

Session one: Getting started



Outcomes

By the end of this session participants will have:

- Decided what behaviours are needed for everyone in the group to participate safely in the programme
- Considered what makes up a person's 'identity' by creating a fictional character

Activity	Time
1. Introducing the programme	5 minutes
2. Working agreement	15 minutes
3. Warm-up activity (My room 101)	10 minutes
4. Creating a character	40 minutes
5. Closing round	5 minutes
Total	75 minutes

Activity 1. Introducing the programme

The facilitator briefly explains to young people:

- What today's session is about
- How long it lasts/how many sessions in total
- That Outside the Box was created with help from young people who advised on the style and what to include
- That there are opportunities to use your imagination and create a fictional character that will reappear in several of the sessions
- That the programme is for your personal development, with some sessions focused on learning about sex and relationships issues
- That there will be a mix of activities working individually, in pairs, as a whole group

Activity 2. Working agreement

Materials: Flipchart and marker pens

Instructions

Explain to the group that you will need to create an agreement about how you work together. Ask the young people why they think it is necessary to agree on how members of the group behave. Reasons could include:

- So that everyone in the group feels confident to share their views
- So that everyone in the group understands boundaries about sharing personal information
- So that everyone in the group feels they are respected



Invite the young people to list their suggested 'rules' and note them down on a sheet of flipchart paper. Once the list is complete you could ask the young people to sign their name at the bottom of the list to demonstrate their commitment to the rules.

Example:

- Respect the opinions of others – and respect ourselves too!
- Express yourself with freedom
- Don't scream or shout
- No ideas or questions are silly
- Take it in turns to talk
- Have confidence in your views
- Consider the words you use – respect others
- Be careful with what you share – i.e. use phrases like 'I know someone who..' if you want to talk about something that might be confidential
- Phones on silent
- Don't leave the building

The working agreement is a really important means of establishing boundaries and respectful behavior within the group. The activity can prompt discussions about what is meant by respectful behavior, and also about confidentiality.

As facilitator you need to explain to the group that if something is shared that raises a concern about their safety or welfare you will need to tell someone else about it. Some of the activities in Outside the Box involve making up fictional characters and stories. If details from these stories worry us we may need to talk to you about it, and possibly share our concerns with another member of staff.

Young people may suggest that confidentiality means that 'what is said within these four walls stays in these four walls'. In practice this is very difficult for people to stick to. It is better to encourage young people to think before they share. Be clear about the opportunities to come and speak to the facilitator or other members of staff one-to-one before or after sessions.

Activity 3. Warm-up activity

Suggested warm-up activity is My room 101. The activity provides an opportunity to put the working agreement into practice.

My room 101

Materials: Paper and coloured pens

This is a useful warm-up to help the group get to know each other and to start thinking about and sharing their personal likes and dislikes. Ask the group if they have seen the BBC comedy show 'Room 101'. If not explain that Room 101 is a place to put all the things you really don't like and never want to see again – in fact things that you think should be banished from the face of the earth. Examples of things that people have put in Room 101 are



jellyfish, glitter in greetings cards, bowties, cheese and blue-tooth headsets. Ask each person to spend five minutes drawing the three things they want to put in Room 101. Then go round the group and ask people to tell the group what they have drawn. People will usually start volunteering reasons why they have chosen their items for Room 101.

Activity 4. Creating a character

Materials; Large piece of paper (e.g. flip chart pages taped together and large enough for a young person to lie down on), marker or felt-tip pens, paper (fake) £10 note

This activity will involve the young people creating a fictional character that will be used several times in Outside the Box to explore some of the sex and relationships topics. Encouraging young people to discuss issues from the perspective of the character that they create is a 'distancing technique' that enables them to discuss potentially sensitive issues without feeling under pressure to disclose personal information.

Instructions

Explain to the group that their first task is to create a fictional character. The character should be a young person about the same age as them. It is someone that they have never met before. **Imagine that they have recently moved to live near you and joined your group of friends.**

Aim for small groups of between two and four young people. Encourage young people to select the groups themselves based on people they are comfortable working with. If it is a small group it may work better to do the activity together as a single group instead of splitting into smaller groups. It is also possible for young people to work individually if they do not want to work in a pair or group.

Groups create a life size drawing of their character. They can ask one of the group members to volunteer to be drawn around by lying down on the floor on top of the piece of paper. One or more of the other young people should then draw around the young person to create an outline of their body. The young person who is lying down may want to draw around their groin area by themselves.

Once the outline has been drawn ask the young people to bring a character to life by thinking about their:

- Name
- Male/Female or do not identify as either
- Age (remember they should be close in age to the young people creating the character)
- Where they live and who they live with
- The clothes they wear
- What they are carrying or what they have got in their pocket





Facilitator's Tips

"My group loved this – I might add in the future different bits of clothing and get the groups to choose one item they feel would be in their characters wardrobe".

"The young people really enjoyed this. They became totally absorbed and created 2 great characters".

"Initially the young people found this difficult, but the prompt questions were really useful to help guide them and really flesh out the character."

Once the groups have established these details ask them to add information – using drawing (rather than words) about

- Hobbies and interests e.g. what music they like listening to, what they watch on TV,
- Relationship status
- Who they are friends with and where their friends hang out
- What they are good at
- Any problems or worries

Stick the finished characters up on the wall and ask all the young people to stand up and stand near their character. Ask each group to take it in turns to present their character to the other groups imagining that they are introducing the newcomer (the character).

Depending on time, the facilitator can probe for more information and discussion about their relationships, friendships and how they feel about themselves, for example:

- Where do their friends hang out?
- Are they happy about their relationship status?
- If they are in a relationship how long have they been in that relationship?
- Do they get on well with their friends?
- What makes them feel happy/sad?
- What makes them feel confident/shy?

Next, give each group a task to help bring their character to life. Create a slip of paper the size of a £10 note with £10 written on it. Give the money to each group and ask them to decide how the character will spend the money. This can be recorded by drawing the items on the paper with the character.

