

INTRODUCTION

A Class Of Your Own is the fourth in our series of therapeutic theatre shows for young audiences. We created the show alongside young people with lived experience of exclusion from mainstream school and attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Their experiences, ideas and creativity have been central to shaping Bailey's story.

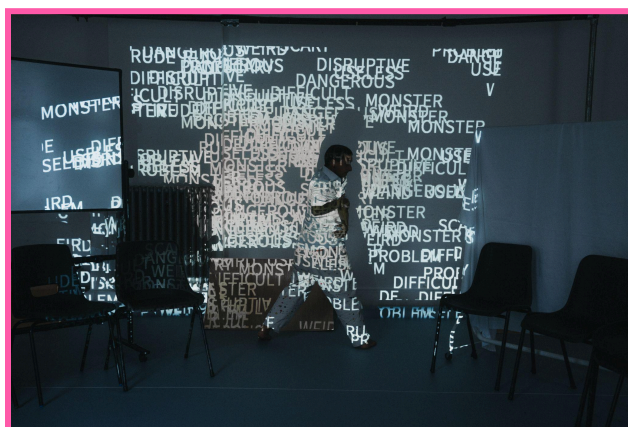


At the heart of the play is a question: **what does it feel like to be misunderstood?**

Watching the show might leave you with thoughts, questions or feelings of your own. You might recognise something Bailey goes through, relate it to your own experiences or those of someone you know, or simply find something you want to talk about.

That's why we've created this resource pack. It's a chance for young people and adults to explore the ideas in the play together — through conversation, reflection, mindfulness and creative activities.

There are no 'right' answers. You can choose the activities that feel useful to you and use them as a starting point for listening, talking, playing and thinking together.



KEY WORDS

There might be some words in the play or this pack that you haven't heard before. Here's what we mean when we use them.

Mainstream School

The type of school that most children go to.

Exclusion

When a child is told they cannot come to school for a period of time because of something that has happened.

PRU – Pupil Referral Unit

A different kind of school that can support children who aren't attending their usual school. PRUs often have smaller groups and can offer different kinds of support.

Transition

Moving from one place or stage to another, like moving from primary school to secondary school. Change can bring lots of different feelings.

Emotional Regulation

Noticing what you are feeling and finding ways to manage those feelings. This could mean talking to someone, moving your body, taking some space or doing something that helps you feel calmer.

Emotional Dysregulation

This is a phrase for when your feelings get so big that they become difficult to manage. Bailey describes it like being a bottle of Coca-Cola that has been shaken and shaken and shaken. The pressure keeps building up inside until it feels like you might burst.

Everyone can have big feelings. Learning to notice when your pressure is building — and finding things that help you release it safely — can make those feelings easier to manage.

'Crashing Out'

A phrase sometimes used by young people when someone feels completely overwhelmed and their emotions come bursting out. It can help to think about what might have happened *before* someone reached this point.

Friendship

A relationship where people can have fun together, care about each other, listen and build trust. Friends can disagree and have difficult feelings too.

KEY WORDS

Rejection

When you feel left out, unwanted or not accepted. Being rejected can hurt and can bring up some big feelings.

Blackmail

When someone threatens you or pressures you to do something you don't want to do. If this happens to you, it is important to tell an adult you trust.

Right and Wrong

How we think about whether a choice or action is okay. Sometimes it is easy to tell what is right or wrong. Other times, a situation can be more complicated.

Needs

Things we need to help us feel safe and well. These include food, water, sleep and safety, but also things like friendship, care, belonging and feeling listened to.

Levels

A way of noticing how big our feelings are becoming. We might go from feeling calm, to uncomfortable, to really overwhelmed. Spotting this change can help us work out what we need.

Stories and Play

Stories, games and play can help us explore feelings and experiences. Sometimes it can be easier to explore something through a character or game than to talk about ourselves directly.

Squishie

A soft, squishy object that you can squeeze in your hands. Some people find squeezing, fiddling with or holding something helps them feel calmer, concentrate or manage big feelings.

