



Face Front Inclusive Theatre

52 Market Square, Edmonton Green, London N9 0TZ

Tel - 020 8350 3461 | Email - admin@facefront.org | www.facefront.org

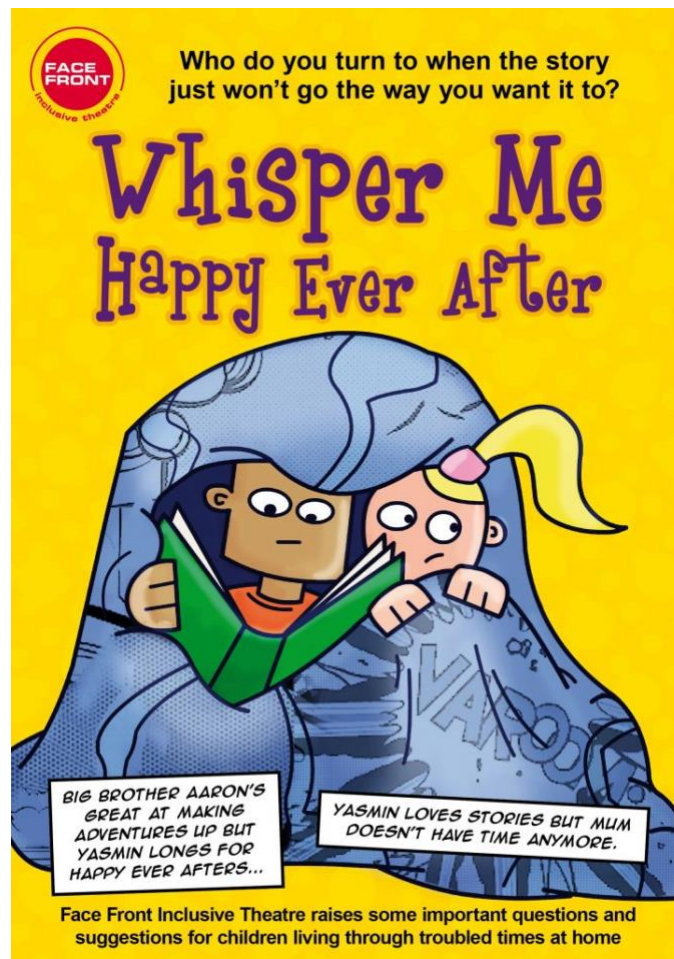
Edmonton Green Charity of the Year

Whisper Me Happy Ever After Tour 2024 Report

This report includes:

- Young People Evaluation
- Teacher Evaluation
- Peer and Partner Feedback
- Mentor Report

All photos, evaluations and emails referenced in this report are available on request.



Inclusion Through Theatre

Patrons: Mat Fraser | Josette Bushell-Mingo OBE | Rachel Denning | Doris Jiagge
Aditya Chakraborty | Judy Hepburn | Onjali Rauf MBE | Joseph Adelakun

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Young People Evaluation

From 26th February to 26th March 2024, *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* toured into **18 primary schools** to **1,829 children & adults** (teachers/TAs). We received **91 disclosures** in total, and of this number 35 disclosures were of concern or urgent.

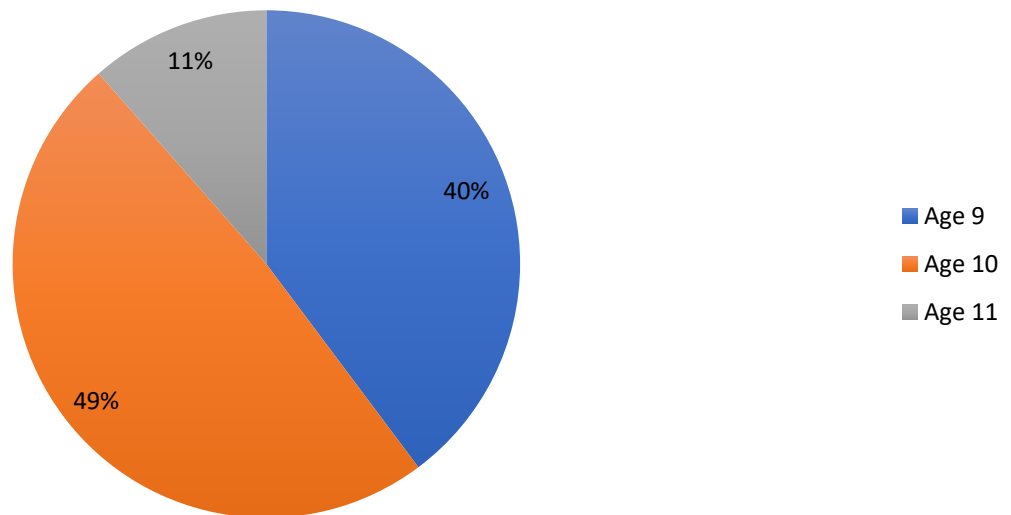
We toured into 3 Boroughs, including:

