

# Workshop 1

## Youth Theatre – A Place You Belong To!

### Facilitated by – Barry McSkeane (He/Him)

In this session, Barry will be exploring what it means to be LGBTQ+ in today's society, the complexity of language, sexuality, gender identity, and the barriers some face when 'coming out'.

How to create safe and supportive spaces will be the main theme of the workshop, and with a combination of presentation, discussion, a quiz, and maybe even some improv, Barry's frank and honest style will provide a safe space for participants to ask questions without fear of judgement, have thought provoking discussion, and a better understanding as to why so many LGBTQ+ young people feel safe and at home in the Youth Theatre arena.



**Barry McSkeane** (he/him) is the National Network Coordinator within **Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Services** and in his role supports youth workers, parents, family members, educators, and other professionals in supporting LGBTQ+ young people across the country. A primary focus of his department is the development of the Rainbow Award – a “Safe & Supportive Services” model that promotes a whole organisational holistic approach to LGBTQ+ Inclusion. Currently in its first phase pilot with a small number of youth groups/services, it is hoped there will be a national roll out in the coming year.

Prior to taking up his role in Belong To, he held the post of LGBTI+ Youth Development Officer in Cavan and Monaghan. As a cis gay man and a Monaghan native, Barry was only too aware of the lack of services for LGBTQ+ young people in his community. Provision of youth groups and safe spaces was a priority in this role, along with stronger visibility and positive representation for the queer community in the border region. Through his advocacy work, and his lobbying of local authorities and representatives, the pride flag flew on government buildings in the two counties for the first time in 2019, and have flown every pride month since.

Barry, a member of the Youth Theatre Ireland Board of Directors, is a graduate of NAYD's *ArtsTrain*, a drama facilitator and theatre practitioner of many years, and as a former youth theatre member himself, has first-hand experience of the power of youth theatre, and the transformative effect it, and the arts in general can have on the lives of young people.

He is a former and sometimes guest facilitator with Monaghan Youth Theatre, co-founder and co-artistic director with Flocking Arts Youth Theatre, and has a strong background in production and technical theatre, most notably as Production and Stage Manager with Ballet Ireland – The National Ballet of Ireland.

## Workshop 2

# Demystifying and developing Inclusive Drama and Story-Making Facilitated Donna O Keeney (She/Her)

Our society is increasingly diverse, we celebrate that in our youth theatre spaces.

The workshop will provide an insight into working with young people with physical disabilities and offers tips on how to adapt our work to ensure equity for all within our YT spaces.

Through playful reinvestigation and reimagining we can find new possibilities, create new performance and presentation styles and ensure the stories we are telling and retelling reflect the world that we live in

**Donna O Keeney** is an autistic theatre maker, director and facilitator whose main area of focus has been with children and young people, including some with disabilities.

She has worked with the creative learning team at Graffiti for the past ten years, where she has been developing, devising and delivering high quality arts engagement projects across educational, community and Youth Theatre settings. She has recently stepped into her new role as Inclusion Officer for the company.

Over the past few years after training as a dramatherapist in 2018 she became increasingly passionate about developing a socially engaged, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion practice and currently works with Breaking Barriers at the Crann Centre and the Irish Wheelchair association.

In 2020 she took part in 'Play and Present Artist Development Programme', where she took time to develop her skills as a facilitator and director with a specific focus on working with young people with disabilities. This has led to a larger research project, supported by an Arts Council Bursary which has allowed Donna time to investigate deeper the meaning of integrated Theatre Practice.



# Workshop 3

## Dyslexia in Youth Theatre

### Facilitated by Aoife Anderson (She/Her)

Dyslexia is very common, affecting 1 in 10. This means it is very likely that within your youth theatre practice you work with individuals with dyslexia. Although very common, there is not always a clear understanding of what dyslexia is, how it affects individuals and what can be helpful in supporting a dyslexic young person.

This workshop will deepen our understanding of dyslexia for what it is, alongside what it isn't. So step inside the space of inclusive learning as we explore how we as facilitators and advocates can make our youth theatres more dyslexia friendly.

What is good for a dyslexic individual, is good for all.

Through this workshop, we will look at how best to create an inclusive environment for young people with dyslexia.

