



**IT'S KUSHTI TO
ROKKER**

BREAKING DOWN STIGMA

Toolkit

***'It's Kushti to Rokker'* means
'it's good to talk'
in English Romany**

About *It's Kushti to Rokker* community filmmaking project

Young creatives have been working with writers and filmmakers to create a series of short films based on their real-life experiences, to inspire and support other young people to speak up and seek help. We hope the *It's Kushti to Rokker* series of films will open up discussion and start conversations about issues impacting on young people's health and wellbeing.

The films were also created to raise awareness about some of the challenges young Gypsies and Travellers experience inside and outside of school, aimed at; education and healthcare professionals and policymakers to improve knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity and culture, and the barriers young people can

encounter to fulfilling their potential and getting the right support.

Making the films gave many of the young people involved an opportunity to use their lived experiences to advocate for the importance of talking about wellbeing to others. As part of the process many of the participants also gained valuable filmmaking skills and experience. We hope the impact of *It's Kushti to Rokker* films will reach far wider than just the young people involved in this project and that their voices will be a lasting legacy to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

WHY?

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers face some of the most severe health inequalities amongst the UK population even when compared to other socially excluded groups or ethnic minorities. Chronic exclusion across the wider social determinants of health can place young Gypsy and Travellers at a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health. However, the health and social care system does not routinely collect disaggregated data on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities therefore, it is difficult to provide a precise overview of incidences and prevalence of poor mental health and the uptake of services. However, data collected within academic studies and by voluntary sector organisations have found stark disparities:

- Gypsies and Travellers are estimated to live between 10 and 25 years less than the general population.
- Even before life expectancy is taken into account, Gypsies and Travellers experience six less Quality Adjusted Life Years (this is the measure of years in good health) than the general population.
- Travellers have higher rates of infant mortality, maternal death and stillbirths than the general population
- Gypsies and Travellers are nearly three times more likely to be anxious than others, and just over twice as likely to be depressed
- The suicide rate for Traveller men is seven times higher than for non - Traveller men

In 2018, the Equality and Human Rights Commission carried out research on social attitudes that found that 44% of the British public surveyed openly expressed negative feelings towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, more than any other protected characteristic group.

We found identity to be an overarching theme within all the films, showing how high levels of hostility can impact on the wellbeing of young people in terms of self-perception and feelings of self-worth.

Young people often experience racist sentiment in the media and elsewhere. The Children's Society found that 63% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children had been bullied verbally or physically while in school because of their ethnicity. This coupled with lack of positive representation of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers long-standing history, language and culture in many schools can lead to inaccurate stereotypes being formed and many young people feeling like they have to hide their identity. This undoubtedly impacts on self-esteem and confidence.

The Race Disparity Audit shows that pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities had the lowest average GCSE score of any ethnic groups in 2016/7.

Pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds also have the highest 'overall absence' and 'persistent absence' rates and are four times more likely to be excluded from school than any other ethnic group. As a result of this, many young people may miss out on important opportunities to learn about mental health in school, how poor mental health can be eased or prevented and where to go to for support.

That is why *It's Kushti to Rokker* believes that community youth made films that are easily accessible online are uniquely useful for combatting feelings of isolation and supporting discussions about youth mental health, as they enable the viewer to see the subject through young people's eyes and offer a creative approach to addressing challenging issues. It's our hope that these films contribute to destigmatising attitudes towards young Gypsies and Travellers and at the same time break down stigma surrounding mental health in order to support and inspire young people to speak out about issues impacting on their wellbeing.

How to use this toolkit:

On pages 7, 8 and 9 you will find activities to support practitioners working with young Gypsies and Travellers to facilitate discussions on mental health and wellbeing.

On pages 11 and 12 you will find a list of all the films made as part of the *It's Kushti to Rokker* series, including a synopsis of each film and the key themes it explores to use alongside the main activity outline on page 10.

It is essential that you watch the [*It's Kushti to Rokker* documentary, the series of five short films](#) and consider the activities carefully before hand. This is in order to support a safe exploration and discussion of the issues.

You are also strongly advised to familiarise yourself with the info pack for specialist support available for young Gypsies and Travellers e.g. [LGBT Traveller Pride](#)

On pages 13 to 19 you will find information on useful resources and further reading to enhance and support your organisations practice and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Safeguarding/Duty of care

Concerns about any young person's wellbeing should always be managed in line with your school or organisation's safeguarding policy. In addition, we recommend that you view content on external links in advance of sharing these with students, as we are unable to accept responsibility for the content which may change, move or become unavailable without our knowledge. You will also need to spend time setting up group rules and a safety plan before beginning any of the activities in this resource. Students must understand confidentiality and be clear about what to do if any of the topics discussed triggers them, or if they wish to disclose or seek help after one of the sessions. For guidance on how to do this, please refer to the ground rules.

