

An Evaluation of the Pilot Healthy Relationships Programme, Preston Road Domestic Violence Project

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Introduction

The Healthy Relationships programme

The Healthy Relationships school programme was delivered as a pilot in Isaac Newton Secondary School in Hull by the Preston Road Domestic Violence Project in the year 2000-2001. This project aimed to reduce domestic violence in the area, and to improve the safety and well-being of women and children. A holistic approach to tackling domestic violence was adopted; this comprised three service strands, including support services for women, perpetrator services for men and healthy relationships work targeted on young people in local secondary schools.

The programme was designed to help young people recognise domestic violence in order that they might avoid such abuse in future relationships. The aim was to focus on positive behaviour in relationships, exploring issues of gender, power and inequality. The main messages were centred on helping young people develop caring and respectful relationships, in which their first priority would be to look after their own physical and emotional well-being and to recognise destructive signs.

Research Background

In a recent report focusing on reducing domestic violence through working with children, Mullender (2000) suggests that present policy and practice in this area are underdeveloped. In particular, she argues that, while there are convincing arguments for mainstreaming interventions which encourage the next generation to reject violence and see themselves as having a role in ending it, work on this issue in schools remains in the early stages.

Mullender found that 84 per cent of secondary school pupils wanted lessons on domestic violence and what to do about it. Young people, she argues, want participative learning about domestic violence in school. She suggests that they

respond positively to learning which employs discussion and drama, and those with personal experience of violence at home want to be able to talk to friends and teachers who can understand.

Collaboration with CragRats

The Preston Road Domestic Violence Project commissioned a Yorkshire-based theatre company to deliver a drama production and develop a series of related interactive workshops specifically for the target secondary schools around domestic abuse and healthy relationships.

CragRats were chosen for this project on the basis of their previous successful performances in schools, which includes theatre in education work tackling issues such as drug and alcohol awareness, bullying, crime prevention, raising self-esteem, sexual health, life skills and disaffection. Developed in partnership with project staff, the issues in the performance and follow up workshop activities reflect the Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) requirements of the National Curriculum which recognises that all young people need to develop their social skills, awareness, self-esteem and motivation. The programme also follows guidelines detailed in the National Healthy Schools Standard Guidance document (Department of Education and Employment, 1999), and reflects both the theme of safety and the theme of Sex and Relationships Education.

The CragRats company wrote and performed *That's the way to do it*, a thirty minute play featuring a young boy, his mother and father in a domestic setting where the father was depicted as abusive and violent towards his wife and his son. The play was aimed at helping young people to recognise abusive behaviour and to seek appropriate help. The play was generally well received and was considered by the professionals and researchers who attended the performance to have a powerful impact.

The Workshops

The pilot programme was delivered in Isaac Newton School, East Hull, during the school year 2001-2002 following a period spent planning and designing the programme. This involved collaboration between the Preston Road Domestic Violence Project member of staff with responsibility for co-ordinating the programme, the CragRats company, teaching and health staff from the school and practitioners from youth and health services who contributed to the delivery of the programme. A number of published models of preventive educational programmes were used to inform the design of the Hull programme. These included materials produced in Sandwell (Sandwell Against Domestic Violence Project, 2000), Hackney (Morley, 1999) and by the Zero Tolerance Trust (Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust, 1999).

Approximately 85 year 8 pupils aged 12-13 years watched the CragRats production and took part in the follow-up workshops. Year 8 pupils were targeted for the programme as this group was considered to offer the opportunity to intervene with children before they became heavily involved in relationships.

The first workshop was delivered by CragRats performers immediately following the performance. Five subsequent workshops were delivered on a weekly basis by the school nurse, youth worker, and domestic violence project worker. One teacher from the school was present at all times to supervise pupils and join in when appropriate. Each workshop lasted approximately one hour and began with a class 'warm-up' activity such as throwing the ball to each other while trying to remember each other's names. The sessions ended with a 'wind-down' activity such as a quiz or 'what I have learned today' and pupils finished by completing an evaluation form for the morning's session.

