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In association with Unity  
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## Self-care toolkit

**wellcome  
collection**

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**UNITY**

# TOUCHY

Five short films, five unique stories, five reasons to watch.

Touchy is a project made by 20 Stories High in collaboration with six Liverpool-based artists. In May 2021, we'll release each film weekly, and they will be available to watch on YouTube and Instagram for a while after. We start with Jemell's story – which this toolkit supports, moving through the weeks to Max's story at the end.

Self-care toolkits are available for all five films (or as one combined toolkit) from our website: [www.20storieshigh.org.uk](http://www.20storieshigh.org.uk)

## About Touchy

A mash up of theatre and music video – interweaving beats, drama, poetry, animation, visuals and original music. We follow the journey of six characters as they navigate their way through the tactile highs and lows of young adulthood.

## About Jazz's story

**Jazz's Story** is a tender and uplifting R'n'B love story exploring public displays of affection in a same sex relationship.

Jazz's story was created by artist Faye Donna Francis, with support from the team and Creative Consultant Emily McChrystal.

## About Faye Donna Francis

Faye is an actor, singer/songwriter based in Liverpool. She is currently training with Both Feet Actors & Galloway Vocals and has previously trained at Arts Educational Schools London, Script Writing North and National Youth Theatre (NYT).

As an Actor & Singer, Faye is extremely passionate about exploring "truth" in her creative practises. Faye has worked on productions such as Luke Barnes's "Lost Boys" in collaboration with NYT, she is part of Tmesis Theatre's "Wicked Women" creative development programme and is currently working on Paislie Reid's research and development production, "Thank You for the Hospitality".

Faye's music is influenced by the genres of RnB, gospel and disco and has received local airplay on BBC Radio Merseyside. Her debut single "Keep Him Keen" released in January 2021, is currently available to download on all music streaming platforms. Her next single, "Where Do We Even Go" will be released on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Faye is a member of the 20 Stories High's Young Actors Company & has been involved in multiple acting and music workshops. "Touchy" is Faye's first professional gig with the company.

## About Emily McChrystal

Emily McChrystal is a 21-year-old poet, activist, lesbian and lived-experience advocate. She works within the creative third sector to challenge inequity within media for marginalised youth. Emily is in a long-term relationship with a woman and focuses a lot of her craft around sharing the often-misrepresented experiences that Jazz's story authentically highlights.

### **Other Touchy stories**

**Jemell's Story** blends Hip-Hop and storytelling to tell the story of a young Black lad living with undiagnosed autism.

**Ella and Ste's Story** investigates consent, with a story that explores the conflicting recollections of an intimate moment from many moons ago.

**Sophie's Story** explores how a young woman renegotiates her relationship with her Grandad Kojo during lockdown.

And finally, in **Max's Story**, a young trans guy guides us through his discoveries around social touch with a funny and heart-warming animation.

Co-created with a multi-talented collection of rappers, singers', actors, poets, beatmakers, writers, visual artists and animators. Touchy offers a unique exploration in the world of touch.

### **Content Overview**

Jazz's story contains themes of same-sex relationships and romantic touch in public spaces. There is a detailed breakdown of what story Jazz tells at the end of this pack, please read it ahead of watching if you would like further information.

Suitable for ages 13 plus.

# Why this toolkit?

This toolkit has been designed to offer support to anyone engaging with the film, especially anyone who might be impacted by its content. We hope this toolkit provides you with specialist resources and tools from professionals that may help.

## Tips – how to look after yourself

- **Go at your own pace:** If you don't want to watch this all at once, maybe consider watching the film a bit at a time. Jazz's story is told through an R'n'B music video and is 7 minutes long in total. It'll be available on YouTube and Instagram for the next few years at least. Do what feels right for you.
- **Watch with someone:** Watching with someone who knows you and any connections you may have to the theme of this film may help when it comes to recognising if you need to switch it off, or if you need support. Or if you can't watch with someone, maybe message someone ahead of watching, and let them know you might call them if you need support.
- **Read a summary of the film:** If you would like to know the content before you watch, so that there is nothing unexpected, you will find a full breakdown of the piece at the bottom of this document.
- **Remember it is your choice:** Remember it is your choice to watch this film – you are in the driving seat. There should never be any pressure to do otherwise. You are in control, even if you might not feel it. If you are feeling overwhelmed at any point, turn the film off and try some grounding techniques.
- **Remember your breath:** If you become triggered, breathing is a great way to bring yourself back into a state of calm, lower your heart rate and create space in your brain to start thinking things through at an easier pace. Try breathing in for four seconds, holding your breath for four seconds, exhaling for four seconds and holding again. Repeat this for as long as you need until your breath feels in control again. Lots of mobiles and smart watches offer apps which can help you with this.
- **Get some fresh air:** Going for a walk or even just standing outdoors can help.
- **Get help:** If you notice that you have become overwhelmed - and the techniques suggested here or techniques that usually bring you calm have not this time - then you recognise that and consider getting professional support. See the bottom of this document for helplines and organisations who can help.