- **Camden** (9 schools, 787 audience)
- **Barnet** (6 schools, 643 audience)
- **Brent** (3 schools, 399 audience)

We asked many schools to complete post-show evaluations and the following report is taken from **361 respondents** (see Appendixes for scan of evaluation). Primary schools taking part in post-show evaluation include:

- Torriano
- St Johns
- Northside
- Millbrook Park
- Rhyl Community
- St Marys CE
- Primrose Hill
- Frith manor
- The Hyde
- Holy Trinity

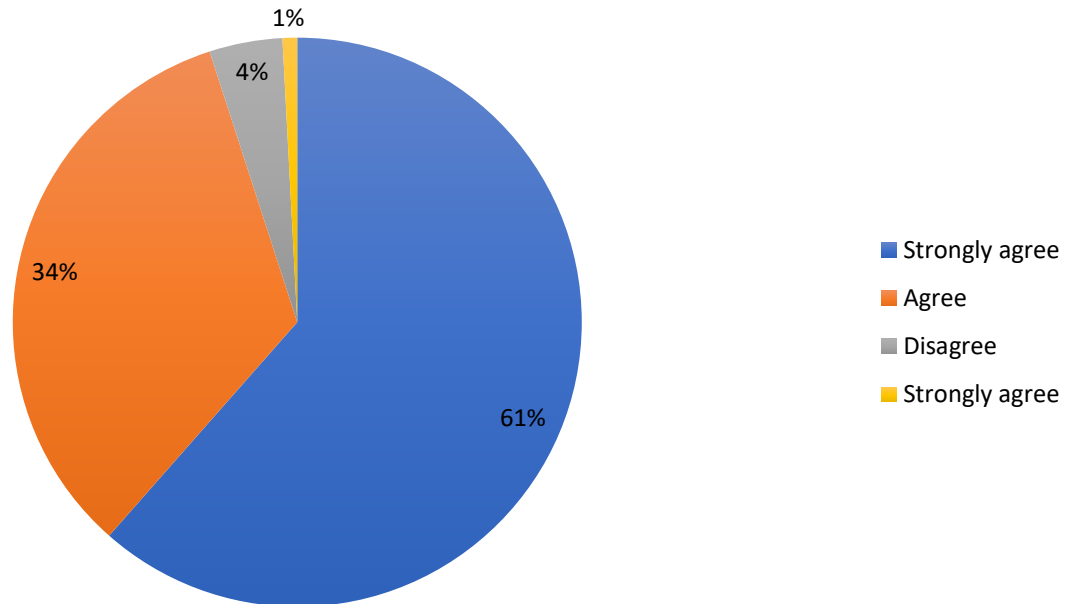
Age of respondents



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Do you think *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* is important for children to watch?



What have you learnt from *Whisper Me Happy Ever After*?

'I learnt that telling the truth is good.'

'When someone is getting abuse call 999.'

'I learnt that you should tell someone whatever problem you have.'

'You have to speak up and it's not right to be abusive.'

'I learnt that domestic violence is when a man is hurting a woman or a man is being hurt by a woman.'

'To always speak up and violence of any form is not ok. Don't bite yourself.'

What could have made *Whisper Me Happy Ever* better?

'More chances to be involved.'

'For it to be longer and more characters.'

