

My name is Laura Jeffs and I am the Co-Director of the theatre company Flossy and Boo. I was asked to come in and work with Sian Jones and the teenage participants of T1me For Me, to facilitate a series of workshops in which teenagers who had been diagnosed with diabetes could come along and create something together. The aim of the workshops was to build new relationships between participants, creating a peer support system, and also to provide a fun atmosphere so that a visit to the hospital wasn't always associated with negative feelings.

In the first session, we began with some getting-to-know-you games, as not many of the participants had met previously, and we wanted to ensure that this felt like a fun and safe environment to share thoughts and ideas. We immediately found that the group had lots in common beyond merely diagnoses and so we began to talk about what we might want to make together in these sessions.

In previous one-to-one chats with Sian, a number of the group had expressed an interest in podcasts and so we used this as a jumping off point. If the group could create an audio piece about anything, what would it be? We discussed lots of possibilities including a Mindfulness podcast, nature themes, an informational audio article around Diabetes and even a comedy panel show!

However what really captured the young people's imagination was the idea of nonfiction - something that they could create from scratch, and not have to theme it around their diagnosis. They voted and we finally decided to create a comedy horror radio drama, for which the group would create the concept, characters and then write and perform.

Our final idea came from a doodle that one young person created in the very first workshop - a cat called Charles. From this came the idea of a were-cat, and so over the following workshops we got to work creating the characters, writing monologues, designing a soundscape and experimenting with foley. In between sessions I would write up what they had created, and write additional script to join all the ideas together, until finally we had our full script ready for a read through and recording session.

There were genuinely so many joyful moments throughout the workshops, but the highlight for me was seeing the young people performing the characters and the sound effects that they had created. Originally, only a couple of them had said that they were confident enough to perform, however by the time we got to the recording session, nearly everyone in the whole group read as one of the characters, and they all did an incredible job.

I then got to work editing it all together - their character performances and the sound effects they designed and made, as well as finding any additional sounds and creating a music track for atmosphere, before uploading it onto individual MP3 players for each participant.

Our final session of that series began with everyone listening to the final finished piece (I've never felt older than when one of the teenagers looked at an MP3 player and asked what it

was!) before we celebrated what they had achieved and talked about what they might want to work on next in any following workshops together.

It was such a pleasure to be part of this project, and to work with Sian (and the rest of the team) to create a space for young people to talk and create together. The room felt like a really fun, supportive environment for all (we always had the option of a quiet area available, in which Sian had provided lots of calming activities, should any young people need a moment away from the main group). It was wonderful to see the confidence of the young people grow, even over just a few weeks, and I can't wait to see what they come up with next.