Workshop Themes

- Workshop 1 - Self esteem and mutual respect
- Workshop 2 - Beliefs and attitudes - stereotypical responses
- Workshop 3 - Awareness of cultural and social influences on gender identity.
- Workshop 4 - Sex role stereotypes and their impact on relationships.
- Workshop 5 - Acknowledging your own feelings, recognising others and practising communication. Session included a short video on families living with domestic violence.

Research Methodology

A questionnaire was completed by all year 8 pupils one week before the CragRats performance. It included open-ended and closed questions and was designed to assess pupils' existing knowledge and understandings of domestic violence and attitudes towards domestic violence and relationships in general. For the closed questions, pupils had to answer 'true', 'false' or 'don't know' to questions about what domestic violence was and 'agree', 'disagree', or 'don't know' to statements about domestic violence, which provided a measure of attitudes. All responses were anonymous and participants were reassured that teachers at the school would not be able to identify what they had written.

At the end of the final workshop, pupils were asked to complete a second questionnaire, which again consisted of both open-ended and closed questions. The second survey aimed to discover whether pupils' knowledge and understandings of domestic violence had changed, and if so in what ways. It was also designed to assess whether pupils' attitudes towards domestic

violence and relationships in general had changed and what pupils felt they had learned from the programme.

In addition to the two sets of questionnaires, a series of small friendship discussion groups were carried out with pupils who volunteered to offer their views and opinions of the programme. Four groups involving 13 pupils (6 girls; 7 boys) were held. Discussions lasted approximately one hour and focused primarily on pupils' own thoughts and feelings concerning both the play and the workshops. Discussions were tape-recorded but participants were assured of anonymity. The transcripts from the discussion groups were analysed thematically while the data from the two surveys was analysed using SPSS, a software package designed for use in the social sciences.

Responses from closed questions on both sets of questionnaires were collated and compared. These provided a general picture from which changes in attitudes and understanding could be identified. Responses from open-ended questions which appeared in both questionnaires were also compared and are discussed in more detail below along with data collected from the friendship group discussions.

Knowledge and Understandings of Domestic Violence

Pupils' understandings of the term 'domestic violence' were examined before and after the programme. The first question on both questionnaires asked participants to describe 'what do you think domestic violence means?' The evaluation showed a distinct shift in the way that domestic violence was defined. Prior to the programme only a quarter of the pupils (27%) saw domestic violence as violence that was located in the family. This level of understanding of domestic violence appears characteristic of young people generally. Mullender et al's (2002) survey of 700 secondary school pupils found that only 28 per cent identified domestic violence as

violence involving their parents or adults at home. Following the Healthy Relationships programme, just over half the Hull pupils (51 per cent) defined domestic violence as a family problem. The proportion who defined domestic violence as something that happened in families had therefore almost doubled.

Prior to the programme, 28 per cent didn't know or did not comment on the statement 'domestic violence is not an issue for people my age'. This proportion fell to 15 per cent after the programme with a substantial increase from 41 per cent to 51 per cent in those who disagreed with the statement. At the outset of the programme the vast majority of the young people (94 per cent) did not believe that domestic violence only happens on television. This proportion increased slightly following the programme as did the proportion who agreed that domestic violence is more common than people think which rose from 82 per cent to 88 per cent. By the end of the programme, the proportion who thought that domestic violence was mostly about men bullying women had more than doubled (30 per cent - 65 per cent).

The proportion of those who thought that domestic violence involved women bullying men increased from 38 per cent to 46 per cent - both boys and girls accounted for this rise. The proportion of don't know or not answered responses to this question also increased slightly, suggesting that uncertainty on this issue had increased. This uncertainty was particularly apparent among girls after the programme: the proportion of girls who did not believe that domestic violence involved women bullying men decreased from 41.5 per cent to 18.9 per cent while the proportion of don't knows among girls rose from 22 per cent to 38 per cent on this question. However, this uncertainty probably reflects the complexity of the question which addresses two issues simultaneously: i.e. do women bully men and does this constitute domestic violence?

This complexity was expressed by one female discussion group member who was unsure about the gendered nature of domestic violence:

About maybe a woman doing it 'cos it's not always just men who do it. I think it's men doing the most to women, but women can probably do it to men as well.

Finally, there was a slight increase in the proportion of young people who thought that the statement 'domestic violence only happens to people who deserve it' was false.

