



HIDDEN TEACHERS' PACK

the definitive guide for PSHE



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ABOUT THIS PACK

This pack has been produced by Peer Productions - a unique youth arts charity dedicated to using theatre to transform young people's lives.

It is for teachers who would like to use the play *Hidden* by Nina Lemon as either part of their Drama or PSHE curriculum.

It is designed to be part of a digital theatre experience which includes:

- A full 90 minute filmed production.
- A Prospero Smartsript. This is an interactive online resource that allows the user to choose the content that is most relevant to them. Our *Hidden - A Student's Guide* Smartsript includes exclusive interviews from the cast and creative team, as well as tips for how to develop their own practice.
- 8 Drama Lessons for Key Stage 3
- 8 Drama Lessons for Key Stage 4
- 8 PSHE lessons.

We'd love to hear feedback from you and your students. Please [click here to fill out a short form](#) about your experience.

Peer Productions

Peer Productions' vision is to use theatre to genuinely change young people's lives.

Founded in 2006, Peer Productions is an award winning youth arts charity specialising in combining high quality arts practice with peer education. Each year we reach 15,000 young people across the South East of England, enabling them to change the way they think about the issues that most affect them and to make positive life choices. Since the pandemic we have expanded into the digital space. Our work is made with, by and for young people.

We offer:

Training - A FREE one year actor development programme for young actors aged 18 - 23 years. 83% of our graduates go on to top drama schools.

Plays - We create and tour original educational plays to schools and youth settings which tackle the issues that matter most to young people.

Projects - We create and deliver innovative arts projects for vulnerable, marginalised or hard to reach young people. Most notably our Generation Girls project for Autistic girls and girls with learning disabilities.

Digital - We produce innovative digital projects exploring the issues which matter most to young people. Most notably 50 Days: Alone Together, our interactive, improvised miniseries.

AUTHORS OF THIS PACK



Nina Lemon FRSA is Peer Productions' Artistic Director and founder. She is a playwright, director, workshop leader, academic researcher and award-winning social entrepreneur. She has a wealth of experience mentoring young people from a wide range of backgrounds and specialises in making theatre that seeks to address the issues that matter most to young people. Nina is currently researching a PhD at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama exploring how plays can change the way teenagers behave in early intimate relationships.

Nina has overseen the development of this resource and has built the Prospero Smartscrip student guide.

Sophie Torrent B.A (Hons), PGCE, currently teaches Drama through Key Stages 3,4 and 5 at an all girls school in West London. She passionately inspires her students to become creative and innovative theatre performers. She has a wealth of experience both in and out of the classroom, which includes theatre workshops, Theatre In Education tours and subsequent productions. Over 10 years of diverse involvement have equipped Sophie's expertise to high standards with successes in a wide range of public and curricular projects. These have included *Forbidden Planet*, *The Penelopiad* and *Blue Stockings*. Through her instagram [@read.play.work.repeat](https://www.instagram.com/read.play.work.repeat) account, she offers other teachers access to new and upcoming plays to use for GCSE and A-level repertoire and further best practice in Drama in schools.



Sophie has devised the drama lesson plans in this resource.



Dr. Pooky Knightsmith completed her PhD in child and adolescent mental health at the Institute of Psychiatry, London, where she specialised in developing practical strategies for supporting self-harm and eating disorders in schools and other non-clinical settings. The strategies that Pooky advocates through her freelance work are all developed as a result of direct consultation with school staff and students and she also seeks inspiration from her clinical colleagues at the world famous Maudsley Hospital, adapting and simplifying evidence based approaches for use by non-specialists. In addition to freelance training, speaking and writing, Pooky is currently the mental health and emotional wellbeing advisor at the PSHE Association, an associate trainer for the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, a trustee of Beat, the eating disorders charity and a trustee of the Kidstime Foundation which supports children of parents with mental health issues. Pooky's latest book is "Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole-School Strategies and Practical Support"

Pooky consulted on the script and has contributed to the Safeguarding and PSHE lesson plans in this resource.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS PACK



Valentina Rosati MA is an award-winning theatre director from Italy. She graduated from the Accademia Nazionale D'Arte Drammatica 'Silvio D'Amico' in Rome with a diploma in theatre directing and has worked as a director, actress, performer and educator for over 15 years. During this time, she has staged shows spanning from classical theatre to contemporary dramaturgy, and more recently from site-specific to circus theatre and contemporary Opera. In 2014 Valentina moved to London, driven by a newfound will to learn a new language and open to a wider artistic landscape. In this diverse and multicultural environment, she started to develop a keen interest in new ways of making theatre. In London, she performed with "PartSuspended", a group of physical and visual devised theatre (Queen's Mary University and Central Saint Martins) and directed the Encore theatre company (South Bank University). In 2020 she completed a master's degree at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in Applied Theatre and The Criminal Justice System.

Valentina directed the digital theatre production of *Hidden* and composed the original musical score.



Molly Chartres



Liam Stone



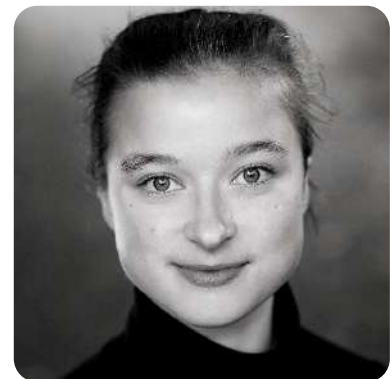
Grace Pennell



Caitlin Walmsey



Janet Oyewole



Naomi Langford

All the young actors in the play contribute to the Prospero Smartscrip. They are all trainees on Peer Productions Free Actor Development Programme.

