

EXPLORE

Setting Up a Local Group

AIM

To deliver Explore's methodology in the realm of relationship education to young people in schools, prisons, clubs etc.

PLAN

1. Introduce Explore and its methodology to local schools and persuade the school management that it will make a valuable and practical contribution to their work in the field of RE/PSHE and Citizenship.
2. The group will need to recruit married couples who are willing to share their actual experience of being married with groups of students from within the school in response to a dialogue initiated and led by the young people themselves. Such couples will need to be available within normal school hours.
3. The group will have to recruit people to be trained as Adviser Coaches. Their role is to support the couples and coach (but not lead) the young people to gain the most value out of the dialogue. Explore will arrange for the training of the Adviser Coaches.
4. A modest amount of money will have to be raised to fund the direct costs of the group's work in the local area. However, in the first instance they could be supported from central funds.

REQUIREMENTS

To be successful, a local group would consist of some or all of the following:

- Chairman/Leader/'Mover and Shaker' - to provide leadership, enthusiasm and commitment.
- A Local Development Officer – to establish links with schools, couples and adviser coaches.
- Secretary
- Fund Raiser
- Adviser Coaches
- A couples' recruiter – perhaps a task for a passionate, enthusiastic couple.

NB

1. More than one of these roles could be filled by the same person i.e. Local Development Officer and Secretary.
2. Most positions are voluntary but the Local Development Officer could be a paid employee.

Section A: Volunteering with Explore

A.1 The local Explore Group

Volunteers in a particular community belong to a local Explore group, sometimes referred to as the Local Community Action Group (LCAG). The LCAG is the unit in Explore's organization that coordinates and supports volunteers and arranges events with schools and other places where young people benefit from its work.

The local Explore Group In order to promote Explore's work and create its presence in the community, a local Group (LCAG) needs a Chairman or Woman and several individuals willing to bring Explore to the community through their associations, Churches and other places. These are the main sources likely to produce volunteers for the roles required at events, couples and Adviser-coaches (see next page).

In order to be in a position to approach a number of schools in the same school year, a Group needs a substantial number of volunteers. For example, to deliver a Half Day Conference* to a Year group of 100 students, a team of 5 Couples and 5 Adviser-coaches are needed. Invariably, 'events happen', someone is prevented from coming on the day, and a replacement is needed at short notice.

*The Half Day Conference and other forms of Explore's work are explained in the section Activities

Whether Explore thrives or not depends on the energy and cooperation of members of the LCAG. It is possible for members to contribute to the life of the local Group, help to promote the work, and not be involved in the events at schools if they do not wish to be.

Taking part in the events needs volunteers as married Couples, and individuals who are group-workers, called Adviser-coaches. These roles are described on the next page.

A.2 Married Couples and Adviser-coaches

Young people have the unparalleled opportunity at an event in opening up the actual experience of Couples who are in a long-term relationship. The young people explore marriage; they use their own thoughts and feelings to ask Couples about all aspects of married life. The Adviser-coach helps the group to consider what they have seen and heard, assess what they have understood and then say what it means to them for their own lives.

Being a married Couple in a group with young people. There is a structure in which Couples meet young people, a group set up with the Adviser-coach which includes a specific aim and defined limitations to guide the exploring. The dialogue is the question and response session between the young people and the Couple (one Couple at a time – not a panel). The dialogue is spontaneous, led by the young people, but made safe for the Couple who are able ‘to pass’ on any question, and by the young people agreeing to ‘rules’, including confidentiality, which are appropriate to small group work. Couples provide the core material in the dialogue with which the young people can work. The next section, Activities, illustrates where the dialogue is located within the whole event.

Being an Adviser-coach The Adviser-coach assists the young people to settle as a group, to be prepared to open the dialogue with each couple, and enables the group to reflect on what they have heard and seen, and then to assess and express what they have gained from the whole experience.

The Adviser-coach enables a process of inquiry and discovery of experience which corresponds to a classical form of adult learning – see the section on the learning method. The primary purpose of the role is to enable the young people to engage in this learning process which respects their growing ability to make life-decisions for themselves.

You will find more about each of these roles, and preparing for them, in the Appendices 1 and 2