Macaroni Cheese

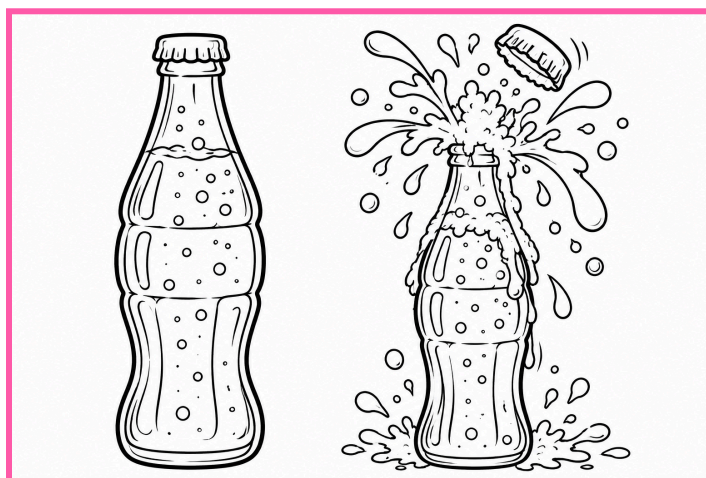
Yes, the food! In *A Class Of Your Own*, macaroni cheese is more than just something to eat. Think about when it comes up in Bailey's story. **Why do you think it might be important to them?** Sometimes familiar foods, objects, people or routines can help us feel safe and comfortable.

ACTIVITIES

Here is an excerpt from the play:

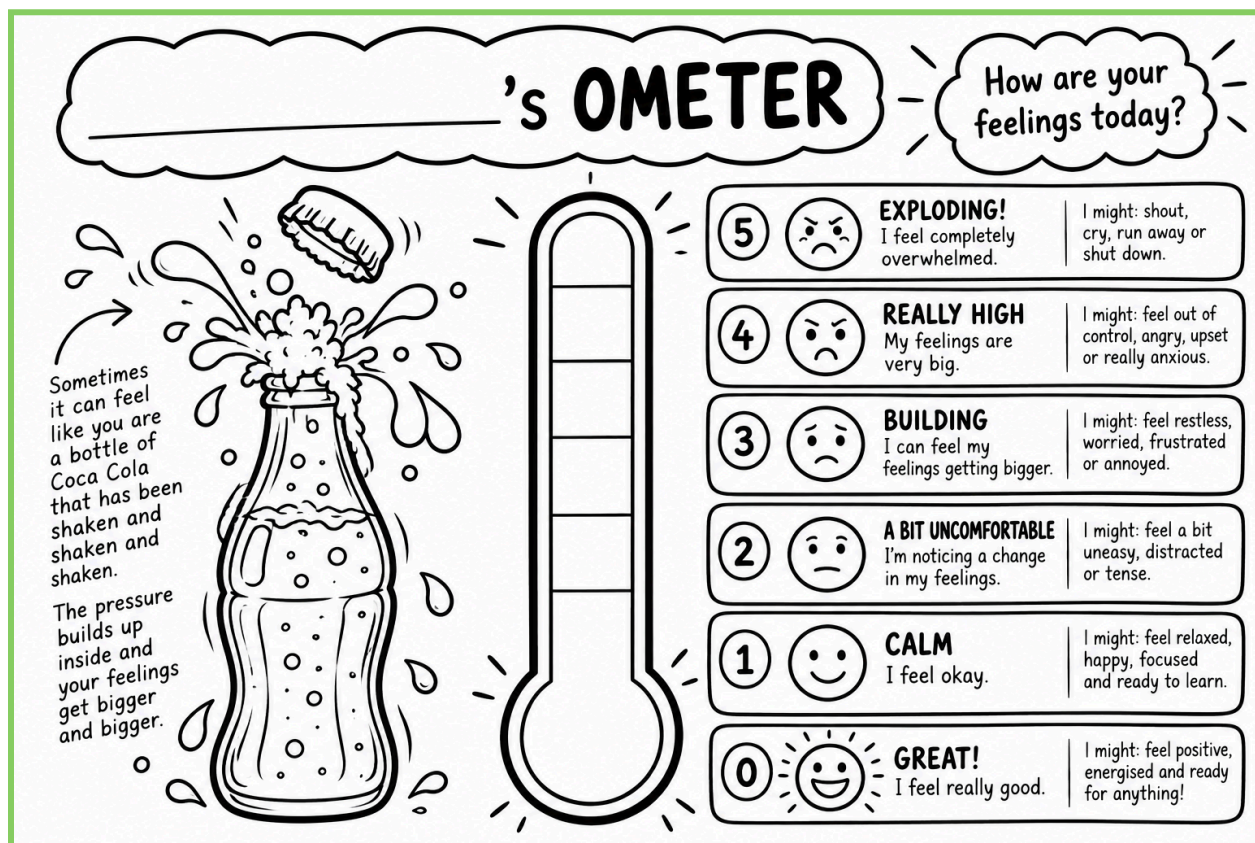
BAILEY: It's like I'm a bottle of coca cola and I've been shook and shook and shook.