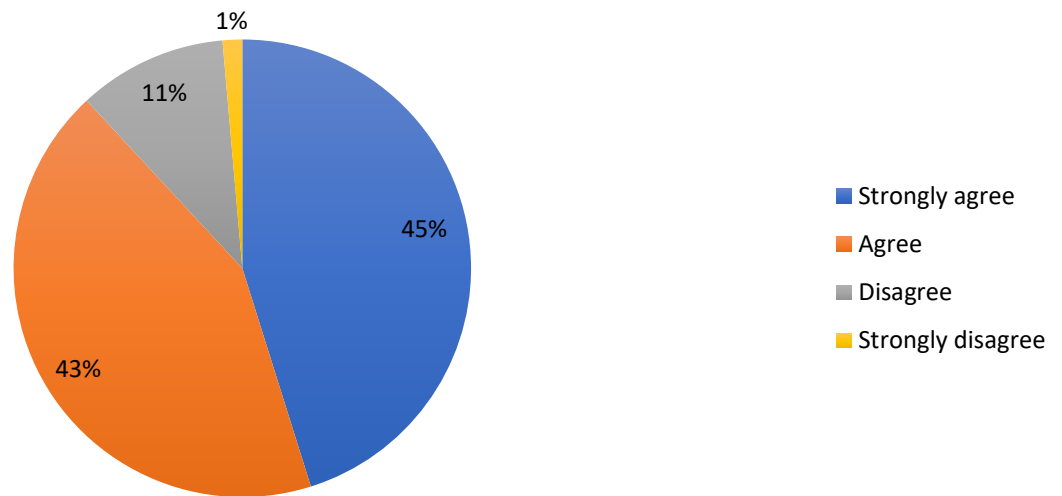
'I feel like they could have changed some sound [e]ffects and maybe they should have added more endings.'

'I can't think of anything because everything about the show is perfect! The only way to make it better is to keep up what you are doing!'

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Did you think *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* was right for your age?



What one thing will you remember from *Whisper Me Happy Ever After*?

'That it's bad to keep secrets when you really need help.'

'Abuse is not ok!'

'Call someone if you need help.'

'Be confident to tell someone about something.'

'When I'm worried or scared about something, I will always remember I can call Childline.'

'I should always speak to a trusted adult about my worries.'

'Call 999 for help or tell the teachers or a trusted adult including your mum, dad, uncle, auntie, friends or cousins.'



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Teacher Evaluation

From 26th February to 26th March 2024, *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* toured into **18 primary schools** to **1,829 children & adults** (teachers/TAs). We received **91 disclosures** in total, and of this number 35 disclosures were of concern or urgent. We toured into 3 Boroughs, including:

- **Camden** (9 schools, 787 audience)
- **Barnet** (6 schools, 643 audience)
- **Brent** (3 schools, 399 audience)

We asked many schools to complete post-show evaluations and the following report is taken from **17 respondents** (see Appendixes for scan of evaluation form).

Teachers/TAs taking part in post-show evaluation are from:

- Torriano
- St Johns
- Northside
- Millbrook Park
- Rhyl Community
- St Marys CE
- Primrose Hill
- Frith manor
- The Hyde
- Holy Trinity
- Kingsgate

Was the programme appropriate for this year group?

Yes: 16 (of 17)

No: 1

Comments:

'Covered a sensitive topic that children need to be aware of.'

'The ending was quite distressing for some of our more sensitive children but also a very important message to send!'

'Brilliant programme. Great performance and clear. Helpful for sensitive subject.'

'It was done sensitively and the explanations/discussions were well pitched.'

'It was hard to watch even as an adult but we all need to be informed.'

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How did your pupils react to the project?

'Engaged, focused, contributed, understood it was serious topic.'

'I felt they learnt so much and got a clear understanding.'

'They enjoyed it. Some found it a bit difficult to watch but they were all engaged.'

'They thought it was funny but shocking/sad that the dad was doing what he was doing.'

'Very positively, lots of discussion and engagement.'

They mostly understood the scenarios and that they had to also use their imagination in part. Engaged and behaved very thoughtfully. Lots of questions/discussion in the classroom afterwards.'

What do you think your pupils learnt from the project?

'The pupils learned the importance of speaking to safe adults about things that concern them and hopefully this will encourage them to be more open, generally.'

'The bottom line that violence is not ok and also what a child can do to stop it.'

'Hurting people who you love and care about is not ok and to not keep it to yourself, talk and ask for help.'

'Speaking to a trusted adult if they are ever worried or unsure about anything they see/experience.'

Is the teacher's pack useful to you?

'Yes – we can do follow up lessons, thank you.'

'It will be good to use for follow up sessions.'

'Very! Thank you.'

'... at first glance it looks useful.'

'It is useful and has lots of interesting things included.'

Would you recommend the project to other schools?

Yes: 17 (of 17)

No: 0

Comments:

'Absolutely – you deal with it in such a great way and make it interactive.'