SAFEGUARDING

Whether you are using the play for PSHE or for Drama, it is important to consider how you will safeguard your students' wellbeing.

All teachers will know that self-harm is an issue which is affecting young people. Whilst a very useful way of starting a conversation on a difficult topic, this play should not happen in isolation. It is best presented in schools where there is robust and ongoing work being delivered on mental health and wellbeing.

To deliver this work in your school we would advocate for:

- The implementation of a whole school plan for self-harm prevention.
- The establishment of ground rules in PSHE and any other lessons where sensitive topics are discussed.
- Students being given information in advance about potential triggers in the play.



Whole School Plan

Self-harm is an issue that can affect every aspect of school life. It is important that, as a whole school, you acknowledge and address the issue. We would strongly recommend Dr. Pooky Knightsmith's book, 'Self-Harm and Eating Disorders. A guide to whole school strategies and support' as a reference tool to enable your school to best support its students and staff. Below is a handy 5 point plan (produced with permission of Dr. Knightsmith) regarding some of the actions your school can take to make it a safer space

5 POINT PLAN FOR A SAFER SCHOOL SPACE

- 1. Create an open culture.** Young people need to know that they can talk about issues that affect them. As teachers, model this by being open, practical and factual when discussing topics relating to personal development.
- 2. Train your staff.** Self-harm is a complex issue and not something that many teachers or support staff will feel confident working with without support. Don't assume that this is just an issue for staff leading pastoral care or PSHE. Young people will talk to whoever they feel confident and comfortable with and this would be anyone within your school.
- 3. Be pro-active.** Many teachers fear that, if they try to help someone, they could make things worse. Research shows that early intervention leads to a better long term prognosis so, if you suspect a student needs support, don't wait. Whilst I would not advocate asking leading questions or making assumptions, a simple, 'are you ok?' might be enough to empower a student to open up. Give vulnerable students space to talk if they want it and always reiterate where they can go for help and support should they need it.
- 4. Have a clear policy.** Make certain your school has an active working policy in which self-harm is expressly named and that it is clear who is expected to do what, when and why.
- 5. Include mental health** alongside academic and behaviour concerns in meetings.

Trigger Warnings

When we talk about triggers, we mean something that could trigger negative feelings or damaging behaviours. Obviously, as everyone's experience is unique, anything could potentially be a trigger.

Having said this, there are certain key triggers that we have actively sought to avoid in the play. [Click here to watch a video](#) explaining what you will and wont see in this play.

In this play you WILL NOT see or hear

- Graphic or explicit details regarding the mechanisms of self-harm.
- Graphic or explicit details regarding suicide.
- Any suggestion that suicide has any positive outcomes.
- Graphic or explicit accounts of sexual abuse or any other trauma.

However in this play you WILL see and hear

- Non-explicit references to self-harm - cutting, burning, hair pulling, laxative abuse and overdosing on unspecified medication.
- Non-explicit references to suicide and the emotional impact on the family.
- Non-explicit references to memories of childhood sexual abuse.
- Non-explicit references to memories of war trauma.
- Scenes containing bullying including Islamophobic bullying and emotional bullying centred on a character's weight.
- Characters who have scars as a result of cutting and burning.

We are confident that the play is suitable for age 11 and upwards. If this play were to be televised it would be able to be screened pre-watershed.



Vulnerable Students

As teachers you will be aware of students who may be potentially more likely to be affected by the content of this play. However, it is important to remember that not all students will have disclosed their personal situations so ALL STUDENTS need to be adequately prepared before seeing the play.

If you are aware of students in the proposed audience who have experience of any of the following, then it may be a good idea to have a more detailed discussion with them in advance.

- They have experience of self-harming either themselves or within their family or friendship group.
- They have been diagnosed with or are known to have depression, anxiety or other mental health issues themselves or within their family or friendship group.
- They have had experience of abuse in their childhood.

It is important to allow these students to make their own informed choices about how or if they see the play. These students, like any others, may well find watching the play enjoyable or cathartic. Many vulnerable young people struggle to feel in control of their lives so making the decision to remove them from the experience without consultation might heighten this belief. It is a good idea to give the student some options:

- Opting out. They should be given an opt out option if they want it, without having to justify their absence to their peers. If they take this option you will need to think about how best to follow up with them.
- Being seated in a position where they can see the play but discretely leave and move to a safe space if necessary. This may mean sitting them at the back or on an aisle.
- Seeing the play without any special arrangements being made. If the student tells you that they feel happy to watch the play, then you should let them unless you have any counter information from another source (i.e. mental health team, doctor, parent etc). In this instance arrange a quiet time to speak with the student after the play to check that they are still ok.

Ground Rules

Teaching PSHE is challenging. It is a subject in which students and teachers alike can end up talking about their own personal experiences. The same is also true of Drama. This has its uses and can make the subject feel less dry but can also be damaging, as a group classroom environment is unlikely to be an appropriate space for a student to disclose upsetting and personal information.

It is worth taking the time to engage your students in creating their own set of ground rules for these lessons. You may even want to get your students to sign the rules to show that they agree to them and you can put them on display for future reference.

A good way to start the conversation regarding ground rules with your students would be to say something along the lines of:

'In PSHE/Drama we will be having discussions about a number of issues that might affect you personally either now or in the future. These will include.... Bearing in mind we will be talking about these topics, what difficulties do you think that we might face as a class. For example if we are talking about sex, some people might feel embarrassed. In your pairs come up with a list of other problems that might occur.'

You can then use these lists to generate a class discussion regarding what rules you need to have in place so that everyone feels comfortable. We are assuming that appropriate ground rules are in place before you engage in any of the activities recommended in this teachers' pack with your students.

