Are We There Yet?

By Jane Heather
Produced by Concrete Theatre
Directed by Mieko Ouchi

STUDIO | Mar. 23 to Apr. 3, 2009

We wish to thank Gary & Donna Slaight for underwriting the Presentation of Are We There Yet?

Written by Karen Gilodo and Vanya Garraway in Collaboration with Planned Parenthood of Toronto
Live Theatre Is An Active Experience!

Ground Rules:
As members of the audience, you play an important part in the success of a theatrical performance. Please review the following theatre rules with your students prior to your LKTYP visit.

- Food, drinks, candy and gum are not permitted in the theatre.
- LKTYP is a nut-free zone. Many children have severe life-threatening allergies; NO PEANUTS or NUT products may be brought to our theatre.
- No electronic devices are permitted in the theatre because they affect our sound system. Photography, audio and video recording during a performance is prohibited by the Canadian Theatre Agreement.
- Students are not permitted to leave the theatre unless they are accompanied by an adult.

Theatre is a two-way exchange:
Actors are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. We want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theatre. However, please be considerate audience members. Talking, whispering and excessive movement during a live performance is distracting for the actors, and disruptive for other audience members.

Enhance your visit by encouraging your students to look at different aspects of the production. Before the show, identify tasks for your class. Have one group of students looking at the set, another listening for the music and sound effects, a third watching the lighting and a fourth, the costumes. Compare notes after the show about what they observed. Your students will be more informed and they’ll be surprised by how much they noticed. Ask them to be prepared with one question for the actors after the show. Brainstorm with them about possible topics to get the most out of the experience!
Are We There Yet?, a play about teen sexual health and decision making, is a dynamic, interactive, and challenging play for teens. Its long run in Alberta has proved that audiences are interested and willing to engage with these important issues.

In this study guide you will find a pre-show exercise that gauges students’ perceptions of what it means to be “normal” and asks them to engage with this often very problematic word. The post-show unit has students working in groups to determine what their peers really want to know and should know about sexual health and offers some creative ways of finding that information.

Are We There Yet? is a frank and honest discussion about healthy sexuality. Students are expected to participate in the show and will no doubt leave the theatre with questions. In order to help you provide students with reliable information, the Resources section on pages 12-14 offers book titles, websites, and a documentary film as well as the names of various organizations in Toronto that can help students investigate the important issue of sexual health. We are also proud to be partnering with Planned Parenthood of Toronto, an organization that offers a number of sexual health services such as a full service clinic for youth, resource centre, online material and in-school workshops on healthy sexuality.

Although the play has more of a workshop feel, it is still important that students think about it as a whole. To this end, Jon Kaplan’s Tips for Student Reviewers on page 11 offers some pointers to get students thinking about and evaluating the overall experience of seeing the production. The study guide is meant to encourage students to interrogate both the content (sexual health and decision making) and the form (theatrical production).

This season LKYP is investigating the theme of “Looking and Leaping.” Are We There Yet? illuminates the myriad of choices students have when it comes to their own bodies. They must look carefully at all of their options before leaping into a situation they may or may not be ready for.

Curriculum Connections

In addition to DRAMA and LANGUAGE ARTS, Are We There Yet? directly relates to student development in the areas of:

- **H&PE** HEALTHY GROWTH AND SEXUALITY
- **SS&H** UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES IN HUMAN INTERACTION
- **SS&H** DECISION MAKING
- **SS&H** RESEARCH AND INQUIRY SKILLS
Curriculum Expectations

Grades 8 – 10

By participating in the activities in this study guide students will:

- analyse situations that are potentially dangerous to personal safety.
- demonstrate respectful behaviour toward the feelings and ideas of others.
- describe the factors that lead to responsible sexual relationships.
- demonstrate understanding of how to use decision-making and assertiveness skills effectively to promote healthy sexuality (e.g., healthy human relationships, avoiding unwanted pregnancies and STIs such as HIV/AIDS).
- identify community support services related to sexual health concerns.
- explain the effects (e.g., STIs, HIV/AIDS) of choices related to sexual intimacy (e.g., abstinence, using birth control).

