



BUBBLEGUM AND BLING

A play about teenage relationships

A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

ABOUT THE PLAY

The Characters

Ben age 16

Kelly age 16

Tommo age 16

Graham (Ben's brother) age 18

THE LOCATIONS

An internet café, The Youth Centre, Ben's House, Crosby Beach, A café in town.

The Story

Kelly has recently arrived in Liverpool from Ireland, and has started a new school. Lonely for her old school friends in Ireland, she goes to an Internet café where she is able to contact them through 'my space'. At the Internet Cafe she meets Ben; helping him to set up his own 'my space' page they become friends and he promises to take her to the Youth Centre and to town.

At the Youth Centre waiting for Ben to arrive, Kelly meets Tommo. When Ben arrives Kelly learns that the two boys already know each other. Ben says that they are cousins although Tommo denies the fact. Tommo gives Kelly his 'my space' address and later makes contact with her and asks her to meet him.

Throughout the play we learn that both Kelly and Ben are the victims of bullying. As the relationship between Kelly and Tommo develops, Tommo confides to Kelly that he feels under pressure from his father to be a footballer, and we realise that this isn't what he wants.

As the play reaches its climax, Kelly discovers that Ben has been invited to a party on Crosby beach. Eager to go, she meets up with Tommo, and he tells her that there is no such party.

Furious with Tommo and his mates, Kelly demands that he apologises to Ben or threatens to end the relationship.

Finally, Tommo apologises to Ben in front of his friends. Meeting Kelly in the café, Ben is delighted with the outcome. Kelly confides to Ben that she and Tommo have had an accident with a split condom; Ben advises her to go to the Brook Clinic for advice and agrees to go with her.

Scene 1.

Opposites attract out of necessity.

The Internet café

Possible links to Headon Pack 1: Stereotypes + Headon pack 2: Emotions

In this scene Kelly meets Ben in the Internet café. In the scene we learn that she is missing her friends in Ireland and that she may be experiencing difficulty making friends at her new school. Ben invites Kelly to go to the Youth Centre with him.

Scene 2

It's hard being me

The Youth Centre

Possible links to Headon Pack 1: Stereotypes + Headon Pack 5: Flirting and sexual signals

Kelly goes to meet Ben at the Youth Centre. While she is waiting for him she meets Tommo, who tells her that the Youth Centre is closed. When Ben arrives, it is clear that the two boys know each other. Ben says that they are cousins; Tommo denies this. Tommo gives Kelly his 'my space' name.

Scene 3

Secret Admirers in Cyberspace.

Possible link to Headon Pack 5: Flirting and Sexual signals + Headon Pack 2: Emotions

Tommo contacts Kelly on the internet and they arrange to meet.

During the scene Ben learns that Kelly and Tommo have been seeing each other. He invites Kelly to his house, but she tells him that she has already arranged to see Tommo. Ben is feeling a little pushed out.

Scene 4

Repeat after me: we are all individuals

Possible links to Headon Pack 1: Stereotypes + Headon Pack 5; Flirting and sexual signals

Kelly and Tommo in the park getting to know each other better.

Scene 5

Friends and Enemies

Possible links to Headon Pack 1: Stereotypes + Headon Pack 2: Emotions

Kelly and Ben have been shopping in town. During this scene, Kelly confides to Ben that she really likes Tommo. We realise that Kelly has been spending a lot of time with him. At the end of the scene, Kelly is bullied by some girls from her school.

Scene 6

The next stage

Possible links to Headon pack 2; Emotions + Headon pack 5: Flirting and sexual signals

Kelly is back in the Internet café where Tommo finds her. During this scene we learn that Tommo feels under pressure from his father to play football. We also learn that the bullying from the girls is getting worse. Tommo tries to cheer her up.

Scene 7

Where it comes from

Possible link to Headon Pack 7: Coercive Relationships + Headon Pack 2: Emotions

Ben arrives home to find his older brother Graham lying around. We learn that Graham isn't meant to be there and during the scene we realise that Graham is a bully. Eventually he persuades Ben to give him some money. We learn that Ben has been invited to a big party on Crosby beach.

Scene 8

Torn In Two

Possible link to Headon Pack 2: Emotions + Headon Pack 1: Stereotypes

Kelly meets Tommo and discovers that there is no party at Crosby beach and it is just a wind-up for Ben. Furious, she threatens to stop seeing Tommo unless he apologises to Ben.

Scene 9

Things to Remind Us

Possible links to Headon Pack 2: Emotions

Tommo goes to Ben's house and tries to apologise. Ben asks him to apologise in front of the other boys at school.

Scene 10

Ben Comes Into His Own

Possible links to Headon Packs 2; Emotions+ Headon Pack 8: Contraception and Making Love.

Ben and Kelly meet up in a café in town. Ben tells Kelly about Tommo apologising to him in front of the school. During this scene Kelly confides to Ben that she and Tommo have had an accident with a split condom. Ben advises her to go to the Brook Clinic for some advice. He agrees to go with her.