There is an example list of rules below which were generated by a year 9 group of students:

- Be honest.
- Be respectful of other people's opinions and experiences.
- Listen to each other and ask questions if you don't understand.
- Do not share anything personal with the group that you might find upsetting to talk about. If you need to talk to someone about a problem instead go to....
- Do not share anything personal about anyone else in the group or within the school in the class.
- Do not gossip about anything discussed in the class. Keep the conversation in the room.
- Keep anything shared in the group confidential UNLESS you are concerned for someone's safety or welfare. If you are concerned about someone in the group's safety or welfare speak to a teacher or trusted adult after/outside of the class.
- It is ok to pass. If someone doesn't want to answer a question or take part in part of the class respect that.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION & COSTS

Hidden is a full 90 minute high quality filmed production, created in partnership with Serpent Films. To see the quality of the production see [our trailer](#) here. Schools can stream the play for their students from digital streaming platform Overture+.

- The cost depends on the number of times you want to stream the production. Each stream can be stopped and restarted up to three times.
 - 1 stream = £55
 - 5 streams = £99
 - 10 streams = £145
 - 15 streams. - £175

Please contact us for larger streaming packages. The licence to stream the production will remain open until the end of December 2021.

The play is available to buy from [Salamander Street](#) and other bookshops. The performing rights are also handled by Salamander Street.

The [Interactive Student Guide](#) is FREE and can be accessed via Prospero. You will need to set up an account but it's FREE. Click [here](#) for a video guide explaining everything you need to know to get started.

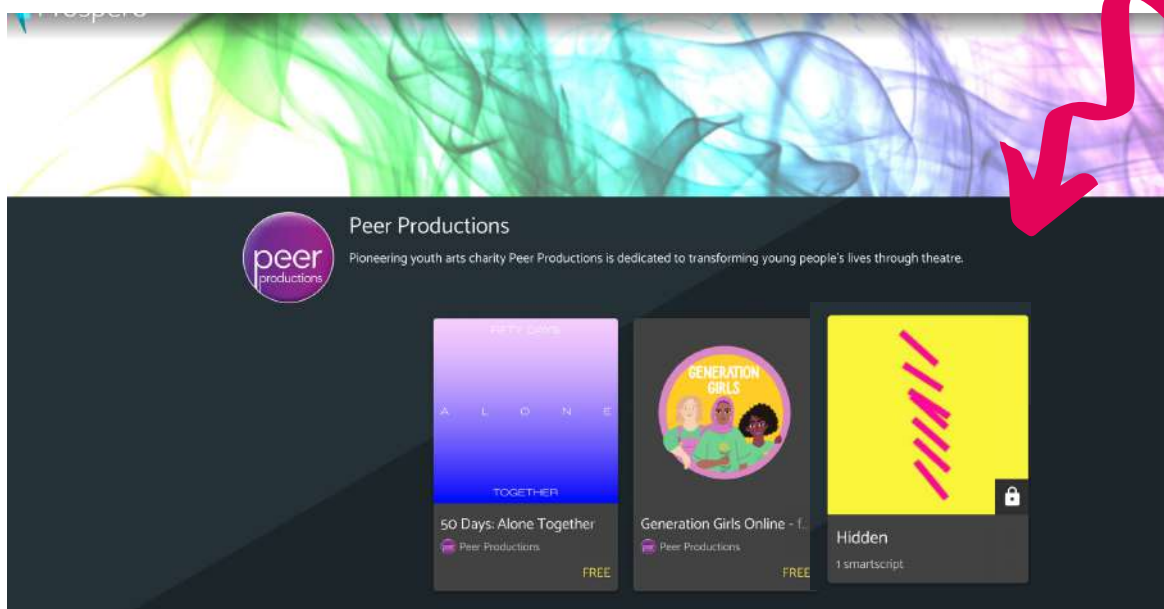
All the video resources designed to support the play are also available on [Peer Productions' YouTube Channel](#).

PROSPERO SMARTSCRIPTS

Prospero is an innovative online platform designed to facilitate the sharing of creative resources and it hosts several of Peer Productions' projects. It is free to access. You will need to set up an account and you should use google chrome for best results. You can access an instruction video to get you started [here](#).

The *Hidden* Prospero smartscript allows your students to navigate, in their own way via choice buttons, through a series of video resources to support their understanding of the play. It includes interviews with the actors and the creative team as well as insights into key moments and rehearsal techniques.

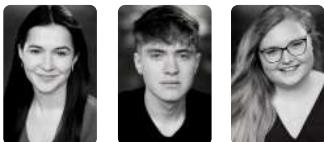
The video content from this smartscript can also be found on our youtube channel [here](#). The benefit of using the smartscript is that students can tailor their own learning to fit in with their particular interests.



SMARTSCRIPT MAP

Introduction

Meet the Actors



For each of the 6 actors, 4 videos:

- Meet the actor
- Actor's top tip
- Actor's biggest challenge
- Actor's interview

Meet the Creative Team



For the writer and director, 2 videos:

- 3 Top Tips
- Interview

Top tips

- 1 top tip from each actor
- 3 top tips from playwright and director.

Design Choices

2 presentations including sketches and photos of design inspiration.



Use of trees



Design Choices

Key Moments

3 videos for each of the key moments.

- Actor's view
- Director's view
- Playwright's view

+ Video extracts of each scene.



Matt & Hayley (scene 3)



Matt's panic attack (scene 30)



Yas & Tash (scene 12)



Chloe's Mum (scene 34)



Sophia & Emily (scene 18)



Trees (various)

Rehearsal Techniques & warm up

1 video demonstrating each of the following rehearsal techniques and warm ups.