The Company

The Cast

| Ensemble | Ryland Alexander |
| Ensemble | Nadien Chu |
| Ensemble | Nick Green |
| Ensemble | Monice Peter |

The Designers

| Scriptwriter: Jane Heather |
| Director: Mieko Ouchi |
| Assistant Director: Beth Dart |

Glossary

- **Abstinence:** refraining from some sexual acts.
- **Boundaries:** the marking or definition of limits.
- **Contraceptive:** a method or device that helps to protect against STIs and unwanted pregnancies.
- **Debunk:** to expose the falseness of.
- **Normal:** constituting or conforming to a standard; regular, usual, typical.
- **Safer Sex:** sexual activity in which precautions are taken to reduce the risk of spreading sexually transmitted diseases.
- **STI:** Sexually Transmitted Infections passed through sex acts, sharing needles, and mother-to-baby during pregnancy, delivery, and breast-feeding.
Most young adults experience the legal, social and cultural milestones of life while still in school – for example the right to drive, first job, vote, drink legally, puberty and yes, first sexual experiences. The lessons learned by youth are not just the ones taught by educators or read in books, but life experiences that shape all of us. Specifically because the majority of young people are in school when they hit puberty, develop a first crush, see the changes in their physical bodies, struggle with body image and fitting in, and start to date and experiment with sexuality, is why educators and administrators need to have an understanding and awareness and sensitivity about sexual health and healthy sexuality.

This is no easy undertaking – very few issues cause as much anxiety to educators as issues of adolescent sexuality. We all have to work through the careful balance between what is appropriate for families to teach their children and what is appropriate for schools, between how to respond to incidents of sexual harassment, bullying and victimization that so many young people (and adults) experience, navigate issues of faith, culture, personal values and social realities; maintain professional boundaries between social work and education and finally, validate and respond to the needs of young people in our care – young people who will grow up to have adult intimate relationships, and families of their own. All of this while negotiating the tensions, discomfort and mixed messages that our society embodies regarding human sexuality.

Studies have shown that youth do want to receive information about sexual health at school. They have also shown that youth turn to caring adults (parents, service providers and teachers) for questions and support about sexuality. As educators, we don’t and can’t always have the answers about sexual health or the vagaries of human relationships (because then our own relationships would be perfect!). But knowing youth-positive, sex-positive community resources like phone lines, websites, or clinics goes a long way towards validating a young person who has questions and giving them access to good information.

We also have to strive to be aware of our own biases and feelings on issues of human sexuality. Questions of teen sexuality, abortion, date rape, sexually transmitted diseases are all intense, politicized and extremely personal issues, but also social realities. Issuing judgments (even if we think we are not being judgmental), personal opinions without context, or belittling concerns or questions can do a lot of damage to someone who is reaching out for information and support. Educators can always maintain a positive attitude about human sexuality. We can always be role models in how we think people should be treated in relationships, intimate or otherwise, and we can always encourage young people to get as much information as they can and to teach good decision making skills. It is also important for educators to always be aware of their own professional and legal responsibilities as well as board policies.

When engaging in personal conversations or group discussion, laying down ground rules like respect and confidentiality are key (unless abuse is suspected). It is important to let students know at the beginning of the conversation that if they do reveal something about being in an abusive situation currently or have been in the past, that they may be obligated to report it and then the student can decide whether or not to continue with the discussion.

Letting youth know that their experiences and ideas are meaningful is important - but so is challenging stereotypes about gender roles, unrealistic expectations of sex or relationships, homophobia and STIs and who is at risk for them. The same advice that we would give a young person with questions also applies to educators – when in doubt, ask!

Finally, we also always have to remember that adolescence can be an awkward, tentative time when people are going through a process to figure out how relationships work and what works for them, when bodies and hormones change on a daily basis, that mistakes do get made, and that young people are vulnerable, but also resilient.

Nadia Bello is the Training Development Coordinator for Planned Parenthood of Toronto.
Pre–Show Unit of Study: What is Normal?

What does ‘Normal’ mean to you? | By Vanya Garraway

If we are all different, if we are all unique, then what is normal? The word normal is hard to define because one's definition of normal can be entirely different from one individual to the next and has not always existed in the form we are familiar with today. In fact today’s conception of what is normal only came to be used in the English language as a means of comparison (i.e. a way to compare one from another either mentally or physically) somewhat recently; the word normal was introduced in this form as late as 1840. In Leonard Davis’ article Constructing Normalcy he writes, “The word normal as ‘constituting, conforming to not deviating or differing from, the common type or standard, regular, usual’ only enters the English language around 1840.” Davis describes this description as a “late” arrival in human history.