There was evidence from the second survey that some of the pupils had developed their understandings about the nature of domestic violence as a direct result of the programme. For example, in response to the question, 'Did the CragRats play change any of your ideas about domestic violence? And in what ways?' these girls answered:

I realised it is a big issue.

The fact that people do get bullied when at home but we don't realise if it doesn't happen to us.

One boy wrote:

I thought that domestic violence was just violence.

Despite the uncertainty about gender issues noted above, some pupils had begun to develop a gendered understanding of domestic violence. These discussion group participants had clearly picked up on the traditional patriarchal nature of the family relationships depicted in the CragRats play, where control and power was firmly placed with the 'dominant' male in the house and the role of the female was visibly subservient:

I remember most the dad was real strict and he wouldn't let them do anything

He wouldn't let his wife get a job or anything because he said he was the one getting the money – the food on the table

I remember the part where the dad and son was fighting and the mum tried to split them up and she didn't want any trouble

The mam used to be soft on the boy but the dad used to be real strict

And the dad normally punched his wife,
(Group 4, 3 girls)

When these boys in one of the discussion groups were asked what they might say to the father in the play, their responses demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of inequality, power, and control in abusive relationships:

Talk to them.' Cos some blokes only listen to other blokes.

Some men only listen to other men. They just think women are..... just there.

Some men might just think they can rule. Some of them like to get their own way.
(Group 3, 3 boys)

When pupils participating in the discussion groups were asked for their own ideas about why domestic violence sometimes happened in families, their explanations included stress, mental ill health and alcohol problems:

Because they might be stressed or something's happened.
(Girl)

Maybe some people have got something wrong with them.

Some nutters are like that.

Some people like to go to the pub every night and get real drunk.
(Group 4, 3 girls)

These girls' explanations were framed in terms of cultural expectations and observations of traditional gender roles around masculinity and femininity:

Because most men usually act hard but the women are just like kind, gentle and that.

[Men] They think they're hard
(Group 2, 3 girls)

Understandings of Consequences for Children in Families

During the group discussions, participants identified a wide variety of ways in which children and young people who are living with domestic violence can be negatively affected. These included major disruptions in family life:

'Cos if you have violence in your home it can make the kids do it or say if they split up it can make you split up. Then your mam might stop you seeing your dad and your dad might stop you seeing your mam.

(Girl)

Feelings of shame and embarrassment were also identified as significant for children who lived with domestic violence:

She might feel ashamed of it 'cos like the boy in the play was real ashamed and didn't want to tell his mates things.

(Girl)

Discussion group participants also emphasised possible effects on educational performance and behaviour:

If you have violence in your home and you go to school it could affect you doing your work and getting on with it.

(Girl)

It could mess the kids' education up because that's all they'd think about – just going home to that.

(Boy)

The emotional impact of domestic violence was also seen as relevant:

Yeah 'cos you get upset and that.

He might be quiet because of what's happened in the past.

That's why he's real quiet.

'Cos he might think that if he says something it might slip out or something so it's best to be quiet.

'Cos he'll be real upset and if anyone says shall I come round to your house he might think 'oh no' and then start crying or something.

(Group 2, 3 girls)

The possibility of long term negative effects on personality and behaviour was also raised in the discussion groups:

That it isn't very nice that it's happening and he was a real nice boy and you don't know it might change him. He could change and be the same like his father, 'cos if the father does it you don't want the son to do the same thing he does so I think it would be best if he just goes away.

(Girl)

I don't think she'll like it 'cos if she thinks that people know about it they'll probably be staring at her. That's what she'll probably be thinking and if she's naughty no wonder if her parents keep fighting.

(Girl)

Seeking Help

The pupils surveyed were asked who they would talk to if someone they were close to was experiencing domestic violence. Following the Healthy Relationships programme, the young people were significantly more likely to say that they would talk to family members. The proportion who said that they would talk to their grandparents about domestic violence

doubled between the two points at which the pupils were surveyed, while four times as many children said that they would talk to other family members about domestic violence after participating in the programme.