'And we'd love to do it again.'

'Perfect for year 5 and 6.'

'It was excellent.'

'Most definitely.'

'Thank you! It was very valuable & excellently planned/presented.'

'They dealt with the sensitive subject in a clever way and they are great actors who were really engaging and made the experience memorable.'

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Do you have any other comments about the project or suggestions for improvement?

'Thank you for always being so fab and for delivering such important message to our children. Your performance really makes it clear to children and it's done with care and compassion. Thank you.' (The Hyde School, Year 5 teacher)

'The actors were really insightful, choosing children who were in need of the message the most.' (Year 5 Teacher, Torriano Primary)

'A great theatre production that focused on a particularly difficult topic. The children were engaged and loved the acting that was excellent. Children were able to tell us who they would talk to if they had problems.' (Year 5 teacher)



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Schools emailed post-visit feedback

'On behalf of the entire Barham Primary School community, I wanted to extend our deepest gratitude to you and the Face Front Inclusive Theatre team for the incredibly insightful and thought-provoking performance and forum on domestic abuse.'

The performance you delivered, portraying a family grappling with the complexities of domestic abuse, was both poignant and powerful. It managed to strike a delicate balance between humour and the stark realities of such a sensitive issue, leaving a lasting impact on our students.

Your workshop not only raised awareness about the issue of domestic abuse but also sparked important conversations among our pupils about the effects on the mental health of children who witness it. The interactive nature of the session encouraged active engagement, allowing students to reflect on what they could do if faced with a similar situation.

Moreover, the opportunity for our pupils to interact with the characters and explore alternative courses of action was invaluable. It provided them with practical insights and emotional support, empowering them to seek the help they need and deserve.

Following the workshop, our students had the opportunity to engage with your counsellor and team members to further discuss any personal issues raised by the play. This follow-up support was instrumental in ensuring that the impact of your workshop extended beyond the performance itself.

Once again, thank you for your dedication to raising awareness about such an important issue and for your commitment to empowering young minds. Your workshop has undoubtedly left a lasting impression on our school community, and we are immensely grateful for your partnership.

We look forward to the possibility of collaborating with you again in the future and I will definitely spread the word amongst my colleagues within my cluster.'

**(Natalie Dweh, Associate Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Leader,
Barham Primary School)**

'... you for yesterday. We had great feedback and later on in the day, we had a disclosure made to our school ELSA and we are not supporting the child and the family. Thank you once again.'

(Francesca Dilley, Assistant Head, Emmanuel Primary School)

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'Good morning, Thank you so much for the workshop and performance on Friday; we have had some fantastic feedback. I was wondering if it would be possible to book you in for next year?'

(Sarah Crouchley, Year 6 Class Teacher, Northside Primary School)

'Thanks to you and the team. It was great as always and the children really benefited from it. Hopefully see you again next year'

(Spencer Guy, Assistant Head, The Hyde School)

'The children really enjoyed the performances and it is such an important theme to cover. We will definitely be booking it again next year. I'll email in the autumn term to arrange dates. Thanks again.'

(Mike Ford, Y5 & 6 Assistant Head, Kingsgate Primary School)

'Thank you so much. The feedback from staff and pupils was very positive. Take care and see you next year.'

(Jayne Andres Deputy Headteacher, St. Alban's CE Primary School)



**Whisper Me
Happy Ever After**



DO YOU NEED TO TALK?

If you are experiencing violence at home and need help, support, information or advice.

FOR CHILDREN PLEASE CONTACT

- **CHILDLINE** 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
- **HIDEOUT** www.thehideout.org.uk
- **KOOTH** www.kooth.com

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Peer and Partner Feedback

'I am so pleased to have caught the last performance- which was superb, really. Please send my congrats to all the cast/team.

It is such a powerful piece of theatre and so important. The cast delivered it in an engaging, funny and very moving way. The students were enthralled and entertained but also clearly they found it thought provoking. I would have loved to be a fly on the wall in their class rooms later. I am sure, like me, the production will stay with them forever.

I watched many of the students throughout the performance They were all completely engaged. We could see from their contribution in the workshop how motivated and passionate they felt about it. I must admit that their maturity and 'acceptance' in receiving such a difficult topic was impressive. This can only be down to the delivery of the piece.

It should be part of every school curriculum.'

(Siwan Thomas-Gibson, Trustee)

'Thank you for the warm welcome at your performance yesterday. It was great to see you Ray and to meet you and the rest of the team, Sarah-Jane.