Dance circle



The Stick



Characterisation
Vocal warm up
Physical warm up

Trigger Warnings

1 video with cast detailing trigger warnings for the play.

Support

Live links to various organisations for support if you are affected by the issues in the play.

Give Feedback

An online form for teachers and students to give feedback.

Character Cards - Matt



Matt has a great group of friends and strong feelings for Hayley. When she confides her secret in him, he really wants to help her but doesn't know how. When exam stress takes over, he begins to follow the same path as Hayley.

Character Cards - Hayley



Hayley is outwardly popular and happy but she is secretly overwhelmed by her home life and has some unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Character Cards - Chloe



Chloe is a lively student with a passion for fashion. She spends a lot of time online and becomes addicted to destructive websites.

Character Cards - Tash



Tash is quiet at school and lacks confidence. When a new girl called Yas starts school, Tash is delighted to have made a new friend, but tensions run high when Yas discovers that Tash has a dark secret.

Character Cards - Yas



Yas joins the school in year 9 and becomes best friends with Tash. She is outwardly confident, speaks her mind and is proud of her muslim faith. Tash is shocked to discover that Yas has not told her everything about what happened at her last school.

Character Cards - Sophia



Sophia has always found it hard to control her emotions. She feels self-conscious about how she looks and hates being at boarding school. With pressure building, she's not sure where to turn or how to manage her feelings.

Character Cards - Emily



Emily has been Sophia's friend since they were children but she often finds her frustrating. When they both go to the same all girls boarding school, Emily takes the opportunity to find new friends and, under their influence, her relationship with Sophia takes a sinister turn.

PSHE Lessons

The digital production of *Hidden* is written as one continuous piece of 90 min drama. There is a suggested interval so it can be watched across two lessons. We recommend pausing at the end of Scene 20, “So where do you want to break the cycle” at 48:13.

Lesson 1 - Act 1

In this lesson, students will watch and respond to Act 1 of *Hidden*. Before starting to watch the play we would recommend reminding students of the Ground Rules and the trigger warnings. You can find a recap of the trigger warnings in a video by the cast [here](#). Depending on the length of your lesson, the following questions can be addressed as discussion or as homework.

- After watching Act 1 of *Hidden*, have you learned anything new about self-harm or mental health?
- How can we support friends who might be self-harming?
 - How could Matt support Hayley?
 - How could Yas support Tash?

Lesson 2 - Act 2

In this lesson, students will watch and respond to Act 2 of *Hidden*. Depending on the length of your lesson, the following questions can be addressed as discussion or as homework.

- What steps did the different characters take to help them to stop self-harming?
- What messages do you think the production is aiming to convey?

Myths about Self-Harm

There are many myths and misconceptions surrounding self-harm. These can be really unhelpful and can make it very difficult for young people to seek help. We therefore feel it is essential for schools to challenge these misconceptions to allow both those experiencing self-harm and their peers to understand themselves and each other better. In her book 'Self-harm and Eating Disorder: A guide to whole school strategies and support', Dr. Pooky Knightsmith debunks many of these myths. She has kindly agreed that we can reproduce extracts of her book here. Where we have used her work this is denoted with (DK). Artistic Director and writer Nina Lemon has also responded to some of these myths. Her responses are denoted with (PP).

Use this section in conjunction with Lesson 3 - Myths about Self-harm.

People who self-harm are attention seeking

DK Self-harm tends to fall into two broad camps: those who hide their injuries and those who don't. Those who hide their injuries will often harm parts of the body which are least likely to be detected, such as the stomach or the tops of their arms and legs. These cases can go undetected indefinitely, often only coming to our attention if a disclosure is made. Conversely, some people who self-harm will not attempt to hide their injuries and may be judged as 'flaunting' them. Rather than dismissing this as attention-seeking behaviour, we should stop and ask ourselves, 'Why is this student seeking attention? What are they trying to communicate?'

People who self-harm want to kill themselves

DK Many people believe that all acts of self-harm have suicidal intent behind them. This belief is particularly strong in cases where a student uses cutting as a coping mechanism or takes a non-lethal overdose. This belief can lead to hysterical reactions to disclosures of self-harm. Whilst students who self-harm are more at risk of going on to contemplate suicide than their peers, especially if their underlying issues are not dealt with, about 90% of students who self-harm never contemplate suicide. In fact, many students talk about self-harm as a protective factor against suicide. When self-harm is used as a coping strategy to keep emotions and feelings in check, it can prevent difficulties from escalating to the point where they feel the need to take their own life

People who self-harm are doing it to fit in

DK For some students, group identity relies on self-harm - that is, those students who actively self-harm together (this is sometimes associated with Goth or Emo communities, or Justin Bieber fans). For these students, self-harm injuries may be worn almost as a badge of honour and there can be a degree of competition over the severity of the injury.

PP Whilst there may be an element of peer pressure involved in some cases of self-harm, it is dangerous to dismiss self-harming behaviour as nothing more than a fashion statement. For some vulnerable people who go on to self-harm privately and habitually, group self-harm is the catalyst which starts their behaviour. My experience is that teenagers can be extremely dismissive of self-harm as they often assume it is only associated with specific social groups with whom they may not share values or aspirations. Equally, young people who self-harm and don't identify as a member of one of these groups can often not seek help for fear of being stigmatised or associated with a group with whom they feel no affinity.

People who self-harm are crazy

DK People who have never self-harmed find it very difficult to understand why somebody would purposefully hurt themselves and think that there must be something very wrong with someone who would choose to do so. However, we find it far easier to understand somebody coping with their emotions by eating junk food or drinking alcohol. Self-harm is simply an alternative coping mechanism and does not mean that someone is psychotic or crazy, as people often think.