As of 2022, the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) define dyslexia as:

*Dyslexia is a learning difference that can cause difficulties with learning and work. It affects approximately 1 in 10. It occurs on a spectrum with some people mildly affected and others more severely. With the right understanding, accommodations and support people with dyslexia can achieve success in education, the workplace and in wider society.*

*Everyone with dyslexia is different but there is a commonality of difficulties with reading, spelling and writing and related cognitive/processing difficulties. Dyslexia is not a general difficulty with learning, it impacts specific skill areas. The impact of dyslexia can change according to the environment (i.e. what a dyslexic person is being asked to do and under what circumstances).*

As facilitators, we can probably think of some areas in our own work that we would like to make more accessible. It can be difficult to know - what supports exist? What is the language around dyslexia? How do I navigate scripts? Developing a confidence within your practice to know what dyslexia is, and how it can present differently in each individual is our starting point. From here, we can move forward empowered to navigate the accommodations and approach to allow full participation for young people with dyslexia or literacy difficulties. We will look deeper at facilitative techniques, alongside some procedures that could help us before a workshop has even begun. Whatever your role or capacity within youth theatre, a willingness to learn is your greatest asset.

**Aims:**

- To assist youth theatre leaders to develop a better understanding of what dyslexia is and what this might look like within their youth theatre.
- To develop valuable strategies that will assist youth theatre leaders and facilitators to embed best practice within their workshops and across their youth theatre.
- To empower youth leaders to learn about dyslexia and how it shapes young peoples experiences to have advocates within their youth theatre journey.
- To exchange experiences and have a safe space to explore the myths and truths around what dyslexia is for what it isn't.
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**Resources to be provided at the workshop:**

Dyslexia Style Guide

Dyslexia in youth theatre guide (in pdf and video format)

**Aoife Anderson (She/Her)**

Aoife Anderson is a Youth Arts Facilitator based in County Kilkenny. With an interdisciplinary set of skills, Aoife works within the areas of film and theatre, with a primary role as an Information Officer with the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI). Aoife's work with the national charity involves providing information and guidance around dyslexia through bespoke workshops, courses and training to young people, parents, guardians and educators. Core themes addressed within Aoife's work in the DAI are well-being, navigating evidence based practice and youth self-advocacy.

Alongside their work with the Dyslexia Association of Ireland, Aoife is a facilitator and well-being officer with Dreamstuff Youth Theatre in Kilkenny. Dreamstuff Youth Theatre (DSYT) is a developmental community of young people and adult mentors who voluntarily work in equal partnership to create theatre productions through a process of devising and experiential learning.

Aoife is a graduate of University College Cork (UCC) with a Masters in Health and Society. The line of inquiry of Aoife's research was 'Well-Being within Education; The need for an interdisciplinary approach to a complex problem.' In 2021, Aoife held the position of Artist in Residence with the Youth and Community Work course in Maynooth University, in partnership with Young Irish Film Makers (YIFM).



# Workshop 4

## Awaken Your Voice!

### Facilitated by Regina Crowley (She/Her)

Learn a series of physical and imaginative exercises that will awaken the expressive potential of your voice. Drawing on the work of world-renowned voice specialist Kristin Linklater, author of *Freeing the Natural Voice*, these exercises will give you a clear understanding of the elements involved in developing your voice and finding more freedom and release in the breath, body and voice in the moment of speaking. Bring 4 to 6 lines of a text you like to play with.

Regina Crowley is a founder member of GAITKRASH Theatre Company and has been involved in all of their shows to date as a deviser, director and performer. In 2010 she qualified as a Designated Linklater Teacher – the first Irish theatre professional to receive this award. She currently utilises this work in the training of performers and has led workshops both nationally and internationally. Performance credits include Mouth In Beckett's *Not I*, W2 in Beckett's *Play*, Clare in *Playing the Maids* directed by Phillip Zarrilli and *English in England* by Tim Crouch. Directing credits include *Killing Stella* for GAITKRASH, *Gone Full Havisham* with Irene Kelleher, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* and, an adaptation of Cocteau's film *Orphee*. She lectures in Voice, Performance and Directing on the BATDS Degree at the MTU Cork School of Music and is currently completing a book commissioned by Routledge on the work Kristin Linklater.