Table 1 shows that, before the programme, 30 per cent reported that they would think of talking to the police if someone in their family or someone they knew was experiencing domestic violence and 10 per cent said that they would think of talking to social workers. Following the programme, these figures were almost halved with 17 per cent suggesting that they would think of talking to the police and six per cent proposing talking to social workers. A readiness to contact professionals was replaced by an interest in turning to parents, grandparents and other family members. This finding suggests that the young people who participated in the programme had developed a more realistic approach to seeking advice and help for domestic violence, which involved them turning to known and accessible sources of support rather than anonymous and probably less easy to access "authority figures".

Table 1. Who young people would talk to if someone in their family or someone they knew was experiencing domestic violence

	Police	Social Services	Parents	Grand parents	Other family members
Prior to HR Prog.	30.4%	10%	9%	6%	8%
After HR Prog.	17%	6%	13%	14%	28%

The young people participating in the discussion groups after the programme identified a wide range of different people who they would talk to about domestic violence. Whilst it was evident that these had clear ideas about the range of people who they might confide in, confidentiality emerged as an important factor in determining who they would talk to. This was mentioned by several pupils, as were sensitivity and understanding:

The teachers, they all like some of them are mates and when like they go in the staff room they might tell them and they'll tell someone else.

Then it gets out.

And if one of the kids are earwiggling, they could spragg it round even if it wasn't true.

It's not confidential.

(Group 3, 3 boys)

My Grandma. Family or something. Cos if I've got a secret that I don't want to tell my mam, my Grandma always sticks up for me and she never tells.

(Girl)

He would have taken the advice and phoned the national child helpline. You don't have to give them your name or anything.

(Boy)

When participants were asked who they thought they could talk to in their school about issues like these, there was some ambiguity around talking to teachers:

On programmes they tell you to speak to the teachers and they can sort it out.

(Boy)

It wouldn't be men teachers - put it that way. Women are more sensitive.

(Boy)

Some teachers are alright but they just wouldn't understand as much as some people would.

(Boy)

Nonetheless, pupils were able to identify other sources whom they could access within the school:

School nurse, your best teacher.

You can go to peer counselling and talk to people there. It's like if you're being

bullied or something you can talk to people about stuff there.

(Group 2, 3 girls)

Your mates.

I'd go to my teacher more than my mates.

There's student counselling isn't there? If you've got any problems you can talk to people.

(Group 4, 3 girls)

These girls articulated some perceptive beliefs about why talking is important and why it helps:

Like help to get stronger so they're not going to be weak anymore. Like if someone's talking about what happened they'd keep strong.

(Group 2, 3 girls)

I think she'd like to talk and discuss and tell what's happened to the people so she can tell them what's been happening and then she can solve it.

(Group 2, 3 girls)

Finally, as well as identifying the importance of talking to someone who could offer confidentiality, sensitivity and understanding, some pupils stressed the importance of talking to people who were perceived to have the power to be able to do something in terms of taking action to solve the problem:

ChildLine.

They can give her information and what to do when they're arguing and fighting.

The school governor. 'Cos they sort out all the problems don't they.

(Group 3, 3 boys)

During the course of group discussions, many participants expressed a sense of personal agency and control in coping with domestic violence by suggesting ways in which children could take responsibility for

action. Some of the boys were critical of the sense of helplessness portrayed by the boy in the play:

I didn't feel sorry for him because he should have done something to help his mam. Stood up for her or something.

Help her do the dinner.

He should have told someone in the family or smacked him or something.

It might make him to look after his mam or who ever he's staying with more, around the house and that. He should be a lot more helpful.

He could do jobs.

(Group 1, 4 boys)

Some suggested things that children can do to help:

Persuaded them to get counselling or something. It could persuade the children to tell the mam to get counselling.

(Boy)

Even if the parents were arguing they could tell them to go out or go for a walk or something like that.

Do it while they're not there.

(Group 3, 3 boys)

You could go to the police if you saw it happening. To stop it.

(Boy)

Attitudes and Beliefs about Relationships

There was considerable evidence that the pupils had developed positive ideas on what constituted a healthy relationship by the end of the programme. These participants' responses to the question 'My rights in a relationship are..' showed that they had absorbed the importance of equality, non-violence and negotiation in relationships:

.....to make sure the man respects me and my ideas - to never take anger out on me and to never make me feel helpless and small.