Prior to this time “the norm” was a term of measurement, sometimes in reference to the “carpenter’s tool called the square” (Davis). This tool was designed to give measurement information to define the normal angle of doorways and corners, and a number of other construction definitions. The word then evolved into an expression of statistical information, in an effort to “compile information about the state” (Davis). Later, normal was used as a means of describing an ideal, which Davis expresses as the “divine body” and so on into a qualitative descriptive word, that eventually came to be used as mode of comparison.

The word normal often conceals itself as harmless, however each individual processes the word differently and therefore, what is normal for one person may not be normal for another person. The experiences that young people have with the word normal may be especially challenging when facing statements such as “It is not normal to dye your hair pink.” or “It is not normal for girls to have crushes on other girls.” Statements like these can become anxiety-inducing. The effects of the binary understandings and uses of normal and abnormal can be limiting and ultimately destructive when negotiating channels of identity and personal growth.

In a discussion with young people about the problematic nature of the word normal, perhaps a more fruitful discussion will come from asking the question “What does normal mean to you?” As opposed to “Are you normal?”

Vanya Garraway is the Metcalf Foundation Intern at Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto. Her major is English and Equity Studies. Vanya’s internship goals involve administrative focus on equity issues, in relation to learning how to increase access to arts education programming among communities of colour, in addition to LKTYP’s strategic initiatives of deep engagement and learning, community building and reflecting diversity.

Pre–Show Discussion Questions

• What do students want to learn from Are We There Yet?
• What do students think the show will be about?
• How do students feel about the show being interactive?
• What does the word “normal” mean to students?
• Brainstorm as many definitions for the word “normal” as possible.
Pre–Show Exercise
What does normal look like?

Point of Concentration: to elucidate the point that everyone’s perception of normal is different by illuminating the many different meanings associated with the word normal.

Uses and Applications: analyzing language and its usage is an important literacy/critical thinking skill.

Directions

• Give each student a sheet of blank paper and make coloured pencils available.
• On one side of the sheet of paper ask students to draw a picture of a person or make a list of traits that society or a particular community deems normal.
• On the other side of the sheet of paper ask students to draw an image or make a list of traits that illustrate what a normal looking person looks like in their opinion.
• When students have completed their drawings/lists, ask for volunteers to show and describe their images or share their lists.
• Ask students to identify the differences/similarities among the images/lists that students have created.
• What does this kind of exercise tell students about the word normal?

Post–Show Unit of Study
Getting the Info You Want/Need

Point of Concentration: to make decisions and work creatively as a group. Students will conduct research and present information to the class.

Uses and Applications: working in peer groups, students will determine the information most pertinent to their fellow students in order to share and learn from their peers.
Directions

- Divide students into groups of 3-5.
- Give each group a set of flash cards (see page 9).
- Give students one minute to organize each topic in order from most relevant to least relevant to students’ lives (i.e. the information they would be most interested in to the information they are least interested in). Have one student record the lists.
- Students must post the flash cards in the order they have determined on the board or on a wall.
- Ask each group to nominate a spokesperson to report to the class as to why their group has put the topics in the order they have.
- When every group has reported, inform students that Planned Parenthood Toronto has tracked the most requested topics searched by online users (see Planned Parenthood Toronto’s order in the key on the bottom of this page). Is there a group that has organized the topics in the same order as Planned Parenthood Toronto? If so, inform students and have them guess which group mirrors Planned Parenthood Toronto. If not, have students return to their groups to try and re-organize their information.
- Give students three opportunities to match Planned Parenthood Toronto list. Let them know when there is a match.
- If after three attempts, students do not produce a match discuss why this might be so. Have them refer back to the lists they have recorded and explain their rationale for organizing the topics in the order they did.
- Reveal Planned Parenthood Toronto’s list. Discuss the differences and similarities between student’s lists and Planned Parenthood’s data. What are some reasons for these differences and similarities? What do student’s think of Planned Parenthood’s data? Does it seem accurate? Why? Why not?