I was so impressed by the event on so many levels – the story, the acting, the invitations and encouragement for the children to engage and their willingness to step up and speak out. It was also good to see the cards and posters being shared as resources for those who may feel concerned or need support, as well as the opportunity to speak with the team at the end of the session.

This is such important work and so expertly delivered. Congratulations to you all and thanks again for inviting us to be there.'

(Julia Elmore, Member Development Officer, Young Barnet Foundation)

'I really enjoyed the show. I thought the set was fantastic I was watching the students faces as they entered the room... very hard show to watch it felt very tense all the young people were engaged they all laughed at the right bits and all were very silent during the tough moments.

... it's an important story and I wished it can tour to all primary schools and tweak it for secondary schools too.'

(Rona Namudu, Freelance Director)

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'Gosh I'm really impacted by seeing Whisper Me Happy Ever After yesterday, it had plenty of laughs and lightness, but was really raw and hard hitting where it needed to be. No doubt the young people will remember this for a long time as will I! The forum part was so powerful in this piece, more than ever, and I just think the work you're all doing is so important and life-changing. As ever, I'm loving the production values, the sound effects and music, the kids bedroom wall and my favourite prop I think was the giant book! And it goes without saying the quality of performances from the entire cast was stunning, I was truly immersed!'

(Joseph Adelakun, Trustee)

'I was very moved by the superb production of a really important piece of theatre. I'm sure that the students, like me, will be deeply influenced by it. And will remember it forever I should imagine. It made me very proud to be a small part of Face Front.'

'I have seen Whisper Me Happy Ever After a good few times now but the impact is never lessened. It is such a hard hitting and moving show. I felt the audience were safe in all your hands. They were empowered and given the tools to make changes if and where needed. Such a wonderful and vital piece of theatre. Well done to all involved.'

(Catrin Thomas, Trustee)



Whisper Me Digital: <https://www.whispermedigital.org.uk>

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Whisper Me Happy Ever After Spring 2024 –

Tour Mentor Report by Emily Bradly

Face Front Theatre's tour of Whisper Me Happy Ever After took place between the 26th of February to the 26th of March throughout 18 different primary schools in Barnet, Brent and Camden. The show was mainly performed for those in years 5 and 6 between the ages of 10 and 11. Whilst the performance focuses on the devastating topic of domestic violence, it incorporates humour, dance, and forum theatre to sensitively convey its message. The story follows the lives of three children and their experiences with domestic violence inside their homes. One in seven (14.2%) children and young people under the age of 18 will have lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood (Women's Aid 2024). We performed to 1829 children and therefore, according to the Women's Aid statistic, an average of 259 of those students could have been directly experiencing domestic abuse within their homes. Whilst some of these students were reflected in the disclosures we took, it's also important to acknowledge that the number of disclosures we received is not reflective of the only lasting effects the production had on the schools we visited. In two instances schools, reported a trickle-down effect where they noticed more disclosures being made during the weeks following our performance. Many of these cases brought to light issues the school was not aware of and, in other instances, the disclosures helped to add information to pre-existing safeguarding concerns.

Forum theatre, also known as 'theatre of the oppressed' aims to help audience members identify their internal oppressions and involve them in the story of the performance. In our show, the audience is allowed to share their impressions of the characters and volunteer in the production to manipulate its ending. The use of forum theatre allows the audience to participate in the production and gain a sense of control over the issues they're seeing. This is vital in conveying

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the message that gaining support is essential and gives the children the opportunity to practise speaking about these sensitive topics verbally. Our internal oppressions refer to a recognised understanding in which an oppressed group accepts the methods that are being taught to them, even when this conflicts with their best interest. This could explain why many domestic abuse victims report feeling as though their treatment was acceptable (BMC women's Health 2023) and why in the UK, less than 24% of domestic abuse crimes are actually reported (Criminal Injuries Helpline 2023). This victim blaming mentality is even more prevalent in children as their brains are still developing and they are learning to navigate their moral compasses. The large taboo surrounding domestic violence also perpetuates internal oppression as it stops others from comparing their experiences and inhibits them from recognising if their experience is unusual or unjust. By demonstrating the harm and destruction caused by domestic violence, we're teaching the children that this treatment is unfair, unacceptable and against the law.

