



**loudmouth**  
education & training through theatre

# TOP TIPS FOR USING THEATRE IN EDUCATION ON SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

TOP TIPS FOR MAKING SURE YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT COMPANY AND YOUR  
STUDENTS HAVE AN AMAZING LEARNING EXPERIENCE

# Loudmouth Education and Training...

Loudmouth Education and Training is a highly respected and innovative theatre in education company. The company has been delivering quality Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programmes since 1994 and has reached over 600,000 children, young people, professionals and parents. Loudmouth specialises in safeguarding and relationship education and delivers over 700 sessions a year with a flexible and diverse range of educational programmes that can support your PSHE curriculum. Loudmouth's work aims to ensure a future where all children and young people are healthy, happy, safe and resilient.

This whitepaper was created by Chris Cowan.



*"I'm Chris, one of the founders and directors of Loudmouth. We believe that every child and young person has the right to have healthy, happy and safe relationships. We are passionate about creating theatre in education programmes that young people engage with to stay safe and to support schools in having excellent safeguarding and relationship education."*

Chris Cowan    [chris@loudmouth.co.uk](mailto:chris@loudmouth.co.uk)



# Theatre in Education...

...has been with us for nearly 50 years. When used well it is a fantastic, effective and powerful way to engage young people in the arts and as a way for them to look at issues in a fresh and challenging way. Loudmouth hasn't quite been around for the last half century but we have seen a lot of good and er...not so good practice in theatre in education over our 24 year history.

Safeguarding is increasingly an important and challenging area for schools and colleges. Recent media coverage of cases around child sexual exploitation (CSE) have highlighted the need to educate young people to help them stay safe by understanding potential risks, spotting signs, feeling confident to speak up and knowing where to get the right support.

If you are thinking of using theatre in education (T.I.E.) to educate around safeguarding then we have listed some tips that can help your organisation to choose the right programme or company so that theatre in education is an accessible, relevant and impactful part of your safeguarding education programme.

For more information or to discuss any of this White Paper contact us on 0121 446 4880.

# Tip #1

## IS THE CONTENT APPROPRIATE?

This may seem like an obvious point however always check the tone and content of the drama especially if the drama is about safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) or domestic violence / abuse. There are many great theatre companies with powerful scripts and great acting but they might not be appropriate for a school setting.

Check that the resources do not include nudity or any language that is gratuitous or unsuitable for your setting. In the current climate of concerns around CSE there are an increasing number of plays or resources available. Avoid resources that show graphic scenes of violence or dramatise the sexual assault. These can be traumatic if not used sensitively. You don't necessarily have to watch the drama in advance or see a script but ask the company about their approach to ensuring that the drama is appropriate for a school setting.

# Tip #2

## IS THERE A WORKSHOP?

Theatre in Education is only truly effective when the audience have the opportunity to be involved and to unpick what has been happening in the drama. Workshops can range in length and approach however they should always focus on exploring the issues or concepts. Some companies may offer drama games workshops that aren't closely linked to the main performance or a Q&A with the actors but this isn't where theatre in education is at its best. Look for companies that have the learning at the heart of what they are doing and provide workshops to allow students to discuss and explore the drama.

Experienced and successful theatre in education companies may offer activities such as hotseating or forum theatre or break out discussion groups. Research has shown that theatre in education works best in small groups so ask if there is an option for you to have discussions in class size groups even if the performance is delivered to a larger group.

## Tip #3

# ASK THE T.I.E. COMPANY IF THEY PROVIDE PRE AND POST SESSION RESOURCES

Even the most powerful and moving drama will have a limited impact unless the students have the chance to discuss and cement their understanding and learning.

Ask the company what resources they supply to help you prepare for the session and follow it up in SRE / PSHE lessons after the visit. Many companies will provide lesson plans or suggested activities so that the session is more than a one off visit. The more you can embed the theatre in education programme into your ongoing SRE / PSHE work the more impactful and successful it will be.

## Tip #4

# CHECK IF THEY ARE A REPUTABLE AND EXPERIENCED COMPANY?

Not many theatre in education companies are that well known and so you may not have heard of the company before. A quick Google search will give you an idea of how long they have been going and the quality of the work. There isn't a Trip Advisor for TIE (sadly) but there are a few things you can look for or ask the company about.

- How much of their work is in school settings?
- How much training have their actors had in working with young people / understanding the issues covered?
- How does the company research and evaluate their programmes?

Good quality T.I.E. companies should be able to answer these questions. This may mean paying a bit more but you will get a much safer and valuable experience.

## Tip #5

# ASK ABOUT THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATION

We are often surprised by the lack of clear objectives in theatre in education. Good companies should be able to provide you with a list of the learning objectives covered by their programmes.

They should also be able to provide evaluation evidence of how they have delivered against these objectives. If the company is a serious T.I.E. company then they should be able to show these or if the programme and company or programme is new then they should be able to explain how they plan to evaluate and evidence the learning and impact.



# Tip #6

## DON'T FORGET THE BOYS

Many safeguarding programmes focus on the risk factors for girls and young women and cover very little on the potential dangers for boys and young men. Young men and women can both be targeted by abusers and perpetrators and so both genders need to know how to spot signs. More schools are now using material to help students understand how girls may be targeted by an older 'boyfriend' however grooming can be slightly different for boys. Perpetrators may target young men through drugs or alcohol, they may play on ideas of masculinity or dares. They may initially approach them through gaming on Xbox Live or Playstation network. Boys and young men are also at risk and it is important that they know how to spot signs and know where to seek advice too. If you are using outside speakers then check whether they cover information on CSE and young men.

## Tip #7

# ASK ABOUT SIGNPOSTING AND SAFEGUARDING

Any issue based drama may raise questions for young people. Many good theatre in education companies will signpost to a range of local and national support agencies and can also flag any key personnel in school that you would like students to use as a first contact.

It is also important to check that the company are prepared if an individual student comes to them directly after the session with a question or disclosure. Ask the company about their procedures if they do have to flag any safeguarding concerns or there is a disclosure. Check if the company have a clear safeguarding policy and check in advance that all visiting actors and staff are fully DBS checked and ideally have had at least some safeguarding training on dealing with disclosures.

We hope you found these simple tips useful. If you would like to find out more about how we work around safeguarding at Loudmouth or want to know how we could help you with your safeguarding education then call us on 0121 446 4880 or e mail us at [info@loudmouth.co.uk](mailto:info@loudmouth.co.uk)