouragement is there for men and women to be aware of sexism and harassment?

Authors: DECSY

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

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?'