Part II

Assign each group one topic from the list used in the previous exercise.
The group must work together to collect the following kinds of information on their topic:

- Three current newspaper articles about the topic.
- A pamphlet on the topic from their school’s guidance office.
- Place a call to Planned Parenthood Toronto’s info hotline (416-961-3200) or instant message Planned Parenthood Toronto at spiderbytes@hotmail.com and ask a sexual health professional a question about their topic and record the response to share with classmates.
- Find two reliable websites on their topic.
- Debunk two myths about the topic.
- Find three recent statistics that shed light on the topic.
- Design an activity that uses the information discovered.

Debrief

- Re-group back in the classroom and share the results one group at a time.
- What were students surprised by?
- Was it ever impossible to find the required information or fulfill the required task? When? Why?
Sexual Health Topic Flashcards

- Puberty
- Sex FAQ
- Puberty Info Penis
- Turned On
- Losing Virginity
- Sex Acts
- Health FAQ
- Being a Virgin
- Health Anatomy
- Female External
- Sex
Culminating Activity

Test Your Sexual Health Knowledge!

- Once every group has reported to the class, have a brief discussion about the most interesting information discovered (record on the board or on chart paper).
- Next, as a class, compile a true/false or multiple choice quiz for students in the school to complete. Keep it short, 20 questions at most. Students taking the quiz should remain anonymous. Students may use online “quiz generators” or an online tool such as surveymonkey.com to conduct their quizzes.
- Organize an appropriate time for students in the school to take the quiz (lunch time, spare, or even during an assembly) or partner with another teacher and ask another class to get involved in the activity by taking the quiz.
- Once students have completed the quiz analyze the responses. Determine by percentage how many students responded accurately.
- What is the state of students’ sexual health knowledge? What is missing? What does our sexual health knowledge say about who we are?
- Post the quiz results.

Extension: have students design a visual learning tool such as a chart or a poster that displays the information collected in a visually pleasing way and post it somewhere in your school.

Hint:
If your school is exploring character development try and coordinate the above activities with character development initiatives! The unit exercises connect with:
Respect
Responsibility
Integrity
Teachers: have students use these tips provided by Jon Kaplan to help them write a review of *Are We There Yet?* We would love your feedback on the show! Please send your play reviews to online@lktyp.ca.

- Whether going to the theatre as a reviewer or simply an audience member, I think that watching a play is an emotional experience and not just an intellectual one. I always let a show wash over me, letting it touch my feelings, and only later, after the show, do I try to analyze those feelings.

- That’s when I start to think about some of the basic questions you ask when you’re writing a review – what did I see (story, characters, themes); how did I respond to what I saw; what parts of the production (script, performances, direction, design and possibly other elements) made me feel and think what I did; why was I supposed to respond in that fashion?

- Writing a review doesn’t mean providing a plot summary. That’s only part of the job; you have to discuss your reaction to what you saw and try to explore some of the reasons for that reaction.

- I don’t believe that there’s any such thing as a totally objective piece of criticism. We are all individuals, bringing our own backgrounds, experiences and beliefs to a production. In some fashion, every one of us sitting in the theatre is a critic, no matter whether we’re writing a review or not; we all react to and form judgments about what we see on the stage.

- When I go to a production, I always keep in mind that the people involved in putting it on have worked long and hard – weeks, months, sometimes years – getting it onto the stage. Even if I have problems with the result, it’s important to respect the efforts that went into the show.

Jon Kaplan is senior theatre writer at NOW Magazine, where he’s worked for the past 28 years.

---

Tips for Writing a Play Review
By Jon Kaplan

L-R: NADIEN CHU, JEREMY BAUMUNG | NADIEN CHU, RYLAND ALEXANDER | PHOTO: EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY INC.
Resources

Organizations

The 519 Church Street Community Centre
519 Church Street
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9
Phone: 416-392-6874
www.the519.org

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
Queen Street site
1001 Queen Street West and 60 White Squirrel Way (Queen and Ossington)
Toronto, Ontario M6J 1H4
(416) 535-8501
www.camh.net

Planned Parenthood Toronto (The House)
36B Prince Arthur Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5R 1A9
Phone: 416-961-0113
www.ppt.on.ca

Sherbourne Health Centre
333 Sherbourne Street
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2S5
416-324-4180
E-mail: info@sherbourne.on.ca
www.sherbourne.on.ca

Toronto Hassle Free Clinic
66 Gerrard Street East, 2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1G3
Women's clinic: 416-922-0566
Men's clinic: 416-922-0603
www.hasslefreeclinic.org

University of Toronto Health Services
Koffler Student Services Centre
214 College Street - Second Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5T 2Z9
Phone: 416-978-803
www.utoronto.ca/health/
Books

The Survivor’s Guide to Sex: How to Create Your Own Empowered Sexuality After Childhood Sexual Abuse (Paperback)


It’s Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health (The Family Library) (Paperback)


Speaking of sex: Are you ready to answer the questions your kids will ask? (Paperback)

Hickling, Meg. Speaking of Sex: Are you ready to answer the questions your kids will ask?. Wood Lake Books, 2005.

GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer & Questioning Teens (Paperback)


Victims No Longer (Paperback)


My Body, My Self for Girls: The “What’s Happening to My Body?” Workbook (Paperback)


What’s Happening to My Body? Girls (Hardcover)


Is It a Choice? - Revised Edition: Answers to 300 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions about Gays and Lesbian People


Our Bodies, Ourselves: A New Edition for a New Era

**Websites**

211 Toronto.
www.211toronto.ca

ACT Toronto
www.actoronto.org

Canadian Health Network - Réseau canadien de la santé

Go Ask Alice
www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/

Medline Plus Health Information
www.medlineplus.gov

Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children
www.metrac.org

Sexual Health Exchange
www.kit.nl/exchange

Sexuality and U
www.sexualityandu.ca

Teenwire
www.teenwire.com/

Won’t Get Weird
www.wontgetweird.com

---

**Hear Me Out: True Stories of Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia (Paperback)**


**Article**


**Documentary**

The Education of Shelby Knox
By Marion Lipschutz and Rose Rosenblatt
www.pbs.org/pov/pov2005/shelbyknox/
Arts Impact: Making a difference in the lives of students

LKTYP is proud to have Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life as lead sponsors for its Arts Impact program, which provides opportunities for schools in low-income areas of Toronto to participate in quality arts education. Arts Impact’s goal is to deepen students’ understanding of theatre, allowing them to be inspired by the material presented on stage and to think in ways that challenge their own perceptions.

Connections: Addressing the pattern of poverty

There is empirical evidence that children who live in poverty are at greater risk of dropping out of school. Studies have also proven that exposure to arts improves scholastic ability and attendance. Thanks to the generosity of CIBC World Markets Children’s Foundation, LKTYP can offer special subsidized tickets to qualifying schools.
Allen MacInnis
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LORRAINE KIMSA
THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
(formerly Young Peoples Theatre) is the largest Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) company in Canada and a significant institution in the Canadian professional theatre community. Over our 43-year history we have produced many of the most important works that now form the canon of plays for young audiences in this country. At the heart of founder Susan Rubes’ idea for Young Peoples Theatre (YPT) was a belief that children deserve a theatre of their own – with resources and standards no lesser than those for adults. She believed – as we do today – that young people deserve good theatre because theatre is good for young people.

Through the communal experience of the theatre we create for them, children can receive indications of what is important, funny, trivial; positive, negative, wrong, right, rightish, wrongish; frightening, reassuring, empowering, unavoidable; familiar, new, eternal … We strongly believe that even through the most playful of plays, we are speaking powerfully to children about the community and the world in which they live.

Therefore, at the centre of the artistic policy of LKTYP is a desire to have a positive and lasting impact on the emotional, social, and intellectual development of young people. We want children to be imprinted with experiences that will increase their access to the world, in order for them to grow into the unique and wonderful people they were born to be. To do this, our programming is drawn from the world classics of children’s stories, from contemporary works, from the new plays we develop, and from productions showcasing the most innovative and accomplished theatre for young audiences by other Canadian and international theatre companies.

At LKTYP, because we are serious about child development through theatre art, children can experience our work as either audience members or theatre creators. We extend the learning opportunities of our professional productions through our substantial Education & Participation Department. The Department’s services for teachers and students helps connect curriculum objectives and learning outcomes to the content of our professional productions; its Community Participation projects link our theatre skill with the educational aspirations of partners who are dedicated to the growth of young people; our interest-based Drama School offers young people the chance to engage deeply in the excitement of theatre art; and our Community Volunteer programme offers everyone who wants it, the opportunity to participate in the mission of LKTYP.

LKTYP is not only a professional theatre for young audiences but a vital community-based centre of arts education.