*Advice taken from The Survivor's Trust blog: Taking Care of yourself & I May Destroy You – find more advice and tips here: <https://bit.ly/3v6rw2H> - this article was created by The Survivor's Trust in order to help viewers in making the choice to watch the TV series **I May Destroy You**. Although our Touchy films have differing themes, the ideas and tips are relevant for lots of shows and films that may be triggering.*

# Signposting

## **The LGBT Foundation**

[www.lgbt.foundation](http://www.lgbt.foundation)

0345 330 3030

A national charity delivering advice, support and information service to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities.

## **Stonewall**

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

0800 050 2020

A national charity for empowering individual, changing and protecting laws, changing hearts and minds and transforming institutions.

## **Young Stonewall**

[www.youngstonewall.org.uk](http://www.youngstonewall.org.uk)

We're here to let all young lesbian, gay, bi and trans people - as well as those who are questioning - here and abroad, know they're not alone.

## **GYRO Liverpool**

[www.liverpoolcamhs.com/support/gyro-ypas](http://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/support/gyro-ypas)

Support line (24/7): 0151 293 3577

GYRO is a collection of groups for young people who identify themselves as: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans, or who are Questioning their sexuality or gender identity (LGBTQ+)

## **The Proud Trust**

[www.theproudtrust.org](http://www.theproudtrust.org)

0161 660 3347

The Proud Trust supports LGBTQ+ young people empower themselves and their communities through youth groups, coordinating national LGBTQ+ youth work networks, managing the LGBTQ+ Centre for Manchester, undertaking research and creating resources.

## **Rainbow Noir**

[www.rainbownoirmcr.com](http://www.rainbownoirmcr.com)

A volunteer led social, peer support and community action group, which celebrates and platforms people of colour who identify as LGBTQI in Greater Manchester and the North West.

## **MindOut**

[www.mindout.org.uk](http://www.mindout.org.uk)

01273 234839

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Mental Health Service

## **Not sure where to turn?**

The Mix offers a wide range of support for young people under the age of 25.

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk) (for 1-2-1 chat and messenger)

0808 808 4994

## **Useful apps:**

- Hub of Hope
- Woebot
- Headspace
- Calm

# Synopsis of the Film:

## Jazz's story

Jazz's story is told through a duet in a R'n'B music video. It explores public displays of affection in a same sex relationship.

We start with Jazz sat in a park. The scenes cut between the park and her room – her creative space. She sings about needing her girlfriend's touch, the small signs of affection that display their love in public. She sings about wanting to escape 'unwanted attention' but also the desire to be physically close and connected – a sign of love.

The chorus recites Jazz's need, and want, to be touched. She sings about how this public display of affection makes Jazz feel loved and needed.

Jazz continues to explore their relationship and asks, 'am I a phase?', she sings about how her partners' family assume that she is straight. Jazz recognises that this is a sensitive topic – she does not want to take over her partners 'space' to come out to her own family. Jazz questions about slowing the tempo.

We return to the chorus (as above), and Jazz ends her verses by asking her partner to 'Touch me, reciprocate the feeling'. Jazz knows that her partner wants to.

The second part of the song is sang by Cat, responding to Jazz. We don't see Cat – just a shadow of her. She asks 'why do we live dangerously?' and replies to Jazz by saying she cares about being affectionate in public with her because people stare. Cat sings about feeling euphoric when they do show their love in public. She reworks Jazz's chorus, appreciating that Jazz led the way and she now feels at ease. At this point, we see Jazz's shadow enter Cat's space. They embrace, and dance and show affection.

We then see submissions which were sent in by female-identifying people in same-sex relationships. These are a mixture of artwork, personal videos and pictures. They are all celebratory of the lesbian, same-sex relationship community.

Cat's verse finishes with a repetition of her request to compromise and take time for them to find their own way.

The music video finishes with a dedication to all the women who are navigating same-sex romantic touch in public spaces. It reminds us that we have time to reach out our hands, to understand one another. It recognises the generational 'radicalness' of same-sex couples showing affection in public spaces. The song finishes by reflecting on Cat's final request – to take time and learn how to give, receive, and support public displays of affection in same-sex relationships.