In recent years, there has been a growing concern over the safeguarding of children within the British education system. Due to this, there's been a positive increase of staff amongst most schools safeguarding and wellbeing departments, as well as an increased awareness and training on how to facilitate and manage children's disclosures. However, tragically this understanding has not decreased the occurrence of domestic violence within homes or minimised the necessity of outside intervention. One teacher who recognised the company from her previous school asked us to perform at a new school she was working at due to the volume of safeguarding concerns they had. At this particular school, we had two urgent safeguarding concerns that required social services to be informed.

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Disclosures

'Spoken to' refers to discussions that haven't raised any issues, these may be questions surrounding domestic violence or specifically the events within the show. Examples include "What do I do if I know someone getting abused?" Or "Why didn't the characters get help sooner?" It's important we keep a record of this so the school is aware and can provide the child more information when necessary.

Spoken to: 56

Concern refers to issues that suggest the child's wellbeing may be at risk of harm and the issue needs further investigation by means of safeguarding. Examples could be a child worried about their sick parent or struggling with mental health issues such as depression or anxiety.

Concern: 27

Urgent disclosures refer to cases where the child is at immediate risk of harm. These cases are escalated immediately to the school's safeguarding team and referred to child services when necessary. An example of this is when a child is being beaten by a parent or guardian.

Urgent: 8

We took 8 urgent disclosures in total, the disclosures listed below mention mental health-related issues and detail violence committed against children and adults.

1. One child told us they had been self-harming ever since the death of their mother.
2. One child told us their father was hitting them on their back with his watch and the last time this happened was that same morning.
3. One child told us every day after school their older sibling would hit them and their mother around the face.

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4. One child told us they were being threatened with violence by their neighbour every day after school and they were anxious to go home.
5. One child told us they had been in a car accident with their dad whilst he was under the influence of alcohol and the police were not informed.
6. One child told us they were a young carer and that they weren't able to have any dinner when they got home from school or have enough time to bathe and complete their schoolwork.
7. One child told us they had been cutting their legs due bullying at school and anxiety over their parents fighting.
8. One child told us that their mother and their older sister were continuously being hit by their father for wearing revealing clothing and being late for school.

These poignant and harrowing accounts of neglect and abuse indicate ways in which children have been failed and let down by those who are meant to nurture and protect them. The schools safeguarding teams were alerted, and actions were taken to ensure these students were supported and provided with safety. Out of these 91 disclosures, 61% were considered spoken to, 30% were of concern and 9% were considered to be urgent and needed immediate attention because they suggested a student was being harmed. Schools were grateful and proactive in their responses and often displayed shock or relief that they had found key information regarding a student's wellbeing. The feedback from teachers and students was positive and often demonstrated large amounts of insight and gratitude for what they had learned.

Generally, the children were engaged in the performances, often shouting out, singing and dancing with the actors, and commenting on issues within the scenes. The journey from watching a happy family transform into a isolated, scared and unfulfilled version of themselves is felt

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throughout the audience. It's clear to see the children experience this as they go from singing and dancing to wincing and gasping. Many of them experience such a large sense of social justice they shout out "Just tell him!" and exhibit outraged gestures by throwing their hands forward. In some cases, audience members become emotional and leave the space, but they're encouraged to re-enter towards the end so they can see the family's lives change and improve. The change of the ending and the audience's participation in a song at the end of the play minimises the emotional impact on the children. Therefore, encouraging them to leave with a positive image in mind and showing them what can happen if families receive the correct support.

The current socio-political climate has also impacted the tour greatly, with over 700 thousand children living in poverty within London alone (poverty in London 2022). The current cost of living crisis has had a direct impact on families and young people, with an increase of almost 20% within household living costs between 2022 and 2024 (UK cost of living statistics 2024). According to young minds, Children from low-income families are twice as likely to have emotional disorders compared to those from high-income families. This was apparent in areas where there were higher rates of poverty such as Brent, a borough with one of the highest poverty rates in London (behind Tower hamlets) (Trust for London 2022). 34% of our disclosures were made in the borough of Brent and many of these were related to self-harm and domestic abuse. School is often a haven for young people. it provides them with food, safety, warmth and comfort. Therefore, our goal is to help maintain and develop schools' ability to support young people and assist them in growing and fulfilling happy lives.