(Girl)

.....not hitting your partner and you should talk to her and let her have a say in most things.

(Boy)

.....listening to each other, both making decisions and getting along.

(Boy)

Generally, the proportions of respondents who answered 'don't know' or failed to register a view in response to attitudinal questions about relationships decreased between the two survey points. The decrease in don't knows/not answered was most evident on questions relating to equality and autonomy in relationships, but there was also a very substantial drop from 23 per cent to 4 per cent among those who didn't know or didn't respond to the statement: *If a girl refuses sex, there are times when it may be okay to make her do it.* Nearly a quarter of the group were unsure whether it was okay to force a girl who refused sex to do it prior to the programme. The proportion of these who disagreed with the statement rose from 62 per cent to 80 per cent with substantial shifts of opinion found among boys and girls, but particularly among boys. However, at the first survey points, girls were significantly more likely than boys (73 per cent and 50 per cent) to disagree with this statement. Responses to the statement *it is never ok for men to bully their partners* showed a decrease in 'don't knows' from 14 per cent to five per cent. The proportion who disagreed went up from 23 per cent to 27 per cent. This small increase may be explained by the fact that the question, which was posed as a negative statement, was confusing for the young people.

Significant shifts in attitudes between the two survey points were found in the responses to statements which emphasised the need for equality and autonomy in

relationships – the young people were more likely to agree with such statements. There were also significant shifts on some of the attitudes relating to domestic violence.

Autonomy in relationships

If the responses to the two statements about men's and women's autonomy in relationships are compared, it appears that the girls were generally enthusiastic about autonomy for both sexes in relationships and became more so with the programme. Boys, however, while enthusiastic about autonomy for men, were less consistently enthusiastic about autonomy for women, even after the programme when a fifth of the boys (more than at the outset) disagreed with the idea that women should have their own friends and activities in relationships. It needs to be acknowledged that the concept of autonomy in relationships will be more familiar to girls through their exposure to girls' magazines. Girls will have rehearsed these issues further through female discussion and debate.

Three-quarters of the young people considered that husbands should not slap their wives in the face. There was little shift in this response between the two survey points. There was, however, a substantial increase between the two survey points in the proportion of young people who disagreed with the view that in relationships, people should insist on knowing where their partners were at all times.

On the three statements which depicted women as powerful and / or aggressive, the responses were split by gender with girls being significantly more likely to show a shift towards agreeing with such statements than boys. At the outset of the programme, over a quarter did not know or answer whether women should be able to have their own friends and activities which do not involve their partner. This proportion was reduced to eight per cent by the end of the programme. However, rises were identified in the proportions of both those who agreed (girls were highly represented

in this group) and those who disagreed with the statement. Interestingly, both boys and girls showed an increase in the proportions who disagreed with this statement between the two survey points, but overall, the proportions of boys who disagreed was larger with 21 per cent of boys disagreeing with this at the end of the programme.

Prior to the programme, 77 per cent of the group thought that both partners should have an equal say about decisions; this proportion increased very slightly following the programme. The proportion who didn't know whether they could identify a situation where they would agree with a wife slapping her husband's face was reduced and the proportion who thought that this was okay went up from 34 per cent to 40 per cent. This increase was only found among the girls, suggesting that the programme encouraged girls to approve assertive models of female behaviour which could encompass violence. This problem is exemplified by the following female discussion group participants. When asked what they would say to someone like the mum who was in the play, they replied:

Kick him to the floor!

Keep out of his way if he hits you. Kick his head in!

(Group 2, 3 girls)

Those delivering the programme were aware of this issue and considered ways in which the message about being assertive in exercising rights in a relationship could be delivered without suggesting to girls that they should resort to violence.

The number of young people who didn't know whether men should be able to have their own friends and activities without their partner, reduced significantly between the two surveys and the proportion who agreed that they should went up from 65 per cent to 78 per cent. The proportion who didn't know or respond to the statement that, in relationships, 'it is usually the other person's fault if one person gets mad' dropped from a third to

22 per cent. The proportion who disagreed rose from 43 per cent to 57 per cent.