# Further Information

## **What positive words can I use when talking about LGBT relationships?**

For many people, understanding gender, sexuality and LGBTQIA+ identities can be confusing. The most important thing to remember is that the words one person uses to identify themselves may be different to the next person. It is good to ask how a person identifies, and to respect their answer. Identities can be fluid and people often realise new things about themselves. The words that someone uses at one point in their life, may not be words that they will always identify with. Below are some of the most common terms used when talking about sexual orientation (who you're attracted to) and gender identity (how you feel about and see yourself):

- Same-sex relationship: a relationship between people who identify as the same gender
- LGBTQIA – an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual. Sometimes, the 'Q' can also mean 'questioning'. We often add a plus sign (+) to the end of this, to abbreviate all of the letters that represent other sexual or gender identities that we have not listed. This is commonly accepted as inclusive practice.
- Gay - People whose physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex. Sometimes lesbian is the preferred term for women
- Lesbian - A woman whose physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay, or as gay women.
- Queer - A word used by some people whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual. Historically, considered a derogatory term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTQIA+ people to describe themselves.
- Intersex - refers to people who naturally have biological traits which do not match what is typically identified as male or female.
- Asexual - an umbrella term used for individuals who do not experience, or experience a low level, of sexual desire. Sometimes the 'A' in the acronym LGBTQIA+ is used for Ally instead – to describe someone who supports the LGBTQIA+ community.

## **What are gender pronouns?**

Pronouns are used in everyday life to identify or reference someone's gender. Common ones are he/him – typically used by those who identify as male  
she/her - typically used by those who identify as female  
they/them – may be used by someone who identifies as non-binary or does not feel that male or female represents them. Another pronoun used by non-binary people are 'ze' (in place of female pronouns) or 'hir' (in place of male pronouns).

## **Why do some people in the LGBTQIA+ community feel anxious about coming out to family or friends?**

'Coming Out' is a lifelong process of self-acceptance. People often create an LGBTQIA+ identity for themselves first before they reveal it to others. Publicly sharing an identity may feel casual and easy, or incredibly difficult. LGBTQIA+ people may have to come out many times during their lives, and in different spaces. Most people worry about how friends, family and colleagues will react because responses can range from very positive, to less welcoming. There is no right or wrong way, or time, to come out. Often, people from LGBTQIA+ communities have been thinking about coming out for a long time and have taken time to decide what to say. Although it is difficult to predict what people will say or do, initial reactions such as shock, worry or silence don't necessarily reflect how family or friends will feel forever. Sometimes, family or friends remain less welcoming and need time to process what they have been told. The idea that these may be the first responses can make some people feel anxious about coming out.

## Why do some same-sex couples feel uncomfortable being affectionate in public?

It can feel natural to reach for a partner's hand or give them a kiss in public. These small displays of affection can show our partner how we feel. We often see heterosexual couples in the media, and in our communities, publicly displaying their affection without receiving much unwanted attention. However, couples from the LGBTQIA+ community can sometimes find themselves a target of prejudice and abuse when they are openly affectionate. In a recent survey, 36% of LGBTQIA+ people said that they don't feel comfortable walking down the street while holding their partner's hand.

Although there are many organisations trying to change the way that some people perceive same-sex couples, prejudice and discrimination does still exist. This can make it difficult for the LGBTQIA+ community to feel safe and supported in public spaces. If you are in a same-sex relationship, it is okay to feel this way. Everyone has different experiences and the way that one person feels about how, when, and why they display their affection for their partner publicly can be very different to the next person. There are organisations in the signposting section that can support couples to have these conversations, and information below on how to be a good ally to the LGBTQIA+ community.

## How can I be a good ally to the LGBTQIA+ community?

An ally is someone who does not identify within the LGBTQIA+ umbrella (i.e. who is heterosexual and/or cisgender) but supports the LGBTQIA+ community and their political struggles. Stonewall has made the following recommendations for all individuals who want to help tackle anti-LGBTQIA+ hate crime and discrimination:

- Take a visible stand against LGBTQIA+ hate crime, join Stonewall's ['Come Out for LGBT'](#) campaign and encourage your friends, family and colleagues to join the campaign too. The five basic steps include:
  1. Familiarise yourself with language
  2. Educate yourself on the history of LGBTQIA+ activism
  3. Discover the challenges facing the LGBTQIA+ community today
  4. Get involved in the community and show your support
  5. Stand up for what you believe in
- Call out anti-LGBTQIA+ abuse whenever you see it, so long as it is safe to do so. Support those being targeted by letting them know you are an ally
- Let local business owners know if you witness an anti-LGBTQIA+ incident from staff or other customers, so that they can tackle it. Make clear that they could risk losing you and others as customers if they don't
- Report incidents of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic discrimination you experience when accessing public services like housing or social services to the service provider or local council so they can take action. Contact Stonewall's Information Service on 08000 50 20 20 for advice and support.

*Info taken from The Proud Trust, GLAAD, Stonewall and Springfield.eu*

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