DEB: Dysregulation just means you're having trouble managing how big your feelings are. Lots of kids here have a lot of big feelings to manage and they haven't been given the tools to help them.



What helps you when your feelings start getting big?

Imagine your feelings are a temperature gauge, from cold to hot, what happens at each stage?



DEB: We all enjoy different foods because we're all different people right?

BAILEY: Is being naughty like being scary? Like a Halloween costume but there's someone else underneath?

We all like different things. We can also need different things to help us feel happy, safe, calm and ready to learn.

Think about you:

Something I really like is _____

Something that helps me feel calm is _____

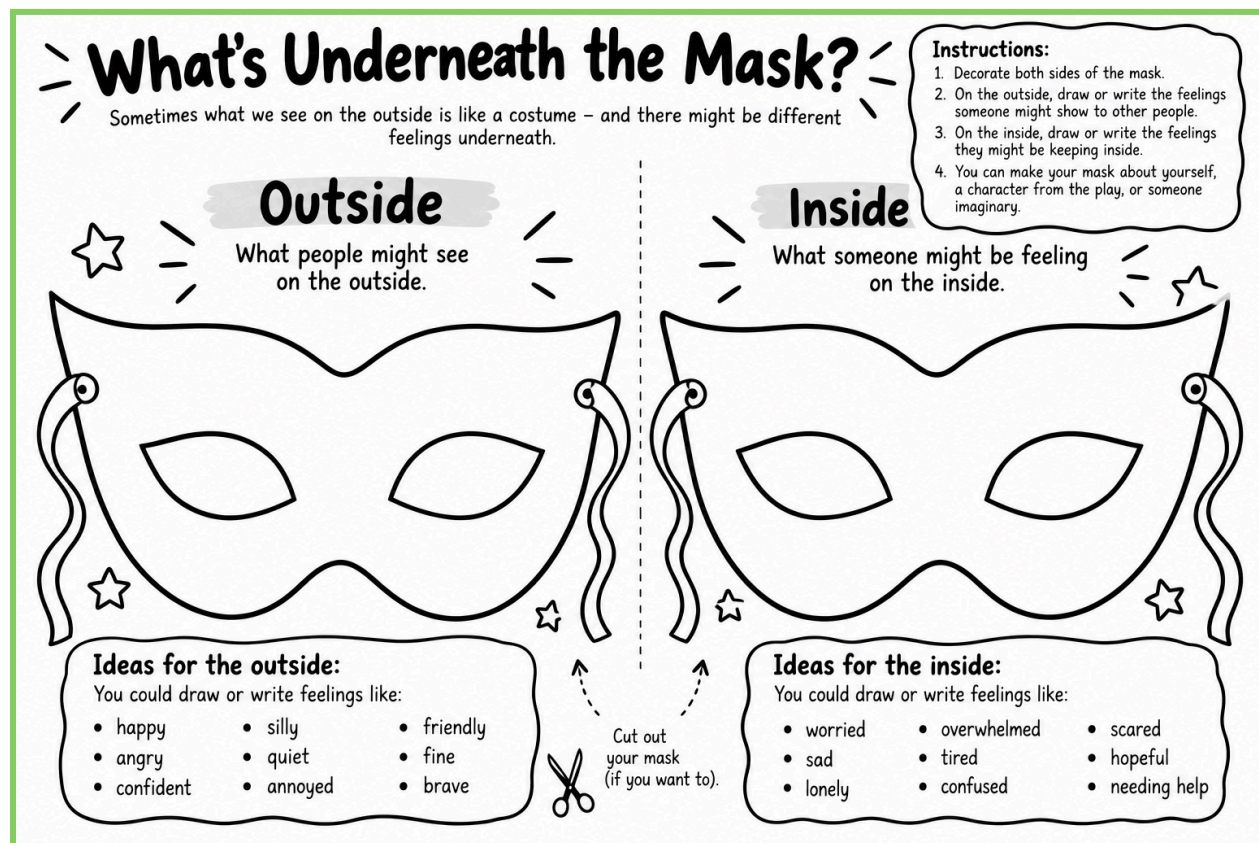
Something that helps me learn is _____

Something I wish other people understood about me is _____

What's Underneath?