Finally, 71 per cent of the group disagreed with the statement that 'a girl who has been hit by her boyfriend probably asked for it' before the programme was delivered. There was a slight increase in the proportion who agreed with this statement following the programme. This is probably attributable to a number of 'maverick' boys who participated in the programme (a few questionnaires appeared to include provocative responses to the questions).

Pupils' Views of the Programme

Nearly a third of the group felt that the CragRats play had changed their ideas about domestic violence. Just under 60 per cent of the group said that they had learnt something from the workshops with 27 per cent saying that they had learnt 'quite a lot or a lot'.

Table 2 shows that, when discussion group participants were asked to rate the CragRats play on a scale of 1-10, responses ranged from 6-10. Boys were more likely to give lower ratings (6-8) than females (8-10)

Table 2. Discussion group participants' ratings of CragRats play and workshops

CragRats play							
Boys	6	8	7	8	7	8	8
Girls	9	8	10	10	10	*	
Workshops							
Boys	3	4	5	6	6	6	5-6
Girls	9	10	10	10	9	8	

* one girl did not see the play

In terms of the follow up workshops, ratings were seen to drop overall with a range from 3-10. Again, female participants were more likely to give higher ratings (6-10) than boys. Thus, amongst these participants, the workshops were more popular with the girls than with the boys who seemed to prefer the play itself, as exemplified by these young males:

*The play was better than the workshops.
You learnt more from the play.*

More than the workshops.

*You could actually see what was going
on.*

*And you don't have to hear you can see
it. When you talk about stuff in lessons,
you can watch videos and actually see
what's happening.*

(Group 1, 4 boys)

*I thought it was a good example of
people who was having problems at
home. It showed like how with their
mates they had to make up a different
reason not to 'cos his dad didn't let
him go out 'til he'd finished his
homework*

(Boy)

Data from the discussion groups also suggested that the boys had particularly enjoyed the more active elements of the workshops, such as drama and role-play:

*We didn't really do much moving. We
had to just sit still.*

*They was doing a lot of talking but we
didn't understand much of it.*

It was too complicated.

Too much talking.

*They did too much talking. Not enough
acting.*

Not enough fun things.

*It would be good to have drama lessons
in school. We do plays but we don't act
in it, you just talk.*

(Group 3, 3 boys)

*The one where you had to throw a ball
at each other and make the other
person tell what they remembered
about the play. That was the only fun
activity we did.*

That was all we did that was quite good.
(Group 3, 3 boys)

These two boys explained how they had enjoyed learning through role-play:

*It was good to see what the girls
thought though.*

It helps you understand more.

(Group 1, 4 boys)

Generally, the workshops were more popular with the girls. These girls also explained that they had enjoyed the role-playing elements of the workshops:

I like discussing stuff.

*Yeah I like discussing in the groups.
That was the best part I think.*

*Especially doing about what girls like
and boys like and we swapped it over.*
(Group 2, 3 girls)

*At the end of the play we had to do like
our own plays. That was good. I liked
that.*

(Girl)

There was also evidence that having the CragRats theatre company performance using different mediums for learning had a high impact. These approaches were positively contrasted with other forms of learning:

*I liked the videos that we watched. It
was like them pieces of paper, like that.
It made you understand what could
happen.*

(Girl)

Yeah miles different.

*Yeah it was better.
We haven't ever had anybody coming
in and doing stuff.*

That was like the first time.

(Group 4, 3 girls)

While some of the girls said that they had enjoyed the discussions in the workshops, these girls indicated some hesitancy in broadening those discussions to the whole class due to fear of being made to feel embarrassed:

A lot of us wouldn't talk though – we daren't talk in front of the class.

We were real embarrassed just stood in a circle.

Like when they asked us questions no one answered.

Yeah 'cos if you caught the ball, you had to say something.

And loads of people just passed it.

And there was one when you had to go with your friend and you had to stand in the middle of a circle and name your favourite subject and some people wouldn't do that either. They might have been ashamed to talk 'cos some people laugh at you.

(Group 4, 3 girls)

In the view of the programme co-ordinator, the gender of the facilitator was a significant factor in determining the young people's response to the workshop run by CragRats company. Boys were considered to respond well to the male facilitator in this workshop whose presence could indicate that it was acceptable for men to engage in discussing feelings and relationships. The use of a male facilitator was also felt to convey that messages concerning equality in relationships were not inconsistent with masculine identity.