Ground Rules

Before starting the activities, we recommend you establish rules to ensure a safe and supportive space for discussion. Young people who participated in the *It's Kushti to Rokker* filmmaking project created and followed their own ground rules as part of the process for generating ideas and devising their short films.

- Don't talk over each other – listen and show respect
- It's OK to say what you think
- Create a safe space (It was decided conversations should be confidential – what's said in the room stays in the room)
- Only share what you are comfortable with (if young people do disclose personal information that may be considered a child protection or safeguarding issue, the practitioner should refer this to the designated Safeguarding Officer in the school or organisation)
- Look after yourself - The conversations may bring up thoughts, feelings or memories. If you need to take a break, you can. Let someone know you're going to do this.
- Help is available if you want to talk after the session (Practitioners should refer to the info pack for specialist support available for young Gypsies and Travellers e.g. One Call Away but also what to do in a crisis –explain what help is available and how to access it in person or online)

Activity 1: I'm just feeling bad

There's often a high level of stigma around the term 'mental health' in Gypsy and Traveller communities and it's rarely discussed openly.

Even the term 'mental health' is often shied away from, with people preferring to use the words 'bad nerves' or 'stress' to describe how they're feeling. Young people may not have an awareness of what the term 'mental health' encompasses. For many adults it comes with thoughts of being crazy or linked with madness, and on the more extreme end of poor mental health, rather than issues such as depression, stress and anxiety.

This activity is an opportunity to explore young people's understanding of the term 'mental health' and by working in a group to think about all the words that are used to describe it. Ask for young people to suggest words and write these on sticky notes, attaching them to a wall or a flip chart. Once the group has exhausted their suggestions, put the following questions to them:

- How many/which of these words are negative?
- How many/which of these words are used as insults?
- How many/which of these words are used positively?

- How many/which of these words make you feel uncomfortable?
- How many of you have been called one of these words?
- Which of these words have you been called?
- How many of you have called someone else these words?
- Which words did you use?
- Can you tell if someone is experiencing mental health challenges?
- Why might people find it difficult to talk about things that make them feel bad?
- Is there a term other than 'mental health' you feel more comfortable using?

Activity 2: Where do you stand?

This activity will help young people understand how broader factors can impact on their mental health and wellbeing. It will also open up a discussion on how gendered expectations may impact on young people's decisions on whether or not to reach out for support. Before the end of the session ensure young people are aware that they can access support independently and confidentially.

To prepare for this activity, write 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree' on two pieces of paper or card and place these on opposite sides of a room. This will create an invisible line for young people to decide how far they agree or disagree with them.

Let young people know that there are no right or wrong answers, but that it's up to them to decide how they feel about the statement today in this room and that they may feel differently another day.

Read out the following statements and ask young people to stand on the line to show how much they agree or disagree with them.

- My family have the biggest effect on how I feel about myself
- My friends have the biggest effect on how I feel about myself
- Social media/celebrities have the biggest effect on how I feel about myself
- It's not ok for boys to cry
- Girls cry too much
- Boys are under pressure to be fit

- Girls are under pressure to be thin
- Mental health problems are not taken seriously
- Mental health problems are not as bad as physical health problems
- Mental health problems are worse than physical health problems
- People with mental health issues are weak
- Anyone can develop poor mental health

Where there are clear differences in opinion or if opinion is weighted heavily in one direction, ask for young people to comment on why they have made that decision about the statement. Encourage all comments, remembering to reassure young people that there are no right or wrong answers but to be respectful of each other's feelings and thoughts.

Activity 3: Film discussion

These questions are to be used to facilitate a discussion based on any of the films listed on pages 11 and 12.

What was the biggest challenge the central character(s) faced?

What helped them to overcome their challenge?

How did the film try to convey the characters' emotional and social challenges?

How successful do you think this was?

From your own experience is this film true to life?

How did the character(s) go about getting help for the challenges they were dealing with?

What advice would you have given them?

How often do you see people from Gypsy and Traveller communities represented on screen?

How are they depicted?

What might the effect of this be on the viewer?

You might like young people to reflect by writing a few notes or discussing in pairs before contributing to a wider group discussion.

It's Kushti to Rokker Project films

Being me

Key Themes: Hiding ethnicity, parents concern's about self - ascription, racism, lack of representation of GRT history in the school curriculum

Synopsis: Shell doesn't want her friend Jenny to know that she lives on a site. One day, new girl Lizzy starts at school and talks openly about being a Traveller. She immediately comes under attack from Jenny. Shell is faced with a tough decision on whether or not to be open about her identity and talk to someone about how she's feeling.