People who self-harm can stop whenever they want to

DK Many sufferers describe self-harm as an addiction and find the cycle very difficult to break as they have no other means of coping with their overwhelming thoughts and feelings, other than hurting themselves. However, people who have not self-harmed do not understand the complex emotions and psychology underpinning each act of self-harm and assume it would be easy to stop. This is not the case, and expecting somebody to suddenly stop self-harming can be very dangerous. If we remove this means of coping then they may find themselves in a more desperate situation; it is at these moments that a sufferer's thoughts are more likely to turn to suicide. Generally speaking, students who are suffering from either self-harm or an eating disorder find it difficult to stop unless there is a significant change in their underlying circumstances, or unless they receive support to develop healthier coping mechanisms and come to terms with their difficulties.

Lesson 3

Split your class into five groups and provide each group with one of the myths about self-harm, the questions and the character sheet. Each group should be given 20 minutes to discuss before feeding back to the rest of the class.

MYTH 1 - People who self-harm are attention seeking.

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards, do you think that they are motivated by seeking attention?

Why do you think seeking attention is viewed as a bad thing to do?

If you compare somebody who comes into school displaying signs of self-harm with somebody who comes into school with a cast on a broken leg, do you think differently about them? Why?

MYTH 2 - People who self-harm want to kill themselves.

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards, do you think that any of these characters had suicidal intentions?

What do you think you should do if you suspect a friend might be having suicidal thoughts?

MYTH 3 - People who self-harm are just doing it to fit in.

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards, do you think that any of these characters self-harm because they want to fit in?

What do you think you should do if you suspect a friend is feeling pressured by their peer group to self-harm?

MYTH 4 - People who self-harm are crazy.

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards, do you think that any of these characters are 'crazy'?

What do you think people mean by 'crazy'? Do you think it is a useful word to use?

MYTH 5 - People who self-harm can stop whenever they want to.

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards, what do you think prevented them from stopping this behaviour?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards what, if anything, do you think helped them to stop self-harming?

What do you think you could do to support or help a friend to stop self-harming?

'People who self-harm are attention seeking.'

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters below, do you think that they are motivated by attention seeking?

Why do you think seeking attention is viewed as a bad thing to do?

If you compare somebody who comes into school displaying signs of self-harm with somebody who comes into school with a cast on a broken leg, do you think differently about them? Why?



'People who self-harm want to kill themselves.'

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters below, do you think that any of these characters had suicidal intentions?

What do you think you should do if you suspect a friend might be having suicidal thoughts?



'People who self-harm are just doing it to fit in.'

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters below, do you think that any of these characters self-harm because they want to fit in?

What do you think you should do if you suspect a friend is feeling pressured by their peer group to self-harm?



'People who self-harm are crazy.'

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters below, do you think that any of these characters are 'crazy'?

What do you think people mean by 'crazy'? Do you think it is a useful word to use?



'People who self-harm can stop whenever they want to.'

Do you think there is any truth in this statement?

Why might some people believe this to be true?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards, what do you think prevented them from stopping this behaviour?

Thinking about the 5 characters on your cards, what, if anything, do you think helped them to stop self-harming?

What do you think you could do to support or help a friend to stop self-harming?



Lesson 4 - Understanding Common Mental Health Problems in Young People

This exercise can either be done in groups or individually. Allocate a mental health problem from the list below to each student/group.

- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Personality Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Addiction
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Ask students to go away and research their given mental health problem in order to answer the following questions and present them back to the class.

- How does this mental health problem typically affect people?
- How common is this mental health problem?
- How can people with this mental health problem get help/treatment?
- Are there any factors that make someone more likely to experience this mental health problem?
- Do you think that any of the characters in the play had this mental health problem and if so, why?

Lesson 4 - Understanding Common Mental Health Problems in Young People

To avoid students encountering dangerous or misleading information online, we would recommend students use the following list of safe, reliable websites;

- <http://www.youngminds.org.uk> - Young Minds - Mental Health Charity
- <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk> - Time To Change - Mental health Charity
- <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk> - Mental Health Foundation
- <http://www.mind.org.uk> - Mind - Mental Health Charity
- <http://www.rethink.org> - Rethink Mental Illness - Charity
- <http://www.teenmentalhealth.org> - (N.B. This is a Canadian site but we feel that the information is useful)
- <http://www.charliewaller.org> - Charlie Waller Memorial Trust Depression Charity
- <http://www.b-eat.co.uk> - B-Eat Eating Disorder Charity

Be mindful of your groupings and your students' needs. We have included quite a wide range of mental health problems here to enable you to avoid assigning an issue that might be particularly challenging to a specific student. If you have a student you are very concerned about, you may want to consider assigning them or their group the topic of stress. Whilst it is not a mental health problem in the same way, it does affect mental health and affects everyone to a greater or lesser degree. It may prove to be a less triggering topic for vulnerable students.

Lesson 5 - How to support a friend or relative who is self-harming

Split your class into pairs and assign one of the four scenes provided to each pair (scenes can be found via the links on each scene page that follows).

Ask the students to re-watch their assigned scene and to consider the questions for that scene. Notes to support the teacher with suggested answers have been provided.

Ask the students to consider how the characters might behave differently towards each other. If they and you feel comfortable, get them to improvise and perform scenes modelling alternative appropriate responses.

This exercise can also be undertaken as a whole class, with one group performing and the questions opened out for all of your students to answer and discuss.