Using drama to learn about other issues

Finally, at the end of the discussion groups, participants were asked whether the school environment was a good place to learn about these sorts of issues or whether these sorts of things could take place somewhere else away from the school. Some pupils suggested other venues where wider

audiences from the community could be reached:

They could have a day where they could help people and the rest just normal at the youth club. It's part of school.

(Boy)

Like a club or something. What about if maybe someone else wanted to go there who'd left school. They might want to go there but they can't if they aren't at school.

Like a club where you can talk to people.

You can talk to people and discuss your life and they could help you solve it.

Like a youth club but different.

Like a youth club but for any ages. 'Cos it could be anyone like a mam and a child getting hurt and she doesn't know what to do. She might be feeling real down.

(Group 2, 3 girls)

Yeah, like at community centres and that.

Yeah, like where they work and stuff or like in a hall and stuff

Where adults can see it as well.

(Group 3, 3 boys)

Some pupils made suggestions for further social and health issues which could be introduced and explored in a similar way:

Yeah, something to do with drugs and that so that people don't go and do drugs and stuff like that.

Yeah.

Definitely.

Something to do with younger people, younger girls like when they get pregnant at an early age.

(Group 4, 3 girls)

Things that go wrong like violence is wrong and stuff like that.

(Boy)

Conclusions

1. The evaluation of the pilot programme provided clear evidence that pupils had developed a view of domestic violence as something located in the family. Prior to the programme, there was considerable confusion about the nature of domestic violence. The enhancement of awareness and understanding is a significant achievement as it allows young people to identify personal experiences as abusive. This is the first stage in the process of identifying behaviour as problematic and avoiding it or seeking help.
2. The programme appeared to have been successful in encouraging young people to identify and contemplate using realistic and accessible sources of help. Between the two survey points the young people shifted from a reliance on anonymous and relatively inaccessible professionals to identifying parents and family members as sources of help. At this stage of the evaluation, the programme appears to have had a significant impact on views about seeking help.
3. The young people identified the availability of confidentiality as a key factor which would promote disclosure of domestic violence. Confidentiality and its limits need to be made explicit for young people seeking help on family or emotional problems.
4. There was some indication that the young people who participated in the programme were able to identify and comment on the gendered nature of violence following the programme. However, in promoting values of assertion and autonomy for girls, educators delivering such programmes in the future need to recognise the risks of confusing assertion with violence and encouraging young women to mimic traditional male patterns of behaviour. 'Girl power' needs to be deconstructed and carefully analysed.
5. Boys appeared to find it easier to recognise their own rights to autonomy in relationships than those of girls, even after the programme. Future programmes need to emphasise responsibilities and caring in relationships in order to balance messages about 'rights'.
6. The pupils responded positively to the use of drama, both in the stage presentation and as a medium for learning in the workshops. The boys were particularly likely to value the dramatic and kinetic aspects of the programme and were less likely to value 'sitting and talking'.
7. The boys participating in the programme would have valued the involvement of a male facilitator. It is particularly important that when boys are being encouraged to challenge stereotypical patterns of male behaviour that alternative models of masculinity are available. Male facilitators offer a valuable means of engaging boys in territory and discussion traditionally defined as female.
8. The evaluation of the programme took place in its immediate aftermath. At this stage, it is not possible to say whether the impact of the programme will be long-term. However, the research team plan to administer a further survey 18 months after the end of the programme to discover whether change has been sustained over time.

The Healthy Relationships Programme 2002 - 03

Following the break-up of the Preston Road Domestic Violence Project in September 2002, responsibility for the educational programme was assumed by Preston Road NDC directly. The project is now managed by the NDC'S Project Co-ordinator for Healthy Schools and Community. The programme has been delivered with different staff in another secondary school in East Hull, again to Year 8 pupils. A third secondary school has also had the CragRats drama presentation followed by a single workshop run by the theatre company. These programmes have been evaluated by the University of Hull team, using the same model for evaluation. The findings from the evaluation of the pilot programme have been fed back to the team currently delivering this service and the programme has been developed accordingly. A full evaluation of the Healthy Relationships programme over two years will be available early in 2004.

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