Hard Road to Travel

Key themes: Being a young LGBTQA+ Traveller, intersectionality, relationships, pride

Synopsis: Danny is a proud young gay man, but it's not always been that way. His brother has been made to drop him off in London to join the first ever Gypsy, Roma and Traveller contingent to march in the London Pride parade. His big brother Joeboy worries about his safety and how people will receive him when both aspects of his identity, his sexuality and his ethnicity collide for the very first time.



Losing Phyllis

Key themes: Bereavement, relationships, discrimination, pressure

Synopsis: Lois uses spoken word to express the loss of her gran. She supports her family with all of the bureaucracy that comes with death. She explains the problems with school for her non-attendance and misunderstanding from nurses when visiting her gran in hospital.



#Online haters

Key Themes: Dealing with online hate, developing counter narratives

Synopsis: Roseanne is an aspiring beauty vlogger who experiences hate online. She searches for support and comes across a vlog on how to cope with online hate and practical things she can do to stay safe online. It also includes myth busters for young people to use. This empowers her to continue her vlogging ambitions and at the same time stay safe.



Targeted

Key Themes: School, racism, sport, stereotypes

Synopsis: Rob talks about his time in school where he faced racism on an almost daily basis from teachers and students. He shares his story on how he found kickboxing as a way to overcome feelings of low self-worth and anger, a space where he is judged on his ability not his ethnicity.



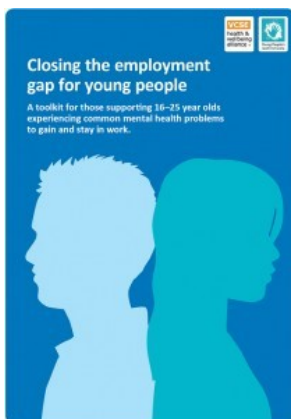
Tools & Resources

Here are some useful tools and resources to enhance and support your organisation's practice and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities.



Friends, Families & Travellers and VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance audit tool

This online tool will help your organisation to audit its engagement with Inclusion Health groups. Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are identified as an Inclusion health group. The tool consists of five sections and takes around 15 minutes to complete. Once you have completed the audit tool, you will be provided with a unique and tailored guide that will help your organisation to embed action on tackling health inequalities into its everyday activities. <https://www.inclusion-health.org/>



Friends, Families & Travellers and VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance: Closing the gap between young people with low level mental health issues and employment toolkit

This resource has been developed by a group of organisations from the Health and Wellbeing Alliance led by the Young People's Health Partnership. There is recognition that some groups of young people are affected disproportionately by mental health issues and/or struggle to access work. The project explored these barriers in focus groups with young carers, young LGBTQA+ people, young people who have experience of the criminal justice system and young Gypsies and Travellers. The toolkit highlights the impacts of some specific issues on these groups and how support can be tailored to meet their needs. <http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Closing-the-Employment-Gap-for-Young-People-Toolkit.pdf>



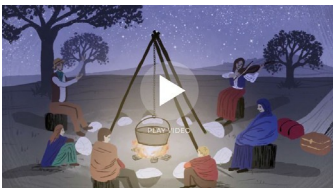
Gypsy and Traveller Online Cultural Awareness Training

Friends, Families & Travellers have experience of delivering Gypsy and Traveller Cultural Awareness training to over 700 organisations and local authorities in the United Kingdom. They have developed an online learning programme that targets the key themes and questions arising amongst service providers about Gypsies and Travellers. The course is ideal for members of the statutory, voluntary or private sector wishing to engage or work more effectively with Gypsies and Travellers. <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/fft-training/online-cultural-competency-training/>



Child Bereavement UK

Offers information to help increase understanding of the factors facing Gypsy and Traveller families following the death of someone close. <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/supporting-gypsy-and-traveller-families>



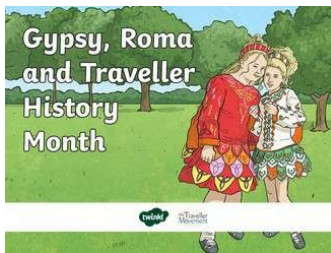
Roads from the Past

“It’s so complicated. What are we supposed to call you? Where do you come from? What have you got to do with each other? I’m confused! ‘Roads from the Past’ is a response to these questions. It’s a short-animated film about the history of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in Britain, from ancient times up to the present day. This resource is useful for anyone but especially for teachers or other people working with children. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bhBbMrF8Z0cc>



ACERT

ACERT is a community-led national charity that works for equalities and human rights of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. They have a specific focus on equal access to education, safe and secure accommodation, equal access to health and other community services, good community relations and an end to discrimination on racial and other grounds. For more information visit their website <https://acert.org.uk>



Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month Resource

There are activity sheets with facts about Gypsy Roma and Travellers and their history to help bring Gypsy, Roma Traveller history month into the classroom for all to enjoy. The aim of the resources is to help people begin to understand the way of life of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers and the purpose of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. You can download your free copy here: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t2-t-16580-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-month-assembly-pack>



The Anti Bullying Alliance

The Anti Bullying Alliance is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals, working together to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. Resources and external research on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller education is available on their website. <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/groups-more-likely-experience-bullying/race-and-faith-1>

Tips for tackling discriminatory bullying

The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Bullying Alliance

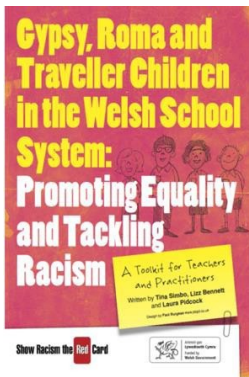
The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Bullying Alliance have worked together to develop tips for tackling discriminatory bullying.

For more information and to download the resource visit: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/tips-tackling-discriminatory-bullying>



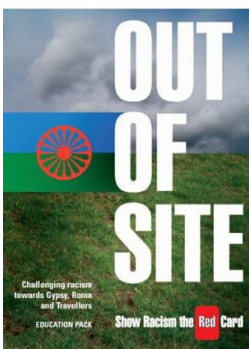
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Education - A Good Practice Guide

This report outlines good practice in the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) school children. It interviews schools, provides case studies, and includes an overview of the findings from Traveller Movement's three-year education and advocacy project. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OuWi_2jnv-Zi2aC88TE-wz37PHbUSamT/view



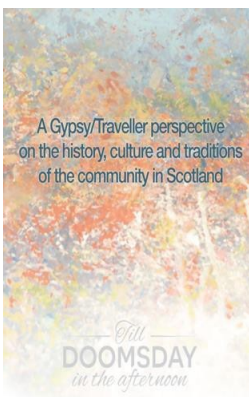
Promoting Equality and Tackling Racism: A Tool for Teachers and Practitioners

This resource is designed to be an informative and practical tool to help those working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people in the Welsh school system. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/574451fe37013bd0515647ac/t/59102277ff7c502e7838363e/1502876574094/GRT+Toolkit+-+Promoting+Equality+and+Tackling+Racism.pdf>



Out of Site

This education pack has been created by Show Racism the Red Card and is aimed at tackling racism towards Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/574451fe37013bd0515647ac/t/5da6f0db32e76a5df11ea1f3/1571221735047/Out+of+Site+Education+Pack.pdf>



A Gypsy/Traveller Perspective on History, Culture and Traditions of the Community in Scotland

To be used by schools to help both teachers and pupils better understand the heritage, history and positive contributions to society of Scotland's Gypsy and Traveller people, and to tackle the discrimination and prejudice that these communities often face. http://www.article12.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/DitA-2017_F_Web.pdf



Travellers' Times

The Travellers' Times bi-annually magazine that brings you the latest news, features & information for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. The website <https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk> is designed to be used by Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities and non-Travellers alike. Contact travellerstimes@ruralmedia.co.uk to add your school or organisation to the mailing list to receive free copies of the magazine.



Stay Safe: Don't Send

This is an animated film telling the story of Mary Anne who gets into difficulties when sharing a photo online. The film has an accompanying activity book for young people and guide for practitioners. Translated leaflets and posters outline the warning signs of child sexual exploitation where young people, parents and carers can find help and information. These can be downloaded and used by members of the community or professionals to display or distribute as appropriate. More information is available on the children's society website: <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-children/gypsy-roma-traveller-children-cse-resources>



Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families Schools

This is a free network for school staff and allied professionals, which shares practical, academic and clinical expertise regarding the wellbeing and mental health issues that affect schools. The network provides up-to-date and accessible resources that school leaders, teachers and support staff can use to support the mental health and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care. <https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/resources-for-schools>



Heads Together

Heads Together brings together a coalition of charities with decades of experience in tackling the stigma around mental health in the UK. <https://www.headstogether.org.uk>



Mind

The Mind Whole School Approach to mental health is designed by young people, parents, the wider school workforce and local Mind branches. It gives the entire school community the things they say they desperately need and would like provided. It involves a self-assessment tool for schools and tailored assemblies, workshops, 1-2-1s, information and training for everyone who's part of school life. <https://www.mind.org.uk>



Place2Be

Place2Be provides emotional and therapeutic services in primary and secondary schools, building children's resilience through talking, creative work and play. <https://www.place2be.org.uk/what-wedo/school-resources.aspx>

References and Further Reading

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