Notes for Teachers

Most teenagers who self-harm are more likely to confide in a friend than in an adult. The chances are, many young people who you teach are concerned about a friend but don't know how best to support them. They may feel confused because, although they know that their friend needs help, their natural loyalty towards their friend makes them want to keep their secret. This often means that young people are struggling alone to support each other. By looking at the key scenes from the play provided, your students will be able to consider different ways of reacting and consider alternate ways to support and protect their vulnerable friends.

Matt & Hayley

Matt and Hayley at Thorpe Park. In this scene, Matt sees Hayley's scars for the first time. He is shocked but doesn't show it and asks Hayley if she wants to talk about it. He tells her she has to stop and Hayley believes he will help her and keep her secret. Hayley gives specific details of her self-harm which might be triggering for Matt. We find out later that this is indeed the case. The link for this scene is [here](#).

Questions to ask your students:

- How do you think Matt feels about Hayley and do his feelings change during the scene?
- Can you pick up on any clues that might suggest to you why Hayley self-harms?
- Look at Matt's reaction when he sees Hayley's scars. Do you think his reaction helps Hayley?
- What could Matt do differently to support Hayley?
- What effect does Hayley's revelation have on Matt?
- Is there anything that Hayley could do differently to ensure that her revelation to Matt has a less damaging effect on him?



Matt & Hayley

The Answers:

How do you think Matt feels about Hayley and do his feelings change during the scene?

Matt clearly has a crush on Hayley and feels closer to her after she tells him about her self-harm.

Can you pick up on any clues that might suggest to you why Hayley self-harms?

The answer is not clear in the text and crucially Matt never asks Hayley what has been upsetting her. She does mention problems with her Step-Dad's kids and arguments with her Mum. Could this be the catalyst?

Look at Matt's reaction when he sees Hayley's scars. Do you think his reaction helps Hayley?

Matt does his best to be a supportive friend but struggles to know how best to support Hayley. Positively, he does encourage her to stop and reinforces her self-worth to an extent - 'He tells me I'm beautiful'. Unfortunately, he makes a few mistakes too:

By telling her to stop, Matt does nothing to uncover the underlying reasons for Hayley's self-harm and may imply that stopping is easy.

Although we know he thinks Hayley is 'popular, pretty, smart' she only hears him tell her that she is beautiful. By only emphasising her physical appearance, Matt may not actually be improving her overall self-esteem. He agrees to keep her secret and then doesn't follow up with her. He should be encouraging her to get help and seek adult or professional advice and support.

Matt & Hayley

What could Matt do differently to support Hayley?

Matt should encourage Hayley to get help from a trusted adult. Matt should focus on Hayley's strengths and personality rather than focusing on the self-harming behaviour. Matt could talk to Hayley about the underlying feelings that are leading her to self-harm rather than just focusing on the behaviour.

What effect does Hayley's revelation have on Matt?

Matt suggests that hearing Hayley's description of her own self-harm makes him consider self-harming himself.

Is there anything Hayley could do differently to ensure that her revelation to Matt has a less damaging effect on him?

Although we, as the audience, don't hear it, we know that Hayley tells Matt the specific details of her self-harming behaviour. It would be safer for her to talk to her friend Matt about it without going into detail as the more specific the details the more likely they are to trigger self-harming behaviour in someone else.



Tash & Yas

In this scene, Yas discovers that Tash has been burning herself. Yas is shocked, angry and hurt and clearly wants Tash to stop. Yas suggests self-harm is about being cool, a fashion statement, attention seeking and extreme. Tash persuades Yas to keep her secret. The link to this scene can be found [here](#).

Questions to ask your students:

- How do you think Yas feels about Tash and do her feelings change during the scene?
- Can you pick up on any clues that might suggest to you why Tash self-harms?
- Look at Yas' reaction when she sees Tash's scars. Do you think her reaction helps Tash?
- What could Yas do differently to support Tash?
- Why do you think Yas is angry with Tash?
- Why do you think Tash thinks Yas is angry with her?
- Why does Yas suspect Tash is self-harming? Do you think she is right?



The Answers:

How do you think Yas feels about Tash and do her feelings change during the scene?

Although Yas really cares for her friend Tash she does not understand her behaviour. She becomes increasingly frustrated with Tash when Tash refuses to get help for her self-harming behaviour.

Can you pick up on any clues that might suggest to you why Tash self-harms?

Tash struggles to articulate the reasons why she self-harms, perhaps because she herself doesn't understand. She does say 'it just makes me feel better sometimes'. Here she is referring to the immediate benefit it gives her but Yas dismisses it.

Look at Yas' reaction when she sees Tash's scars. Do you think her reaction helps Tash?

Yas is very angry which Tash finds difficult. She tells Tash that by burning herself she is hurting her friend and this makes Tash feel even worse.

What could Yas do differently to support Tash?

On the positive side, Yas does make it clear that she cares for her friend. Unfortunately, she makes a few mistakes too:

She is very angry.

She promises not to tell anyone and then she tacitly agrees to keep it a secret even though she is very concerned about Tash.

She assumes that Tash is just self-harming to fit in.

She makes Tash feel worse by focusing on how much Tash's behaviour is hurting Yas.

Tash & Yas

Why do you think Yas is angry with Tash?

Yas feels angry because she doesn't understand. Her view of Tash is very different to Tash's view of herself and this means it's difficult for Yas to understand why Tash hurts herself.

Why do you think Tash thinks Yas is angry with her?

Tash has very low self-esteem so thinks that Yas is angry because Tash is stupid and worthless and pathetic.

Why does Yas suspect Tash is self-harming? Do you think she is right?

Yas thinks Tash is self-harming to fit in. This is not true.



Tash and her Mum

In this scene Tash's Mum is trying to have a conversation with Tash about her self-harm but it descends into an argument. The link to this scene can be found [here](#).

