

Using our voice to have difficult conversations

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Image description:

A black and white line drawn comic over four pages. The style is loose, capturing expressions often in close-ups of faces. Text in boxes is the voice of the research project, accompanied by speech bubbles for the voice of the participating artists.

Page 1. There are four panels across the page. A text box reads: Sometimes in order to get what we need we have to make our voice heard. This can involve having conversations that might be difficult) or where we feel that we're not being listened to.

At the top of the page two panels show an exchange between a man and a woman.
"Sometimes it feels like that whatever we say we are hitting a brick wall."
"Other times what we say might appear to go in one ear and out another."

A text box reads: We used forum theatre to roleplay what it feels like to assert our voice in conversation.

A panel across the bottom of the page shows two figures reading from a forum theatre script. A young woman asks, "I would like to have more independence in my life."
A man playing her father replies, "We're not talking about that again."
A facilitator looking on replies, "What might we say in response?"

At the top of page 2 a text box reads: We all agreed that there were things in our lives that we wanted to change. Talking about them would help, but sometimes this was tricky.

In the panel on the left a man states, "Being grounded at the age of 26 isn't so great."
A woman adds, "I want to be more independent, go out late, do my own cooking, see my friends. When I stuck at home I'm stuck."

At the bottom of the page a man is asserting confidently, "My auntie weren't too pleased in my moving out. But it was my decision. I'm happy where I'm living now and she's happy too."

At the top of page 3 a text box reads: If we are not happy about something, then it is important to think about how we can use our voice to start making changes. Four panels are spread across the page. In the first serious looking young woman states, "I struggle to have difficult conversations because I don't like conflict. I know there's going to be an argument so I just walk away."
A woman facing away from the reader adds, "Other people might feel as awkward talking about it as you."
In the bottom left panel a man states, "If you're not going to listen what's the point?"

In the final panel on this page a group of people around the table are writing, question marks above their heads. A text box reads: In groups we worked on different ways we might start asking for change, thinking about situations at home and at work. Some suggestions were polite, some very direct.

The final page is a single drawing of nine people all facing the viewer as a massed group. Several of them are holding signs and a text box above their heads reads: We turned these ideas into placards.

In the centre a man's placard reads in capital letters: Stop it!

To his left a woman holds a sign reading, "I know it is a big step. Let's take it one step at a time."

Other placards read:

"Back off and sort your own life out"

"What can I do to help you trust me"

"Can we make a plan?"

A shy looking woman holds a sign reading "Can we arrange a time to talk?"

A man holds one reading "Back off and sort your own life out!"