

## CHARACTERS

### ASHLEY

- Describe what loneliness means to you. What makes you feel lonely?
- What do you imagine depression feels like?
- Is addiction genetic or something that happens because of your situation, environment and friends?
- Why do you think people bully? How do you deal with bullying?
- What is brain injury? How do you think it has affected Ashley's life?
- What is the connection between alcohol consumption and violence?
- How and why does alcohol make you a 'different' person?
- Ashley says "Everyone needs a parent." Do you agree?
- Ashley says that he hasn't worked out his dream as yet. What is your dream and do you think it is important to have a dream?

### MICHAEL

- Why do you think that Michael is not living at home with his parents?
- Is Michael ambitious and how is this demonstrated?
- How difficult would it be to undertake studies outside of the 'normal' school environment?
- What leads you to believe that Michael will or will not be successful in his life?
- Would you enjoy living independently and what would be the advantages and disadvantages of living away from home?

### ELLA

- What kind of opportunities and programs does Oasis provide to help young people?
- Do you, or does anyone you know, have anger management issues similar to those experienced by Ella?
- How do you deal with conflict and arguments with your parents?
- Not all parents stay together. What is your experience of families that have split up?
- What does the term 'junkie' mean to you? Have you ever had an addiction to something that you have had to break?
- Do you have your own room? How important to you is having your own space?
- Could any of your hobbies translate into a career?

## FRESHIE

- Why does Freshie write songs about his life and Oasis?
- What other ways could you tell your life story creatively?
- Do you ever write or sing about experiences in your life?
- Take an experience from your life which has made a deep impression on you and turn it into a song or a poem or a short story or even a short film.
- Do you think creative expression can be therapeutic?

## FRANKIE AND BREE

- If you were in the same situation as Frankie & Bree would you choose to have the baby?
- What options would be available to you?
- How do you think having a child impacts on your life, both positively and negatively?
- What are the responsibilities of having a child?
- What do you think makes a 'good dad' and 'a good mum'?
- How do you learn to be a parent?
- What sort of qualities does it take to provide for a child, both physically and emotionally?

## BEAU

- What kind of treatments are there for people with mental illness?
- What kind of impact do you think drug and alcohol use can have on mental illness?
- How important are the examples set by your parents, for your own personal development?
- Who do you consider to have had a fundamentally positive impact on your life and why?
- What is the importance of friendship in your life?
- Beau takes strength from his faith. How does faith figure in your life?

## DANIEL

- If something happened to your parents, are there family members or friends whom you could live with? What would that be like?
- What is your personal experience of violent situations either at home or elsewhere? What impact did this have on you?
- Daniel 'feels' he is an alcoholic. What makes him say that?
- What are the benefits of being involved in sport either at school or outside?
- If you had a problem with alcohol and decided to get help, how easy do you think it would be to get a place in a detox or rehabilitation facility?

## ESTHER

- What kind of things can happen to a young girl sleeping on the street?
- What kind of perceptions of hygiene do people have of street people?
- What accommodation options are available for young people if they are on the street?
- Why does Esther make jewellery?
- If you received a youth allowance of less than \$200 a week, how would you manage your money? What are the basic necessities and how would you prioritise them?
- What are the key elements that help you as students to study well at school? (stable accommodation, supportive environment, proper diet?)
- Do you think you would be able to study properly if you were living on the street? Why/why not?
- What kind of legal help is available for young people living on the street?
- What options are there for young people who aren't academic or don't fit into traditional schooling/education models?
- How do you think a parent might feel if their child left home and was living on the street?

## FLETCH

- What kind of impact can parents who are drug or alcohol users have on their children?
- What options do young people on the street have to support themselves financially?
- What are the benefits of having a job, personally and financially?
- What kind of living environment is conducive to holding down a stable job?
- What are the psychological effects of never getting a good night's sleep?
- Do you think there are significant links between mental illness and living on the street?
- Do you know anyone who suffers from mental illness?

## KEN

- What are the benefits of volunteer work for Ken and the Salvos?
- Are you involved in any volunteer work or do you know anyone who is?
- What sort of organisation would you choose to volunteer for and in what capacity? What sort of commitment would you be prepared to make?
- Ken feels that he was 'called' to work for the Salvos. Do you feel compelled to follow a particular job/path/direction in your life?
- Ken has a very rigid routine in his life. Do you have similar routines or rituals in your life that you enjoy or dislike?
- Ken believes young people are very materialistic and that money does not necessarily bring happiness. What are your thoughts?
- What are the things in your life that make you feel truly happy and fulfilled?
- What do you know about or think of the Salvation Army as an organisation?
- Have you ever given money or helped raised money for charity? For whom and why?

## MATTY

- What kind of benefits can a job bring for young people who are homeless?
- Do you earn money? Is it easy to budget your money? What kind of things do you prioritise?
- Would you be able to survive without any family?
- How would you run your household if you lived alone?
- How might young people living on the street have to adapt when they get their first stable independent home?
- What kind of things do you think trigger young people to start taking drugs and alcohol?
- How does peer pressure affect you in your daily life?
- What are some of the physical and psychological effects of drug and alcohol abuse?
- What treatment options are available for those wanting to break away from drug and alcohol abuse?

