

Print, Prose, Poetry: 3

I Was Angry - A True Story

This is most suitable for use within a PSHEE and Citizenship context.

For your information, here is the mapping for this activity to the PSHEE and Citizenship National Curriculums:

PSHEE	Developing a healthy, safer, lifestyle	2g
	Developing good relationships and respecting the difference between people	3a, b, j, k
	Knowledge, skills and understanding	4a, c, f, g, h
Citizenship	Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens	1a, g
	Developing skills of enquiry and communication	2a, c
	Developing skills of participation and responsible action	3

- Divide your group into smaller groups of about four.
- Read or show (or both) the statements below to your whole group.

This is a statement made by a 16 year old youth when arrested by the police:

My mother started to argue with me, she threw my tea on the floor and I went mad and picked a pole up and smashed the door. I was angry.

Ensure that your group understand this is a true case. With your whole group create a name for the young man and for his mother (this makes discussion easier.) Stress to them that you are 'inventing' a name to 'anonymise' the case.

Ask your young people, in their small groups, to build up the circumstances that led up to this young man being arrested.

Accept, and challenge and accept their ideas to build up the facts of the case and then fill out the bare details. Compare these with the real facts below (they are in semi-note form, taken from the case file):

Young person, male, 16 years returned to home address in a mood. He was verbally aggressive to mother and other younger siblings in the house. An argument ensued between mother and son and heated exchange made.

Son then picked up a metal tent pole left in the hall and smashed the front door window pane in anger. He then left the house and was later arrested by the police after his mother made a complaint.

Once you've established a background for the case, ask your students, in their small groups to further imagine the circumstances. These will include:

- Why was the lad in a mood?
- Do we think the mother threw his tea on the floor - if so why did she?
- Was the lad justified in his anger? Is his response justified?

Share your students' thoughts on these matters. Then follow up with another series of questions:

- How might the lad have dealt with his anger or mood before coming home or while at home?
- The mother and son clearly had an argument. Arguments happen . . . but how could it have been resolved or defused?

The lad is arrested and charged. He will have a criminal record. Ask your students to think about feelings.

- How do they feel about the mother reporting the incident and being responsible for her son's arrest? (Try to ensure they think fully about her circumstances, to put themselves in her shoes.)
- Ask the students to put themselves in the lad's and the mother's shoes after the arrest and charge. How do they feel at that time?

Sum up the session. With the whole group focus on:

- The cause of the criminal damage
- Who pays for the repair
- The effects on the people (mother and son)
- How this situation might have been avoided.

Ask your young people if they can apply any of this to their own lives. (They may prefer to share this in their small groups first and feed back.)