Questions to ask your students:

- How do you think Tash's Mum feels about Tash and do her feelings change during the scene?
- Do you think that Tash's Mum's reaction to Tash in this scene helps her daughter?
- Think about Tash's Mum's line "This has to stop. You have to stop doing it.". How do you think this line makes Tash feel?
- Why do you think that Tash struggles to talk to her Mum and then walks out?
- What could Tash's Mum do differently to support Tash?



Tash and her Mum

The Answers:

How do you think Tash's Mum feels about Tash and do her feelings change during the scene?

Tash's Mum is extremely worried about her daughter but struggles to know how to help her. She starts calm but becomes increasingly frustrated by the situation.

Do you think that Tash's Mum's reaction to Tash in this scene helps her daughter?

Whilst Tash's Mum tries to show her daughter that she cares, the way she goes about it is understandable but unhelpful. For example:

She pushes her daughter to talk to her when she is clearly uncomfortable.

She has been through Tash's things and admits this which makes Tash defensive.

Tash's Mum's emphasis on stopping the behaviour rather than exploring the cause of Tash's behaviour makes Tash uncomfortable and stressed.

Tash's Mum's emphasis on self-harm not being normal further alienates her daughter.

Think about Tash's Mum's line "This has to stop. You have to stop doing it.". How do you think this line makes Tash feel?

By only focusing on the behaviour and not the cause, Tash feels backed into a corner. She does not know how to stop, so asking her to do so is futile and further reinforces her belief that she is a failure.

Tash and her Mum

Why do you think that Tash struggles to talk to her Mum and then walks out?

Tash's Mum inadvertently reinforces many of Tash's negative beliefs about herself and makes her feel unsupported. In the play we know that she fears that she is the cause of her Mum's unhappiness and she does not know what to do to change this.

What could Tash's Mum do differently to support Tash?

She could de-escalate the situation by giving Tash space to calm down and suggest that they talk later. She could try to encourage her daughter to talk to someone, even if that person isn't her. She could also seek professional support for Tash to cope with the trauma from her childhood which seems to be overlooked and not properly dealt with. She could focus more on what might be leading Tash to self-harm rather than only focusing on the self-harming behaviour.



Sophia and her Dad

In this scene, Sophia's Dad visits Sophia at the Boarding School and seems to have all the answers. He doesn't listen to her and suggests that school is safer than home and that this will all blow over in a few weeks. The link to this scene can be found [here](#).

Questions to ask your students:

- How do you think Sophia feels during the scene?
- Can you pick up on any clues that might suggest to you why Sophia self-harms?
- Look at Sophia's Dad's reaction to his distressed daughter. Do you think his reaction helps Sophia?
- What could Sophia's Dad do differently to support Sophia?
- Looking at the scene, how many times does Sophia's Dad dismiss her feelings? How do you think this makes Sophia feel?



Sophia and her Dad

The Answers:

How do you think Sophia feels during the scene?

Sophia feels completely disempowered because no one is listening to her or acknowledging her concerns. Her Dad controls the conversation and she feels ganged up on by her teachers, parents and peers.

Can you pick up on any clues that might suggest to you why Sophia self-harms?

Sophia never actually admits self-harming in the scene nor does she explain why. It is clear that she feels she has no control and also that she feels that her peer group don't like her.

Look at Sophia's Dad's reaction to his distressed daughter. Do you think his reaction helps Sophia?

No. He doesn't appear to hear her concerns and dismisses her persistent requests to come home. He makes her feel like everyone has been talking about her behind her back.

What could Sophia's Dad do differently to support Sophia?

Sophia's Dad could listen to his daughter's worries, fears and anxieties and involve her in planning how to move forward.

Looking at the scene, how many times does Sophia's Dad dismiss her feelings? How do you think this makes Sophia feel?

Sophia feels completely helpless as no one is taking her concerns, worries or fears seriously. She feels very isolated.

Additional Insights

Matt and Hayley

For Matt

- Encourage Hayley to get help from a trusted adult
- Focus on Hayley's strengths and personality rather than focusing on the self-harming behaviour (TALK TO THE PERSON NOT THE ILLNESS)
- Focus on Hayley's feelings that are behind the behaviour, rather than just focusing on the behaviour.

For Hayley

- Try not to give specific details about her ways of self-harming as this can be triggering.

Tash and Yas

How to be a better friend:

- It is easy to get drawn into secrecy and you might think you are being a good friend, however, you are being a better friend by encouraging them to get help. Self-harm gets more addictive the longer it goes on.
- Guilt and shame will make your friend feel worse. Again, try talking to the person not the illness.
- It's ok to say you don't understand but you do want to help:
 - "I don't understand but I do want to help"
 - I want to help but I don't know how"
 - What can I do to help?"
 - Would you like me to come with you to talk to (parent/teacher etc)?"

Tash and Tash's Mum

Tash's Mum could try:

- Non-judgemental listening with lots of reflections, thereby making sure she is really listening to her daughter with open questions such as “Help me understand” whilst perhaps acknowledging some of Tash's childhood trauma.
- Affirmations - for example, noticing that Tash has the courage to talk about how she is feeling “my whole life I've felt like I'm numb, stuck in some kind of fog”.
- Offering Tash a hug and acknowledge her pain, and letting Tash calm down. “I can see you are really upset right now and that this isn't the right time to talk. You know I am always here for you if you want to talk.”
- Asking Tash if there is anything she could do differently that would be helpful.
- Finding out what professional help is available and helping Tash to access it when she is ready.

