

Subject: FW: Explore - feedback
From: "Louisa Stafford" <louisawstafford@gmail.com>
Date: 19/06/2015 10:04
To: "Rex Chester" <rex.chester@theexploreeexperience.co.uk>

From: Gordon Dale [mailto:gdale@Bedales.org.uk] [Gordon Dale is Head of Sixth Form at Bedales]
Sent: 19 June 2015 09:24
To: 'Louisa Stafford'
Subject: RE: Explore - feedback

Hi Louisa,

Thank you so much for this. Reading through the feedback it is very clear that you have provoked an intense amount of thought and reflection. I have every intention of inviting you back in the coming academic year.

Regards,
Gordon

From: Louisa Stafford [mailto:louisawstafford@gmail.com]
Sent: 19 June 2015 09:16
To: Gordon Dale
Subject: Explore - feedback

Dear Gordon,

Here is a summary of the feedback from our time with you last Friday. It appears to have been a rewarding experience for your students and we hope you will invite us back.

Kind regards,

Louisa
Explore (Hampshire)

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Subject: Explore at Bedales School
From: "Louisa Stafford" <louisawstafford@gmail.com>
Date: 19/06/2015 08:48
Attachments: Bedales Rec&Eval 12 June 2015.doc (47.5 KB)
CC: <Fordsatfareham@aol.com>
To: "Rex Chester" <rex.chester@theexploreexperience.co.uk>, <crispin.drummond@tiscali.co.uk>, "Jonathan Portal" <jonathanp@jpdirectors.com>, <shannonsaise@hotmail.com>, <edmundadamus@rcdow.org.uk>, <julian.benson@btinternet.com>, <farleighhouse@btconnect.com>, <david@davidfellowes.mail1.co.uk>, <warren.taylor@rsmtenon.com>, <jill.isaac@btconnect.com>, <gprnallam1@gmail.com>, "HEATHER OLIVER" <heatheroliver@btinternet.com>, <anna.mccormick.explore@gmail.com>, <marymcghee@rcdow.org.uk>, <andybeard2@gmail.com>, <ianharknessexplore@gmail.com>, "B S" <bec-explore@outlook.com>, "Benoit Diers" <benoit.diers@gmail.com>, <michaelajhyde@gmail.com>, <jmsr.explore@gmail.com>, "Gracernote Silver" <rosie@gracenamesilver.co.uk>, <milana.grainger@hotmail.co.uk>, <shaneroche007@gmail.com>, "Jane Deegan" <janefdeegan@gmail.com>, <steubenville97@yahoo.com>

Dear All,

Last Friday Explore Hants ran a conference at Bedales School in Petersfield.

We thought you would be interested to read the very positive feedback. And below is a piece that was written by two of the students for their weekly newspaper following our visit.

80,000

"On Friday 12th, 6.1 were visited by the charity Explore. Explore work to educate young adults on the reality of marriage and relationships. They organise a range of sessions for over 80,000 people our age in 180 schools and 18 prisons. Explore believe that it is important to get away from the misrepresentation of relationships created by the media and other external sources accessible to young people today. We were split into four groups and were treated to two couples who we each spent 45 minutes with. During this time we able to create a dialogue with the couples through asking questions and listening to their responses. What was particularly striking to us was their openness when discussing their individual relationships. They made us aware of the sometimes demanding reality of being in a committed relationship, as well as how special it can be. The experience was incredibly unique as it enabled us to ask personal and sometimes difficult questions to people whom we had no connection to. This is something that Explore recognises as a huge benefit of their charity furthering the honesty of both the couples and the students. This experience was not only unique but insightful, as it provided an honest and refreshing perspective into the reality, including the ups and downs of relationships."

Kind regards,

Louisa Stafford
Explore (Hampshire)

22/06/2015 17:07

Record and Evaluation

Record of Event:

School: Bedales School
School Contact: Gordon Dale
Date: 12 June 2015
Event: Input into Relationships Education
Student Yr. Group: Lower Sixth Form
Mixed: Boys & Girls
Adviser-Coaches: Chris Ford Louisa Stafford
 Peter Batsford Jan Penistan
Couples: Jeremy & Sarah Culverhouse Lundy & Kit Fields
 Richard & Judith Willcox Pete & Jan Walley

Evaluation:

Number of Evaluation Forms Returned: 75

Ratings:

Excellent: 19
Very good: 34
Good: 20
Average: 2
Poor:

Excellent, Very Good and Good totalled: 73 (97.3%)

Evaluation examples

What discoveries or surprises have you experienced today?

- It helped me understand my parents' relationship a little more – it's not perhaps the most healthy, although they are married.
- I have discovered not to be so naïve about marriage, marriages can happen because of many different reasons.
- The rules and boundaries they mutually put into their relationship. The work they put into it and constant self-evaluation.
- You can still find another one you really love after losing someone you really love. I thought people may lose the ability to love but that actually makes you know better how to love someone.
- That when you fall out with your partner – keep talking. Marriage is extended best friendship.
- Both marriages are happy but at the same time very different. What surprises me is that the level of happiness can be varied even when they both love each other.

