



Behind Closed Doors

A 'DIGITAL INTERACTIVE THEATRE' APPROACH
EXPLORING SAFEGUARDING
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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INTRODUCTION

The digital interactive theatre innovation was created with the intention of providing a mechanism for audiences to interact with a 'live' theatrical performance while bringing alive a service user/carer narrative. Through the use of a digital interactive theatre approach, service user narratives can be converted in to dramatic form and presented to an audience allowing the opportunity to:

- Analyze the complexities and motivation behind human behaviour
- Make judgements about the verbal construction and impact of language
- Have a democratic/active role in deciding the direction of the play without having to enter on to the stage

The digital interactive theatre approach fills a gap in tackling traditionally difficult to teach, contemporary health & social care issues in an engaging way which encourages audiences in critical dialogue and debate.

WHAT IS IT?

The construction of a digital interactive theatre includes the following main components:

1. Story: The construction of a truthful, contemporary service user/carer story is the bedrock of a successful digital interactive theatre. Commonly a story will draw upon real service user/carer narratives who have generously donated their stories and combined with existing health and social care research/evidence. The anonymized stories are carefully curated then crafted together so that the complexities of clinical practice can be emphasized to a health care professional audience.
2. The Pick-a-Path device: After creating an authentic story it is converted in to a 'pick-a-path' format. A parallel path method facilitates manageable options for audiences to choose from while also utilizing points of convergence in the story.
3. A 'live' theatrical approach: The theatre has long been utilized in human history to tell stories in dramatic form, assist with problem-solving, encourage catharsis and hold a mirror up to society without being individually accusatory. The live aspect of theatre allows the story to be 'shown', lending voice, observable action, heightened personal resonance and present connections to situations. Actors are recruited and led through the rehearsals. No other medium offers such an engaging experience while having the opportunity to observe and consider the challenges faced by a service user/carer
4. Electronic voting system: Prior to the commencement of the performance, the audience will be set-up with an electronic voting system (e.g. Meeto: <https://www.meetoo.com/>). The electronic voting system assists the 'Pick-a-Path' device by allowing the audience to

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decide the direction of the play. At pre-selected points during the live theatrical performance the actors will pause and turn to the audience to ask for assistance in making a decision. The audience will be presented with options via the electronic voting system and will democratically vote on the direction they would like to see enacted. The vote will be decided by the 'will of the majority' and the rehearsed actors will immediately show the result of the decision.

5. Facilitated discussion: At the conclusion of the play the actors engage in a facilitated discussion with the audience exploring the insights gained from the depiction of the story.

HOW WOULD IT WORK?

'Behind closed doors' features four actors presenting the digital interactive theatre experience. A working, stable Wi-Fi signal for the audience would be desirable to facilitate the use of the electronic voting system. Audience members would download the free 'Meetoo' app on to their devices prior to the commencement of the session.

The audience can expect to watch a live theatrical presentation with the invitation to engage in pick-a-path moments using the electronic voting system. The duration of the session would be exactly 1 hour – this would include the delivery of the play and facilitated discussion.

The theme for this presentation is safeguarding. The titled digital interactive theatre 'Behind closed doors' follows the daily activity of Jane, a student nurse who is confronted with a myriad of challenging situations. Jane will be looking to the audience to help her navigate her through the complexities she faces. As health and social care workers...do we really know what happens behind closed doors?

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE ATTEND?

Digital interactive theatre is a truly innovative way of presenting complex situations to audiences:

- Health and social care professionals will find the engagement in the digital interactive theatre as informative, emotive and 'non-confrontational' (we do the acting so they do not have to). The immersive qualities provided by a live performance is able to be analyzed from the objective safety of their own chairs.
- Educators will be interested to explore, adapt, evolve and adopt a digital interactive theatre approach in their own institution.
- Countries around the world interpret 'safeguarding' in a variety of ways. This approach opens up the opportunity for an inter-cultural exchange and debate about the diverse approaches to safeguarding (Law, societal influences etc.)