Sometimes we notice someone's behaviour before we know what they are thinking or feeling.

Activity - Decorate a mask.



On the outside, write or draw what other people might see:
shouting • hiding • arguing • being silly • walking away ?

Underneath, think about what the person might actually be feeling or needing:
worried • angry • lonely • embarrassed • overwhelmed • tired • needing help

Can we be curious about what might be underneath someone's behaviour before we give them a label?

How do you like to learn?

We are all different — and that means we don't all learn in the same way.

Some people like to move around, some like things explained out loud, some like to draw or make things, and some need a quiet space to concentrate. You might like different things at different times.

In *A Class Of Your Own*, we see that finding the right support can make a big difference.

What helps YOU to learn, concentrate and feel comfortable?

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO LEARN?

We all learn in different ways.

Think about the kind of environment, activities and people that help you feel motivated, curious and able to do your best.

VISUAL
I like to learn by seeing things.
e.g. pictures, diagrams, colour, videos, maps, written instructions.

AUDITORY
I like to learn by listening.
e.g. stories, music, conversations, discussions, podcasts.

PRACTICAL
I like to learn by doing.
e.g. making, building, hands-on activities, real life experiences.

SOCIAL
I like to learn with other people.
e.g. group work, sharing ideas, team projects, talking things through.

SOLITARY
I like to learn on my own.
e.g. quiet spaces, independent projects, time to think.

NATURAL
I like to learn in nature.
e.g. outdoors, fresh air, real world experiences, being active.

CREATIVE
I like to learn through creating.
e.g. drawing, designing, performing, imagining, trying new ideas.

LOGICAL
I like to learn by working things out.
e.g. patterns, problem solving, questioning, analysing.



HOW DO YOU LIKE TO LEARN?

ACTIVITIES

Use the activities below to explore the ways you like to learn. There are no right or wrong answers.

- 1 **COLOUR YOUR STRENGTHS**
Look at the different ways of learning on the first page. Colour the ones that feel most like you.
- 2 **DRAW YOUR IDEAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
What does a place where you learn best look like? You could include spaces, people, nature, objects or anything else.
- 3 **MATCH THE ACTIVITIES**
Tick or circle the activities you enjoy.
 - ☐ Drawing or designing
 - ☐ Building or making
 - ☐ Being outdoors
 - ☐ Reading
 - ☐ Listening to stories or music
 - ☐ Working in a group
 - ☐ Working on my own
 - ☐ Solving problems or puzzles
 - ☐ Talking and sharing ideas
 - ☐ Performing or acting
 - ☐ Using technology
 - ☐ Moving, playing or being active
 - ☐ Exploring real-life things
 - ☐ Other: _____
- 4 **PEOPLE WHO HELP ME LEARN**
Who helps you learn? Draw or write about the people who support you.
- 5 **MY TOP 3**
Write or draw your top 3 ways to learn.
- 6 **REFLECTION**
What have you discovered about how you like to learn? Is there anything you would like to try more of?

GAMES FROM THE SHOW

In *A Class Of Your Own*, Bailey and the other characters use games and activities to get to know each other, have fun and explore how they are feeling. Here are some you can try together.

Roll the Dice

Take turns rolling a dice. Whatever number you land on, answer that question.

- 1 — Name something that makes you laugh.
- 2 — Name somewhere you feel comfortable.
- 3 — What is something you are good at?
- 4 — What helps when you're having a difficult day?
- 5 — Name someone you can talk to.
- 6 — If you could change one thing about school, what would it be?

You can always choose to **pass** if you don't want to answer.

Look Up, Look Down

Stand in a circle. One person calls “**look down**” and everyone looks at the floor. When they call “**look up**”, everyone looks directly at someone else in the circle.

If two people make eye contact, they're out — or, if you want to keep everyone playing, they can simply swap places!

Staring Competition

Choose a partner and see how long you can look at each other without looking away or laughing.

Afterwards, have a think: **How did it feel?** Funny? Awkward? Easy? Uncomfortable? Did you both experience it in the same way?

