

Building Self-Esteem Through Comedy

COMEDY & CONFIDENCE

Today we're looking back to happier times before the Coronavirus chaos hit. Back in February 2020 we spent a day with Anna (CEO of Comedy & Confidence) and a squad of budding comedians in Hamilton. Created by award winning comedian & entrepreneur Anna Devitt, Comedy & Confidence aims at providing educational training qualification through using the art of comedy. Comedy & Confidence offers the opportunity to learn how to use comedy techniques to help improve and build public speaking and presentation skills as well as using these newly learnt skills as a daily coping mechanism. The course is aimed at offering experience in public speaking and using comedy while learning transferable skills within communication and confidence techniques. Each young person keeps a track of their work and manages their way through a workbook; again all aimed at teaching life skills that are essential in their adult life. The course also covers META skills and goes through all the mental health benefits of laughter.



A DYW FLY ON THE WALL

Our DYW office is based in Hamilton where this particular Comedy & Confidence session takes place. Sitting working away we saw the young people coming and going through the weeks. We also heard the laughing and hilarity each week get progressively louder. We had to get in that room to see what was going down! So we arranged to sit in on a session with Anna to see what all the laughter was about. DYW helped source participants for the programme in Hamilton. Using our contacts in local schools we selected pupils who could benefit from this support and provided a space for the sessions to take place.

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I thought I would be a fly on the wall for the day, taking notes on the session and getting a feel for what the young people were getting out of their time with Comedy & Confidence. Oh how I was wrong!

Anna let me know that I would be taking part in the session and today just happened to be improv day. This turned out to be the best way to get a feel for the work and what it gives to the young people involved. It was clear to me that the young people on the session benefited from the work Anna provided. When we first entered the room some were quite shy and not talking much at all. I expected them to really struggle with getting up in front of the group to do their improv sessions. Again, how I was wrong! They all got up and burst into life telling their stories and going through their routines. A few weeks into the course at this point, it had obviously done wonders for their confidence.



SQA ACCREDITED

I caught up with Anna at our lunch break and she filled me in on the finer details of the course. The course runs as a 17 week programme and at the end the young people come up with an SQA/SCQF Qualification. The course is set at SCQF Level 5 & 6 which is equivalent to a National 5 and a Higher. This particular session was aimed at additional support needs and disengaged pupils and the aim was to teach them transferable skills and build their confidence and self esteem.

Working in partnership with DYW, the plan was to build that level of confidence so high that we could help find some employment experience for these young people after the course and even potentially get the young people in Modern Apprenticeships in the near future. Speaking to some of the chaperons on the day they waxed lyrical about the effect the Comedy & Confidence sessions had on the young people they work with, telling us they couldn't believe the difference in such a short period of time. From a person point of view, it was so great to see how positive everyone in the room was about the sessions and clear to me after only 1 day that it's extremely beneficial in raising self-esteem and confidence. I can say that from personal experience as I was well out my comfort zone taking part in the session but could feel the peer support in the room which can't not build the confidence of these young people which will stand them in good stead in the future.