## SONYA

- Do you ever/often feel bored? What do you do to avoid being bored?
- How much does peer pressure influence what you do? What are the positive and negative instances of peer pressure that you have experienced?
- What are some strategies to avoid negative peer pressure?
- Is it important to balance work and fun in your lifestyle?
- What are your views on drug and alcohol use? What and how much is acceptable for young people?
- What kind of morals and values are important to you? Where did you learn these?
- How did Sonya go about overcoming the situation of her family?
- When do you think you would be ready to have a baby?
- Do you think someone with Sonya's experience of life is in a good position to help other young people whose lives go awry?
- What kind of life experiences have you learned most from and how have they made you who you are today?

Next: Short Films about Events

# EVENTS

Young people who require the support of Oasis Youth Services have access to a variety of programmes and activities in addition to the offer of a place to sleep and eat. These programs are established as a way of bringing young people together and offering them possibilities for skill building, engaging with the community and employment.

The short films Luna Park, Paint Ball, Freeway Camp and Girls Club show experiences that most people would probably normally associate with school, family or peer groups.

**Luna Park** is a short film with no dialogue

- Why would Oasis take the kids to Luna Park?
- As no-one talks about how they feel during a day at Luna Park how does the filmmaker portray their feelings?

**Paint Ball**

- How do activities like Paint Ball encourage group bonding and leadership skills?
- Do you think homeless people need to develop these skills or does the activity have a different purpose? List three reasons why you think Paint Ball would be a good activity for the young people from Oasis.
- Captain Paul Moulds attends Paint Ball with the group, you can see that he is not just an administrator at Oasis but has real rapport with Oasis clients. Identify three instances where this is shown.

**Girls Club**

Girls Club provides an opportunity for the girls to get together with other young women. The film shows the beauty and grooming TAFE course, which culminates in a certificate for each participant. A part of girls club is to help the young women gain accreditation for a particular skill.

- How does joining a club like Girls Club encourage commitment and self respect?

**Freeway Camp**

A group of young people is taken to camp for a day or up to a week. While there they take part in activities such as horse riding, abseiling and climbing.

- What benefits might there be for these young people in being away from the urban environment?
- Young people face many challenges even when supported by family and school. How does focussing on and learning a new skill like rock climbing support young people in other aspects of life?
- A feeling of self worth is important in finding a positive place in society, for all of us. How do activities like Freeway Camp contribute to building self worth for marginalised young people?

## Christmas with the Salvos

Christmas with the Salvos started as a small gathering of kids at Oasis as Paul and Robbin Moulds did not want any of the kids there to spend Christmas alone. It has grown into a huge community event, supported by many businesses and individuals in Sydney. The Oasis clients have an opportunity to contribute to the wider community and support the Salvos by helping to pack Christmas hampers, selling their candle bags at *Carols in the Domain* and many also volunteer to help at the Christmas Lunch. Capt. Robbin Moulds organises the lunch, which is held in Waterloo. Santa hands out gifts for local children and in addition to the hampers distributed after lunch, more are delivered to people living on the streets in the local area.

- Robbin says “Our belief is no-one should spend Christmas alone.” How important is Christmas to you?
- Who do you spend Christmas with? If you were on your own, where would you go for Christmas?
- Preparing for the Christmas activities Michael says “It keeps me out of trouble and it’s fun.” What preparations do you enjoy at Christmas time?
- Have you ever volunteered for charities at Christmas? What charities operate Christmas functions in your area?
- The Christmas lunch is a huge event – identify 5 key organisational tasks needed for an event like this.

## Workshops

One-off workshops, as well as ongoing projects give young people opportunities to express their feelings and thoughts in a group environment. Role-playing and expressing ideas in a group forum can lead to positive choices about life paths. Identifying negative beliefs, patterns and behaviours can be very challenging in formal one on one counselling or in groups, whereas workshops aim to provide young people with a more relaxed environment in which to do this.

- How does the film show the young people expressing themselves and what behaviours are being addressed?
- Can you identify a time where expressing an opinion in a workshop or class through song, poetry or drama felt “safer” for you than expressing it in everyday life?
- What role does co-operating with other young people play?
- Resources like “Street Radio” are available to the kids – if you were given a 5 minute radio slot to broadcast to other young people, how would you use the time?

# Binge drinking and alcoholism

It is generally accepted that alcohol is the most widely used recreational drug in Australia. Many people drink wisely and moderately but for others alcohol consumption is too high and can lead to problems.

The effects of alcohol on the body will vary from person to person. Binge drinking (short term heavy drinking) is significantly different from alcoholism (a long term addiction to alcohol).

- What factors may influence how you might be affected by alcohol?
- When is it not a good idea to drink ie when you are pregnant?
- What are the immediate effects of binge drinking on your body?
- What are the long term risks associated with drinking too much as a young person?
- Why do you think that some young people are more prone to alcoholism than others?
- What is the attitude of your parents towards drinking?
- Do you feel pressured to alcohol by your peers?
- If you or any of your friends are concerned about the amount of alcohol that you or they are consuming, what steps could you take to seek help?

Links:

<http://www.headspace.org.au>

<http://www.adf.org.au/>

<http://www.drugs.health.gov.au/>

<http://www.reachout.com.au>

<http://www.somazone.com.au>