Keepie-Uppie

Use a balloon, soft ball or scrunched-up piece of paper. How many times can you keep it in the air without letting it touch the floor?

Try it on your own and then as a team.

Is it different when other people are helping you?



Body Outline

Draw around a body on a large piece of paper, or draw your own body shape.

Think about different feelings and where you might notice them in your body. Maybe worry gives you butterflies in your tummy, anger makes your fists feel tight, or excitement makes your whole body feel fizzy.

There's no correct answer — different people can experience the same feeling in very different ways. What colour is each feeling and where are they located?

Three Things

Take a moment to notice what is happening in your body.

Can you name **three things you can feel right now?**

Maybe your feet feel warm, your tummy is rumbling, your shoulders feel tight or your breathing feels slow.

You don't need to change anything.

Just notice what your body is telling you.

EXERCISES

Cloud Gazing

Inspired by the geography lesson in *A Class Of Your Own*

Have you ever stopped to watch the clouds moving?

Find a window, or head outside and look up at the sky. If you can, find somewhere comfortable to sit or lie down.

What is the sky like today? Are there lots of clouds or just a few? Are they moving quickly or slowly?

Now use your imagination. **What can you see in the clouds?** An animal? A face? A magical creature? Something from nature?

Say the shapes out loud as you spot them. Watch how they slowly change, disappear and turn into something new.

Take a little longer just to watch.

How does cloud gazing make you feel?

Let's Have a Wiggle!

Inspired by Michelle's wiggle dance

Stand up and give yourself some space.

Start a tiny wiggle in your **toes**.

Really concentrate on how that wiggle feels.

Now let the wiggle travel upwards:

toes → knees → legs → bottom → tummy → shoulders → arms → fingers

Can you get your **whole body wiggling?**

Keep going for a few moments... and **STOP!**



Rest for five seconds.

Now send the wiggle back the other way:

fingers → arms → shoulders → tummy → bottom → legs → knees → toes

Slow your wiggle down... slower... slower... until your whole body is still.

Now notice your body. **Does anything feel different after your wiggle?**

Finish with four slow, comfortable breaths.

Squishie Breathing

A moment to slow things down

Find a squishie to hold. If you don't have one, you can imagine you are holding your favourite squishie in your hand.

As you breathe in, **gently squeeze your squishie.**

Breathe in... 1... 2... 3... 4.

Now slowly loosen your hand as you breathe out.

Breathe out... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.

Imagine any tension in your body softening as your hand relaxes.

Try it again.

Can you repeat your **squeeze and release four times?**

When you've finished, notice how your hand and body feel. You don't need to feel any particular way — just notice.

Design Your Own Squishie

If you could create a squishie especially for you, **what would it look like?**

Would it be an animal, a favourite food, a character or something completely made up?

Draw your squishie and give it a name.

My squishie is called: _____

It feels: _____

I might like to use it when: _____

Talking About the Play

Sometimes it's easier to talk when your hands are busy.

Grab some paper and pens and **draw or doodle while you talk**. You could draw something from the play, or just doodle whatever you like.

(insert blank page for scribbling?)

Or why not grab your fave squishy.

While you draw or squish, talk together:

- If you close your eyes and imagined somewhere that is safe, where is it? Why is it safe?
- Pick up 5 objects, which one belongs which doesn't? What makes you belong?
- If your teacher was an animal, what animal would they be? why?
- What can make feelings get really big? Have you ever felt like an exploding cola bottle?
- What is something surprising that happened in your school day? Why did it surprise you?
- Why might someone behave in a way that seems difficult?
- What can make school feel easy or hard?
- Why is it important that people are different?
- What can help when someone feels left out or rejected?

There are no right or wrong answers, and you can always choose to pass on a question.

For older groups...

- What is happening to Bailey while they are in mainstream school? What changes do you notice?
- What changes do you see in Bailey when they arrive at the PRU?
- What do you think helps those changes happen?
- How would you compare Teacher Campbell and Deb? What is similar and what is different about them?
- What words would you use to describe Bailey at the **beginning, middle and end** of the play?
- Do any of the characters surprise you or make you change your mind about them?
- What do you think the play tells us about judging someone by their behaviour?
- What do you think Bailey needs from the adults and young people around them?

Try this: Pick one character and write down three words to describe them. Compare your words with someone else's. Did you choose the same ones? Why might you see the character differently?

