

# RULER HEART



## RULING OUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT USING THE VISUAL ARTS IN A SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

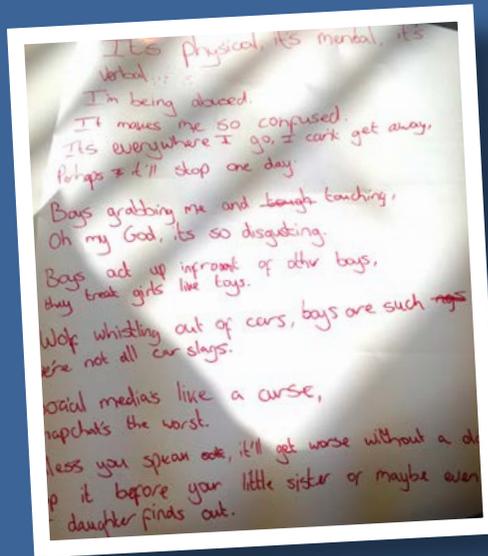
### TALK AND MAKE

We set up a Relationship Matters lunch club with Professor Emma Renold to talk about what makes a respectful relationship, and what kinds of problems young people face in school, online and in our communities. Emma recorded our conversations, typed up our words and we used them to make lots of different things, from mind maps and raps to tagged hearts and ruler skirts! This is our story...

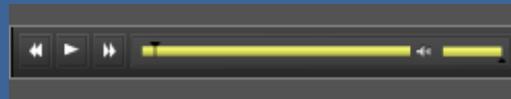


### MIND MAPS AND RAPS

We made mind maps and wrote poems. This one is called, 'Scream, Shout, Speak Out'.



Listen to us read it here!

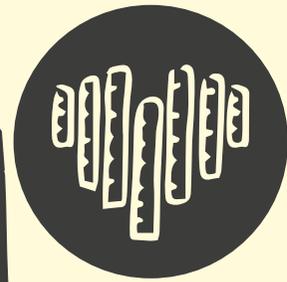


### TAGGED HEART



Some feelings are difficult to talk about. To help us express these feelings in different ways, Emma read out some of the words and phrases (from our group discussions and interviews) that we found hurtful. We ended up scrunching and ripping the paper to express how we felt without talking. In 10 minutes we had created a big pile of torn pieces. These pieces were not just "like our feelings" – they "were our feelings".

We didn't want to throw our feelings away. Instead, we collected them all up and decided to make a heart. We drew clocks on the hearts to show that time can heal. But the clocks also have cracks on them, to show that time can't heal everything. We put the hurtful words on the outside of the heart – we didn't want to hide what happens to girls any longer.



Try the Reassembling the Rules stARTer activity!



## THE RULER SKIRT

Some boys use rulers to lift up girls' skirts. The idea for the ruler skirt came from wanting to raise awareness and change the things that are used to shame girls. The skirt was a way of making visible the hurtful and often hidden experiences that can happen to girls and turn them into something positive – something that could create change. We wrote on the rulers both the negative things we wanted to stop hearing and some positive things that we wanted to hear and change. This skirt has been worn by us, by other young people, by practitioners and policy-makers around Wales and beyond. It has a force all of its own!



"the messages on the rulers are hard to read, just like girls' experiences of sexual harassment are hard to talk about and hard to hear"



## RUNWAY OF DISRESPECT

We used a long roll of paper and wrote down all the hateful words and comments that we hear everyday in school and out of school. We used this in our school assembly, asking students to "stamp out the hurtful words". We called this piece the 'runway of disrespect'.

The school should teach the true meaning of sexism and feminism at a younger age.

Maer ternaaw slett a swetty yn cael ei defnyddio'n rhywiol a nac

Being called "gay" because my best mates are girls

I've experienced hard times with boys during past relationships. I didn't have the support, it has affected my life and I hope it won't happen to anyone else.



## LISTENING, ASSEMBLING AND STAMPING

We delivered two school assemblies to students and staff in Years 7, 8 and 9 to raise awareness of sexual violence in relationships and peer cultures.

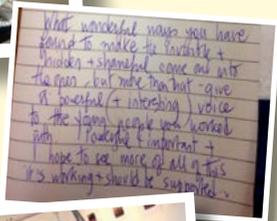
We shared all our art-works, from the 'tagged heart' to the 'ruler skirt'.

We passed our tagged heart around so young people got the chance to feel our feelings and the kinds of hurtful words that go around school and online. We read out our poem, 'Scream, Shout, Speak Out' and students to stamped out the hurtful words on our 'Runway of Disrespect'.

## RULER HEART: NEW CUTS AND S/MASH UPS

We developed our tagged heart by working with clay. We used the rulers, as tools, to cut, shape, score and stab the hearts. We twisted and fixed the rulers and words (from our original conversations about being safe and unsafe) in each heart. It was really cathartic.

The 'runway of disrespect' was laminated onto hardboard, with wooden rulers that can flip up and swivel to reveal the stamped out words.



We selected student comments from the 'relationship matters' school assembly, rolled them up, and inserted them into glass heart jars.

Our story and all our artefacts have been read, heard, touched and watched at local and national exhibitions around Wales. It's been a life changing experience – not just for us but for others, we hope, too.

### WHERE WILL OUR RULER HEART GO NEXT?

"We had no idea when we first started talking about what mattered to us, that we would end up making these amazing things – and things that opened people's minds on what sexual harassment can really feel like"



**What anonymous methods might you use to collect the views and experiences of students and staff on an issue you are raising awareness about?**

**How might you make your student-led school assembly more interactive?**



**Read about how dresses hanging from washing lines strung across a football pitch in Pristina, Kosovo, raise awareness for survivors of sexual violence during the Kosovo War.**

**16 art initiatives that address violence against girls and women.**

**Read more about how to create effective messages through the visual arts to raise awareness of everyday experiences of sexual violence.**

For more skirt activism by young people follow **#iammorethanadistracton**

**Are school dress codes sexist?**