

What Can I Do?

Age

10+

Duration

90 minutes

Group size

10-30

Overview

The children use forum theatre to consider how to respond to bullying based on sexuality or gender.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of different kinds of bullying
- To consider ways victims and bystanders can respond to bullying
- To explore ways people can become an 'ally' to those being bullied

Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask the children to think of situations they have witnessed where someone was bullied because of their gender, gender expression or sexuality or the gender and sexuality others think they have. Divide them into small groups of four or five and ask them to share their examples. They should explain:
 - What happened? Who else was there? How did it make them feel? How did they and others react?
2. Ask the children to decide on one example in which the situation was not resolved (or a mixture of the examples) and prepare a short play of the example they have chosen.
3. Show the short plays to everyone in turn. After each play is finished ask the whole group questions based on the situation:
 - What happened in this situation? Who was bullied? Why?
 - How did you react? How did others react?
 - How did you feel watching the play?
4. Explain that the group will now play their scene again but this time the group as a whole will try to change the situation to make it better. During the play, anyone in the audience can clap to signal that the play must freeze at that point, then the person should get up, tap someone (except the bully) on the shoulder and replace them in the scene.

IMPORTANT! There can be no 'magic solutions'. The bullies cannot suddenly be reasonable people who treat everyone nicely. Therefore the bully cannot be changed. The changes need to be based on real things either the person being bullied or others present could do to make a change.

5. Each time the scene is changed, discuss with the group again:
 - What changed?
 - Do you think this is realistic?
 - Would you feel comfortable doing this in a real life situation?
 - Do you think this would have an impact?
6. When each scene is exhausted or the conflict has been 'resolved', go to the next one (you might not find a 'solution' for every scene).

Debriefing

- How do you feel after the performances?
- Which of the solutions will you use in your everyday life?

Tips for facilitators

- It is useful to do short theatre exercises before this activity, so that the participants get used to acting and feel comfortable taking on different roles (a good resource book on theatre exercises for forum theatre is 'Games for Actors and Non-Actors' by Augusto Boal). Forum Theatre was developed by Augusto Boal and is described in his book "Theatre of the Oppressed" (1979).