- The couples surprised me by saying they were actively religious (especially the first couple) – as they struck me as a liberal and untraditional pair.
- Some of the reasons why people have long marriages; the importance of trust.
- How important communication really is. How rough life can be, yet how resilient marriages can be.
- It was really interesting hearing about their relationships – they're very different to my family which I would expect, so it provided a different perspective.
- The difference between 'media' relationships and 'normal' relationships. How married couples act around each other.
- That the key elements of a marriage shift over the years, different things become important.
- Their openness/honesty – they were willing to share a lot. (x 9 similar comments)
- How optimistically people viewed their marriages and talking about illness realistically.
- How easy couples find it to resolve differences of opinion.
- It quite surprised me when people can talk about their private lives. And it's really helped me to listen to what experiences they had.
- Long term relationships can work
- How couples deal with each other during rough times.
- That 'perfect' or 'dream' couples actually exist.
- Marriage is a lot of work but worth it. (x 3 similar comments)
- Sex is good but not the most important thing.
- Good sex life after years of marriage. (x 6 similar comments)
- Extent of loyalty.
- Marital techniques e.g. time out.
- Arguments – helpful.

Were there any disappointments?

- No, it was very interesting / it was great / loved the talk.
- No, I got to see two very different marriages and was very fascinated by both of them, and to see how two people grow to accept the other person.
- Not necessarily, apart perhaps that all their marriages seemed almost too idealistic.
- Not really. Would maybe have been interesting to have had some more conversation about when to not keep trying to make it work (especially as there are so many semi-abusive/unhealthy relationships).
- There were some areas where one felt impertinent to explore with strangers: infidelity, sex.
- The fact that both couples were white, British, heterosexual – and therefore little diversity. (x 3 similar comments)
- Both married religiously – atheistic perspective?
- That we didn't dig enough.
- Not necessarily relatable.

(The rest of the students answered 'No' to this question)

What difference might today's session make to you?

- Seeing friendship within a marriage as the most important aspect.

- Be more hopeful and aware of the possibility of spontaneity in long term relationship.
- I understand there will be rough patches in marriage.
- Encouraging that long-term relationships can last despite conflict and unfortunate events.
- To bear in mind marriage is about more than a few things. Like sacrifice and acceptance and tolerance etc.
- More aware of the intricacies of a relationship.
- A wider view on different marriages that are not my own parents – an insight into another person's marriage that is completely different (walk of life, problems etc.).
- My parents divorced when I was young so it was interesting to see how relationships can be maintained/resolved.
- Learnt about strategies to keep a relationship together.
- Looking at my parents differently.
- Made me re-assess some of my beliefs towards marriage.
- It might make me aware of how to maintain a healthy relationship.
- Having a more positive attitude about dealing with relationships.
- Look on having kids in a more positive way.
- To make a relationship work and understand if it is unhealthy.
- Analysing why I might be with a particular person before making a real commitment.
- Understanding of the foundations of long-term relationships.
- How to make a failing relationship work.
- How to deal with arguments.
- Communication is key.
- There are a lot of things I didn't realise before the talk.
- To think more about the personality of the other person.
- Knowledge/advice for the future. (x 4 similar comments)
- Make me respect different married lives.
- Be more open/considerate towards people.
- Think about what marriage really means.
- Want to get married / More likely to get married / Feel better about marriage / Maybe think about marriage more / More likely to enter a long term relationship/marriage / Take marriage more seriously.
- It has changed the way I might approach relationships.
- Not sure, but it was definitely useful.

What questions/issues do you feel that you still face?

- Finding the right partner. How do you know? (x 4 similar comments)
- Whether I personally could ever put so much trust in someone's hands and actually marry. The gamble of ending up with a successful marriage is a 50/50 chance and wouldn't want to commit.
- Whether marriage/having kids is really right for me.
- What if you don't want to go through the process of marriage?
- Reconciling irreligiosity with institution of marriage.
- When is the right time to marry?
- If marrying is better than partnership.

- Parental acceptance.
 - Finding someone to love me.
 - How to maintain attraction.
 - Is marriage the beginning or end of life?
 - Financial difficulties. (x 3)
 - Shyness. Reluctance. Approval from family. True/vibrant happiness.
 - Being alone.
 - Religion.
 - About bipolar disorder because my dad has bipolar and my parents are still married but things seem a little hard for them and I want to know if my mother would be able to cope with him.
 - Not many. It was very useful.
- (The rest of the students answered 'None', 'Not sure' etc. to this question)

Other comments

- The talks shattered many of the false sit-com images of marriage. Gave more positive, real image.
- Open, easy-to-talk-to couples. Thoroughly interesting. THANK YOU SO MUCH.
 - Thank you – unexpectedly useful.
 - Thank you very much. It was extremely eye opening.
 - Thank you – this was very helpful / very interesting / very inspiring (x 4)
 - Very easy-going couples. Being given topics might have helped avoid awkward silences.
 - Both couples were lovely to talk to and open to answer any questions. (x 3 similar comments)
- I did not feel there was enough diversity (x 5) however I did enjoy the session.
- I still don't believe in marriage. However, it was very interesting listening to the couples' stories.
- Make sessions longer; had more questions towards the end.
- Perhaps have a brief introduction.

Feedback from a couple: (Rating: Excellent)

In answer to: "What was good about the conference / most significant experience?":

'The students engaged in more of a dialogue, testing what we had said earlier, and probing more deeply with very intelligent questions. [These] questions were more adult and thoughtful than we have sometimes experienced - e.g.

- *Which should receive priority, development of yourself as an individual, or the growth of you as a couple?*
- *How important is monogamy?*

As such, we had to stretch ourselves more, and I think everyone got more out of it, including us! We thoroughly enjoyed it.'
