

## Behaviour Change in Schools

Dead Earnest approach their work through a model of empowerment in which participants are encouraged to recognise, challenge and change their own behaviour. To encourage behaviour change you need to take people through these following stages:

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation and planning
- Action
- Maintenance
- Relapse

In a recent project we explored how we could apply this model to an education setting. By encouraging teachers to observe themselves and think about what changes they might like to make we begin by operating in the area of contemplation. However, this results in little actual change. When we encourage teachers to take risks and then to plan and deliver lessons with pupils we move into the areas of 'Preparation and planning' and 'Action'. There is even some degree of 'Maintenance' in the Peer support sessions that we can establish. This results in change, but without further maintenance some of the learning might disappear and result in a relapse back to old methods.

It is also interesting to test the effectiveness of a 'Forum' theatre presentation as a model for changing behaviour. The immediate responses are often extremely positive "The only opportunity we've had to debate 'real' issues as a staff" etc, but in itself a performance can only get participants to contemplate change and can't expect to result in much actual change (unless it resonates so intensely with someone that it provides a 'trigger' for action). Therefore in structuring our work we often try to follow up performances with some practical exercises and planning activities to ensure the benefit is both 'contemplation' and 'preparation and planning'

Certain creative approaches might well enable you to recognise that you could behave in a different and possibly better way, but contemplation doesn't in itself result in change. It takes support in preparing & planning, taking action and maintaining the momentum, which in a school context has to come from within the school itself. We can help to devise a peer support approach in which teachers observe and support each other in improving their performance.