

Play 2: *Success and Failure* Support Notes

Issues Covered

Peer pressure, damage to shops, effect of alcohol, consequences of damage.

Plot

Shane and Jake talk about a Detective Inspector that's looking for Jake - he's been tagging garages. At the point at which they decide on a plan of action we realise these two lads are performing a script as part of a BTEC module. Their teacher is full of praise for them.

The boys go home but their mothers are unable to give them the attention they need. To overcome their disappointment they go to a local off-licence to buy beer. The shop-owner refuses to serve them and a row breaks out.

The two boys buy drink elsewhere; later they decide to go back to the off-licence to take revenge. They damage a row of shops.

Suggestions for Points to Notice and Follow-up

- What is the result of the boys' damaging of the shop fronts?
 - To the boys (we hear the police coming) - they may be cautioned or warned or have some other penalty e.g. ASBO. The shopkeeper may suspect it was them and may tell their parents, or bar them from the shop. They may be barred from other shops nearby.
 - To the wider neighbourhood - including the shopping precinct? How unattractive and depressing it looks when damaged - worse for everyone.
 - Other young people may only be allowed in two at a time.
- When did the boys decide to take action against the shop-keeper, what else fuelled the action? Not at the moment it happened - later. So less through anger, more from revenge. Alcohol was a contributor.
- Everybody is likely to lose out one way or another as a result of the boys' damaging behaviour; how could the situation have been defused? (Keep in mind the decision to act on the insulting language against Shane's mother is not taken in the off-licence but later, calmly while talking.) If they had not taken or drunk the alcohol; if they had stopped to think of the consequences; if they had decided 'it's just words' and ignored it...

In addition

- What things bring the boys together? Both have 'issues' with their mothers; would prefer more attention; can help each other out.

Filmed Audience Response

Notice how the young people discuss the place alcohol plays in this - 'it gives him confidence' they say. They become engaged in the relationships within the play. They can see that the relationships are crucial to the story as it unfolds.

The point here is that no one is really 'to blame', or looking at it another way, everyone is to blame in some way or another. Young people in the audience often asked Shane: 'Is your mum depressed?'

Role-play, Replay Possibilities

Role playing can help young people examine rights and wrongs within a powerful emotional context.

- The decision to go back to the shops is made by the boys while they're drinking alcohol; replay this scene while they're not drinking to explore different outcomes and devise strategies.
- The boys go back to the off-licence and it's still open.
- The boys run off (as at the end of the play) and the police catch them; the boys are taken to the police station - what happens?