The Themes:
Bullying
Loyalty
Responsibility
Isolation

USING THE PLAY IN PSHE LESSONS

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Discussion
Drama Games
Improvisation

SECTION A:

EXTRACTS FROM THE PLAY

The following extracts are designed to give rise to areas of discussion and debate. Teachers who have seen the play will doubtless find many other questions to explore.

These are more of a guide.



Scene 6: The Next Stage

Another message? Should find out who it is an' knock them out.

Kelly

Press delete, it's easier. Just idiots. *Typing away. Tommo gets a bit bored. Looking around fidgety.* Oh my God. My mum's getting a job in my school. I was mortified when she told me. Talk about social suicide.

Tommo

How long are you gonna be? *Beat. She carries on typing.*

Kelly

Give us a minute I'm nearly done.

Tommo

Making a show. Oh, she's nearly done...come on.....come on....are you done.

Kelly

Ok.. ok, shut up.

She logs off and they leave.

They walk outside. Sit off on a wall.

I don't get it. I don't know how to make it right. I talk to them, I don't talk to them.....they just don't like me.

Tommo

It's cause they're all the same and you're not. You're different. They're just jealous.

Kelly

But I'm not. I'm just the same I don't want to be different.

Tommo

Talk to them like they talk to you. That'll shut them up.

Kelly

What do you mean?

Tommo

Gotta get on their level. Move your neck around. Walk like this a bit.

She starts to laugh at him being a girl. Hey girl, what are you laughin' at? Wind your neck in. You gotta talk the talk an' walk the walk round here.

Discussion/Drama points

What do you think about Tommo's advice?

What else could Kelly do to stop the girls being horrible to her?

Who can we talk to if we are being bullied?

Kelly is receiving nasty messages on her 'my space' page. How else do people experience bullying?

Actions

Ask the class:

Has anyone ever been called names in the playground?

What do you think about this?

How do you feel about the person calling the names?

Ask the class to brainstorm the names they have heard. Record these on a flipchart or board.

Lead a discussion about name-calling and bullying.

Make a list of types of bullying.

Make a list of why people bully.

In the play Kelly is being bullied on her 'my space' page.

In groups discuss:

- Ways we can control this type of bullying
- How much time should we spend on 'my space'
- What are the positive and negative aspects of 'my space'

Share your findings with the rest of the class.





Scene 8: Torn in Two

Tommo

Shifty. Crosby? There's nothin' going down there babes.

Kelly

There is, Macca's organised it. He left Benno a message on my space.

Tommo

Nah babes...er...it was just...it's a wind-up.

Kelly

A wind-up. For Benno?

Tommo

I dunno...think so yea...dunno

Kelly

Well do you know or do you not know?

Tommo

I heard about it but...

Kelly

Why didn't you say anything?

Tommo

To who? Not my business is it?

Kelly

But I'm your business and Benno's my friend.

Tommo

Benno? No-one calls him that. Only you. He's spack, or mong or idiot or....it's not my fault that he's stupid is it?

Kelly

His name's Ben. Ben McKenzie. And he's far from stupid.

Tommo

I know what his name is! I know. He'll get there, realise it's a wind up and come back. It's alright.

Kelly

It's not alright. It's horrible. And cruel.

Tommo

He'll get over it. He always does.

Kelly

Know what I think? I think he frightens you all.

Tommo

What are you on about babes?

Kelly

He doesn't like football and he isn't scared to say so. Least he's honest.



Discussion/Drama points

How do you think Kelly is feeling in this scene?

What could Tommo have done to stop Macca and the others playing this cruel trick on Ben?

What are the other things young people argue about?

What are the things that make us lose trust in a person?

Actions

Ask the class to write down things they would look for in a friend.

Put them in order of importance.

Ask the class to share ideas and produce a list of the important features of a friend on a flipchart/ blackboard.

3. BEN'S MONOLOGUE

Benno steps forward. Speaks directly to us.

The thing about being on your own is....you get time to think. I think about all sorts of things. It's like them statues....I mean how did that Anthony Gormley bloke come up with that idea? He must have gone somewhere quiet, sat down and thought about it. Really thought about it before he made them statues. *Beat.* I think they're brilliant because they're just looking out to sea...away from all the people in the town....each of em on their own...just thinkin'. This sea leads to another sea leads to another sea leads to....there's a lot to fink about innit. *Beat.* Wonder what they look like from a boat...in the middle of the night? It's funny cause the nearest ones to the beach seem lonely whereas the ones further out to sea seem...like they belong. To everything, I mean it's like they're thinking 'Here we are. All together. This is *our* space.' I wonder if that's what he wanted us to think. That Anthony Gormley bloke, I mean. *Beat.* You have to look at the bigger things first....to make sense of the little things.

Discussion/ Drama Points

How do you think Ben is feeling at this point?

Actions

Write an alternative monologue which expresses Ben's feelings.

Draw a picture of what Ben is describing.

Write a monologue which expresses how Tommo feels about football.



Section B: DRAMA GAMES

Game 1 – Fruit Salad

Objectives: Warm-up – Break the ice – Build group identity

First Stage

The group sits on chairs arranged in a circle. A volunteer removes their chair and stands in the middle of the circle.