Sophia and her Dad

- Collaborative Care - young people who feel that everyone is working together and that they are at the centre of the care plan are much more likely to feel supported and hopeful for their recovery.
- Where possible it is so much better if the school, parents and anyone else in the care team can show that they are prepared to listen to the young person involved to establish the best approach.
- The young person should be given the opportunity to talk about what has gone wrong and what might make things better.
- Acknowledging the challenges of recovery and helping create a step by step approach is more likely to be successful than trying to force through a quick fix approach, or assuming the issue will pass or is only a phase.

Lesson 6 - Understanding our own self-worth

- Ask your class the question 'What is self-worth?'.
 - Ensure that everyone in the class understands what we mean by self-worth.
 - Ask your class to consider in groups what factors contribute to a sense of self-worth.
 - Get each group to feedback their thoughts to the rest of the class.
- Give your students the character cards and the Self-Worth Factors sheet. Ask your students to add any of their own factors to the list.
- Which of these factors do you think are the most important and why? (N.B. There is no right or wrong answer, but it could help both student and teacher to identify what is more important to your students)
- Assign each small group a character card from the play. Which factors do you think affect the character's sense of self-worth and why?
- Get each group to feedback their thoughts to the rest of the class.



PSHE Lessons

As educators, we can focus a lot on mental health problems and the disorders or risk-taking behaviour that can occur in young people. We tend not to focus as much on the factors that can protect young people from developing mental health problems.

Obviously genetic and environmental factors play a large part, but one of the key areas that can protect someone from developing mental health problems is their own sense of self-worth.

Everybody holds beliefs about themselves and there are a number of factors that contribute to these beliefs. The exercises in this lesson are designed to enable your students to use the play and its characters in a safe environment to start to think about their own sense of self-worth.

Self-worth Factors (feel free to add your own)

- Physical attractiveness
- Being part of a group
- Doing well in education
- Achieving your aims and ambitions
- Feeling safe
- Intelligence
- Relationship with parents
- Relationships with siblings
- Relationship with partner
- Relationships with friends
- Doing well at school
- Wealth
- Having a good job
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Sportiness
- Personal history
- Fitness
- Physical Health
- Faith
- Disability
- Race
- Popularity

Support Information

Below you will find a list of websites which we recommend. Please note Peer Productions are not connected to these sites and are therefore unable to update them or edit them.

www.selfharm.co.uk - This is a website developed by someone who used to self-harm. It provides lots of support and information including access to 'Alumina' which is a 6-week online programme to help you overcome self-harm. You can self-refer.

www.youngminds.org.uk - Young Minds are a charity which focus on young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Their site includes downloadable information leaflets on a range of topics, including self-harm, aimed at both young people and adults.

www.childline.org.uk - Childline provide support to young people. They are trained listeners who will never break confidentiality and will never judge. They are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. You can either call them on 0800 1111 or talk to them online at www.childline.org.uk

www.nshn.co.uk - National Self-harm Network is an online forum which aims to support and provide information for individuals who self-harm and their families.

www.kooth.com - Free, safe and anonymous support

www.riseabove.org.uk - Rise Above is an NHS developed young people's website designed to build emotional and physical resilience on a variety of issues.

Support Information

www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk - Self Injury Support (formerly Bristol Crisis Service for Women) is a national organisation that supports girls and women affected by self-injury or self-harm.

<https://stem4.org.uk/> - Supporting teenage mental health

www.orcha.co.uk - Orcha work with organisations to empower people to actively use & embrace digital health.

www.inourhands.com - Dr. Pooky Knightsmith's own website providing details of her accessible mental health training for schools, parents and students.

www.charliewaller.org - Charlie Waller Memorial Trust website with support and further information about depression and related issues including self-harm.

www.youtube.com/user/pookyknightsmith - Dr Pooky Knightsmith's YouTube channel with new videos weekly, has practical ideas on how to support young people and their mental health.

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/> - NHS have gathered a list of mental health apps which may be beneficial for any of your young people who are struggling with their mental health.

Bibliography

Essential Listening Skills for Busy School Staff

-by Nick Luxmoore

A Short Introduction to Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People Who Self-Harm

-by Carol Fitzpatrick

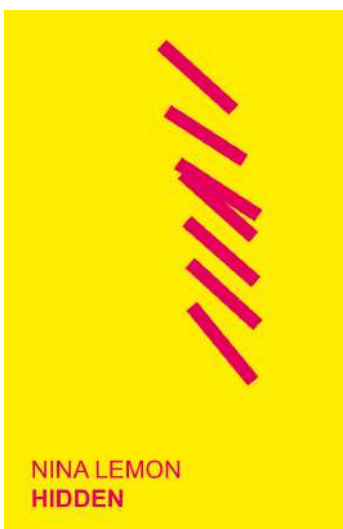
Banish Your Self-Esteem Thief: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Building Positive Self-esteem for Young People

- by Kate Collins-Donnelly

Self-Harm and Eating Disorders: A guide to whole school strategies and support

by Dr. Pooky Knightsmith

Plays by Nina Lemon available from [Salamander Street](#).



Peer Resources

Please click on the links below for more information about Peer Productions.

Peer Website - www.peerproductions.co.uk



Generation Girls Website - www.generationgirlsuk.com

Online resource for Autistic girls and girls with learning disabilities.



50 Days: Alone Together Website -

www.50daysalonetogether.com

Interactive teen mini-series exploring the mental health impact of social isolation during the pandemic.



Prospero Producers' Page - [Peer Productions](#)



YouTube Channel - [Peer Productions](#)



Instagram Channel - [Peer Productions](#)



Facebook Page - [@peerproductions](#)



Twitter - [@peerproductions](#)



LinkedIn - [Peer Productions](#)



Tiktok - [@peerproductions1](#)

