

FRIENDS?

USING DRAMA TO TAKE PRIDE IN CREATING
AN INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION



Members of DIGON meet every Thursday lunchtime. Sometimes it's just to talk and be together in a safe space but we also organize lots of different activities, from peer-led workshops on homophobia, heterosexism and gender norms to organizing LGBT+ Rainbow weeks. Our group is really passionate about the power of drama, especially physical and interactive theatre, to communicate difficult to talk about topics and experiences.

**DIGON
translated
into English
means
'Enough'.**



DIGON is a youth-led school-based anti-homophobic and anti-transphobic bullying group. LISTEN to us **here**.

WHAT DIGON MEANS TO US

"Creating an inclusive community is at the heart of feeling safe. I feel that the school is a safer environment because of DIGON's work"

"DIGON has become a safe and comfortable space to experiment with and develop our ideas"

"DIGON has helped us learn how to manage lots of different projects that spread such a brilliant message"

"DIGON has made me realize that my coming out is an irrelevance. My sexuality doesn't dictate my life, nor does my life dictate my sexuality"

"I have loved talking with primary school pupils, especially because of how open they all are to our ideas and about what we want to achieve in our school with the work that we do in our group"

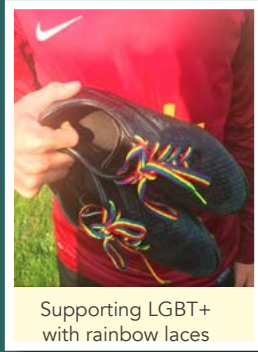


DIGON'S ACTIVITIES

Created a script, "Just good friends", based upon children's quotes from the research, "Boys and Girls Speak Out".

Taken up invitations to present at government and practitioner conferences on healthy relationships, gender-based and homophobic bullying, and other LGBT+ events.

Organised Rainbow Weeks during **LGBT history month**.



Delivered workshops for teachers and students, in primary and secondary schools on friendship; inclusive school cultures; gender norms and homophobic language.

Made a guide on how to address media stereotypes of LGBT+ identities.

Created physical and interactive theatre on anti-homophobic bullying.

Translated Olly Pike's book, "**Prince Henry**" into Welsh – this is a fairy tale romance which delivers positive messages of both love and equality.



FRIENDS?

a drama about the gendered pressures of young relationships

We had the opportunity to read children's stories about the pressures of gender norms and how they shape and control boy-girl friendships and young boyfriend girlfriend relationships in the research '**Boys and Girls Speak Out**'.

We wanted to communicate these findings to a wider audience, so we created the play, "Friends?". One of us wrote the script and our drama teacher helped us bring the script to life in a stage performance. Every line in the play is a direct quote from one of the children in the research. This makes it really powerful when we tell the audience that the play was based on real children's lives (aged 10, 11 and 12).

The play covers and complicates the issue of gender and sexual bullying. Our main storyline is to challenge societal assumptions that everyone is or will be straight (i.e. heterosexual).

We show how many children are teased or pushed together to couple up as boyfriend and girlfriend just because they hang out or share the same interests. We have performed the play in primary schools, secondary schools and at conferences and events for teachers and policy makers.

"We created a piece of physical theatre to challenge sexist and homophobic banter. Chairs were used functionally (to sit on) and symbolically (as a form of defence and attack)."



The Children's Commissioner's supports **Wales' first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* youth conference**.

How to take action against the negative media stereotyping of LGBT+ communities

Young Stonewall supports all young gay, lesbian, bi and trans people, and those who are questioning. They host youth pride events and young writer's competitions. They also run young leaders and volunteering programmes.

26 LGBT young adult books that challenge homophobia and support sexual diversity.

Every year, Cardiff hosts the International LGBT Short Film Festival, the Iris Prize Festival. **Iris Education** is a project which allows the Iris team to work with pupils from around Wales to tackle homophobic bullying through creating, developing and producing their own short film.

DIY

30 MINUTE DRAMA

PREPARATIONS

Organise your class or group into small groups (no more than 4 people per group).

- 1 Read the quotes silently.
- 2 Discuss the quotes you feel most strongly about. Each group member highlights one quote each and then chooses a quote to cut out with scissors provided.
- 3 Take it in turns to read out the quotes you have selected.
- 4 Put the quotes on a separate piece of A3 paper allowing spaces in between. Move the quotes around in ways that might help you to make a storyline.
- 5 Think about a storyline that can link the quotes together. Write up your script and ensure everyone can have a turn at reading.
- 6 Develop the reading into a short performance.
- 7 Play around with tempo, tone and volume and think about gesture, expression and movement.
- 8 Act out your script to each other if you want to. Give it a title if you like.

CHILDREN'S QUOTES (AGE 10-11)

At my primary school you just had to go out with someone. It was a virtual rule!

They call the girls who go out with boys, 'tramps' and the girls who don't want to hug and kiss, 'fridge'.

They ask someone to ask the same girl out again and again. They like pass you round.

I'm not really, you know, fussy about girlfriends. I'm not a girl person ... I love horses.

In primary school, me and this girl used to always hang out. We made up a lie that we were cousins, and that lasted for like a year before we told anyone. When it was her birthday, I'd get her Happy Birthday Cousin cards.

Boyfriends are extra time, that I don't want to give

The (dinner staff) go "the more the boys hit you, the more they love you"

For more quotes, go to **Boys and Girls Speak Out**.

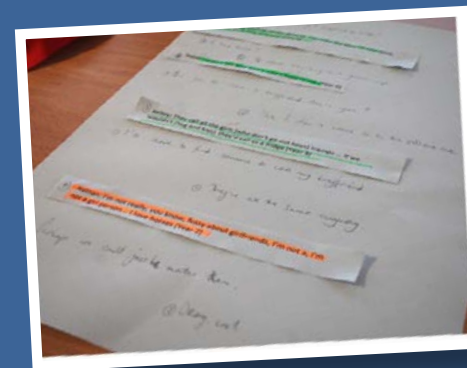
MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- Print the Girls and Boys Speak Out CHILDREN'S QUOTES for each person, OR collect your own quotes in an anonymous suggestion box or survey on a topic of your choice.
- Scissors for each person
- A3 paper for each person
- Marker pens
- Highlighter pens



WHAT NEXT?

Why not work with what you've created to make your own play. Or offer the scripts to your school drama department, or local drama group to work with and develop into a piece of **interactive physical or forum theatre**.



Before you begin adapting this activity for the children and young people in your setting, read the section on **Safety and Support**.