Furthermore, the increased number of asylum seekers and refugees within our education system has led to an influx of young people experiencing and recovering from traumatic events. These

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children have been exposed to unimaginable trauma and within their families and communities. At one school we attended, only 25% of students spoke English as their first language and at this school we had a large number of students affected by the performance. Six students left the performance and each of them asked to speak to me and made disclosures. These children discussed past experiences, a few of which took place in war-stricken countries. Some of what they described included having flashbacks, feeling anxious, having nightmares, struggling to sleep and worrying about their future. Our interaction highlighted how these students were being affected by their past traumas and helped to establish a way in which they could gain support from their school. Working closely with their safeguarding team, we passed on the information obtained within the disclosures enabling these students access to counselling and intervention.

Additionally, the multiple conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine were seen to have an impact on students who reported feeling anxious. One student in particular was very affected by what they had seen in the news and stated they were scared and distracted by their fears of war. These devastating circumstances are directly impacting young people and affecting their ability to learn, to feel safe and to be happy. By creating an awareness of this impact, we can support young people and provide them with a space to express their emotions and develop ways to cope in this climate.

Our tour ended on the 26th of March 2024, but its impact is ongoing, the resources and education offered to students and teachers serves to guide them throughout their education and life experiences. Many schools have expressed that they're keen to invite Face Front back in the very near future to perform to other groups of students and continue to spread the vital and life-changing lessons surrounding domestic abuse.

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According to the UN convention and the European convention on the human rights of a child, every child has the right to a safe environment free from cruel treatment. All parties should take appropriate measures to ensure a child is protected from all forms of punishment and discrimination whilst ensuring the best interest of the child is of primary consideration. Unfortunately, many children within the UK are not able to access these basic human rights and live in homes overcome with fear, deprivation and suffering. It's our collective responsibility to provide ways for these children to access a life free from fear, emotional distress and pain so they can experience a joyful and fulfilling childhood. The Whisper Me Happy Ever After project is there to help our current systems provide this life for children. We assist and aid schools in highlighting safeguarding concerns, ensuring students are able to receive the correct support and access happy lives.

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Appendixes:



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Edmonton Green Charity of the Year

Safeguarding Cover Sheet for Disclosures for *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* (2024)

As agreed, with this cover sheet we are handing over all disclosures connected to our production. Face Front will not keep any of these disclosures. These are for your school to take appropriate action. However, we do ask for a photocopy/scan/photo of this sheet (two-sided) as a receipt.

Name of School [redacted] Date 04/03/24 Time 15:50

Number of **Urgent** disclosures: 1
(Urgent means disclosures when there is a report of a child or person being harmed e.g. reports of a situation in which a child, sibling or parent is being physically assaulted.)

Number of **Concerned** disclosures: 4
(Concerned means when there is a report of a child or person being at risk of being harmed or experiencing mental health issues – e.g. in a situation where alcohol or substance misuse is present.)

Number of **Spoken with** disclosures: 13
(Spoken with means when a child has discussed an issue that does not constitute harm or risk e.g. when a child has discussed problems keeping up with schoolwork.)

Names of School Safeguarding Team:

Rachel [redacted]
Sophie [redacted]

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Children's Feedback on *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* 2024

Your School... The Hyde Your Age ... 10

Do you think *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* is important for children to watch? (please circle)



Did you think *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* was right for your age? (please circle)



What have you learnt from *Whisper Me Happy Ever After*?

I learnt about do be safe and telling the trust about what happen

What could have made *Whisper Me Happy Ever After* better?

(For example: different music...)

Happy, terrified, sad and impressed

What one thing will you remember from *Whisper Me Happy Ever After*?

Dad and mom are fight at their bedroom. Brother and siter are wishing to have good family.

Any other comments? Please turn over...

Remember Childline can help on 0800 1111

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Whisper Me Happy Ever After Teacher Evaluation 2024

- Name of school and year group Frith Manor Primary School
- Was the programme appropriate for this year group? Yes No Please comment
- How did your pupils react to the project? They enjoyed it. They continued to talk about it after break. They thought the show was entertaining and had a good message.
- What do you think your pupils learnt from the project?
Who they can turn to if they need help.
And they can recognise the signs of abuse
- Is the teacher's pack useful to you?
It is useful and has lots of interesting things included.
- Would you like any further support or training following the project?
Nothing I can think of.
- Would you recommend the project to other schools? Yes No Please comment
They dealt with the sensitive subject in a clever way and they are great actors who were really engaging and made the experience memorable.
- Do you have any other comments about the project or suggestions for improvement?
Please turn over with comments. Thank you for your time and support.

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