Go around the circle naming each person one of three fruits (e.g. apple, pear, banana).

The person in the middle then calls out the name of a fruit, for example, “apple” and all the apples have to change places, while the caller tries to sit in a chair.

The person left standing takes the caller’s place in the middle.

If the caller shouts “fruit salad”, everyone has to change places.

Second Stage

The rules are practically the same, but this time the caller says “change places if you like chocolate...or football...or if you live with your parents” etc.

The group generally start by using things we can see such as clothes or hair.

Explain that this is a good way of finding out things about each other, what they like and don’t like.

In this game they choose whether to answer the question by choosing whether or not to change places.

Game 2 – Romeo and Juliet

Objectives: Warm-up – Working together – Listening skills

First Stage

Ask one volunteer to play Romeo and another to play Juliet.

The objective is for Romeo to catch Juliet.

Everyone except Juliet walks around the room.

With his eyes closed, Romeo has to find Juliet by calling out her name and listening for her answer.

If Romeo calls Juliet, only she can answer (by calling Romeo).

The game finishes when Romeo catches Juliet.

Second Stage

Same as before, but Juliet chasing Romeo.

Third Stage

Two Romeos try to catch two Juliets at the same time.

Exercise 3 – When someone says...I think...

Objective: Exploring an issue

First Stage

In groups of three, everyone makes a frozen image of a work using the other people in their group (so that each group will have three images).

To make the image, each person thinks of the following sentence:

When someone says...I think...

For example, in a workshop on sexuality, the word might be 'Desire'. So the sentence is:

When someone says 'Desire', I think... and make their images.

Each group shows their three images and chooses one to continue working on.

All the groups now do their chosen image at the same time.

They can eliminate any repetitions between groups and join images that seem to fit together.

The group continue adjusting the positions of the images until the different groups have formed into one image.

Second Stage

The whole group can discuss the image they have made or develop the image into an improvisation using improvisation techniques.

Exercise 4 – They can't because...

Objectives: Gender issues

First Stage

Prepare cards with following statements on:

Girls can't... because...

Boys can't... because...

Participants divide into groups of four.

Distribute one card to each group.

The group has three minutes to build a frozen image to complete the sentence on their card.

Each group shows their image and says what they see.

Discussion

What are the limitations each group has shown for girls/boys?

Can these limitations be broken down by discussion and understanding each other more?

Who sets these limitations?

Do we accept these limitations as fair/useful?

Section C: IMPROVISATION IDEAS

Follow-up Improvisation

Scene 5: Friends and Enemies

Possible link to Headon Pack 2: Emotions and Headon Pack 1: Stereotypes

In this scene Ben and Kelly are shopping when some of the girls from Kelly's school start to call her names; Ben tells her to take no notice.

In groups of four or five you might like to improvise:

The scene between Kelly, Ben and the girls.

Things to Consider

How else Kelly might respond to the group?

How else Ben might respond to the girls?

Who else could Kelly talk to about the bullying?

Scene 6: The Next Stage

Possible link to Headon Pack: 2: Emotions and Headon Pack 7: Coercive relationships

In this scene, Tommo tells Kelly that his father is putting him under pressure to play football. Kelly suggests that he should talk to his father. Tommo says that it's not worth it.

In pairs you might like to improvise:

Tommo trying to tell his father that he doesn't want to play football

Things to consider

Why is it difficult to express how we feel and what we want?

What are your ambitions?

What other activities might Tommo prefer to do?

Scene 10: Ben Comes Into His Own

Possible links to Headon Pack 2: Emotions and Headon Pack 1: Stereotypes

In this scene Ben describes what happened at school when Tommo apologised to him.

In groups of six or seven you might like to improvise this scene.

Things to consider

How difficult is it for us to speak out in a group?

How might Tommo be feeling?

What is the response from the girls?

During this scene Kelly confides to Ben that she and Tommo have had an accident with a split condom.

When he asks her what Tommo has said Kelly says that they didn't really talk about it because it felt uncomfortable.

In pairs you might like to improvise:

A scene where Kelly tells Tommo how she is feeling about what happened.

Things to consider

What are the other things that young people find difficult to discuss?

How is Tommo feeling about the situation?

What are the problems that could result from the accident?

Apart from the obvious oral work, there is also scope for other activities such as:

- Diaries of characters' thoughts
- Re-writing scenes
- Writing follow-up scenes for the characters
- Writing monologues for all the characters using Ben's as an example
- Designing posters advertising advice for teenagers
- An anti-bullying poster
- A 'my space' quiz which explores young peoples likes and dislikes

BUBBLEGUM AND BLING

CREDITS

Director	Paula Simms
Writing Support	Esther Wilson
Composer	Ra Cole
Designer	Rowan Watts
Actors	Adam Baird Daniel Cutmore Bronagh Lagan
Healthy arts Co-ordinator	Linda Meagor
Teachers' Notes Content	Paula Simms
Teachers' Notes Editor	Sarah Denvir

