



Operation Shrink

By Ella McGran

**2026
SCHOOL
PACK**



in association with



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SUITABLE FOR STUDENTS AGED 14+

A real and honest story; Operation Shrink delves into Ella's lived experiences with an eating disorder. With confessional writing, intense workouts, and tap dance, this autobiographical solo show invites you to question what it looks like and means to live with an eating disorder.

Operation Shrink holds a magnifying glass up to Ella's brain and helps you to unravel all of the secrets hiding away up there. Join her as she delves into her turbulent relationship with an old friend named Steve, otherwise known as 'Atypical Anorexia', and her lifelong love of exercise (or not). Together you will gossip, dance, exercise profusely, and critically reflect on your time together.

TRIGGER WARNINGS – Themes of Disordered Eating, Obsessive Exercise, Emotional Abuse, and Mental Illness.

Approximate Running Time – 40 minutes



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RELEVANCE AND CURRICULUM

Themes discussed in *Operation Shrink* may be relevant to class studies in the following subjects:

- PSHE/RSHE (Mental wellbeing, body image, self-esteem)
- Drama (Autobiographical theatre, confessional writing, solo performance, breaking the fourth wall)
- English (Narrative voice, symbolism, metaphor)
- Health Education
- Citizenship (Social pressures, media influence)
- Dance (tap dance, movement, storytelling)

Possible Learning Objectives might include:

- To Develop an understanding of eating disorders and common misconceptions
- To encourage empathy and reduce stigma
- To explore how external pressures can impact mental health
- To build confidence in discussing topics safely
- To recognise what resources are available for guidance and support

Some suggestions for Pre-Show activities in the classroom include:

- Establish classroom ground rules for sensitive discussions
- Explore myths vs facts about eating disorders
- Investigate how social media influences body image
- Check vocabulary and define terms correctly and sensitively

Some suggestions for Post-Show discussions include:

- What emotions did the show raise for you?
- How did the production encourage empathy?
- What pressures did the character experience?
- How did the creative choices support the story?

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RELEVANCE AND CURRICULUM CNTD.

Some suggestions for creative classroom activities include:

- Write a monologue from a supportive character's perspective
- Create a visual response to the performance
- Write a letter of advice to a fictional friend
- Drama-based exercises on metaphor vs realism

Please note that students should never be asked to share or reflect upon their own personal experiences.

SUPPORT AND SIGNPOSTING

During the performance, students will be encouraged to speak to a parent, teacher, GP, or trusted adult if they are struggling. **If a disclosure should occur, please report directly to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).**

At the end of the performance, students will also be signposted to trusted organisations such as **BEAT Eating Disorders, Samaritans, MIND UK and Childline.**

BEAT Eating Disorder Helpline: **0808 801 0677** is open from Monday to Friday from 3pm to 8pm.

Samaritans Helpline: **116 123** is open 24/7.

Childline: **0800 1111** is open 24/7.

MIND UK: **0300 123 3393** is open from Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm excluding bank holidays.

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

“Approxiamtely 1.25 million people in the UK have an eating disorder. 25% of them are male, and Anorexia only accounts for 8% of them. So despite what many people may think, eating disorders are NOT visible and they’re certainly not something to go through alone.”

NHS research in 2023 found that the rate of possible eating problems in young people aged 11 to 16 was 12.3% and up to 57.2% for those aged 17 to 19. With the continuous rapid growth of social media and body image pressures, it’s likely that these numbers will continue to grow.

Operation Shrink talks openly about the societal pressures to look a certain way and the mental health struggles that can stem from this. An autobiographical presentation of a young person’s experience, the show aims to de-stigmatise the topics of disordered eating and body dysmorphia. Ella hopes that by sharing her story, she can help others to reach out for help.



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WHO AM I?

“Operation Shrink is a personal story of my lived experiences.

Sharing this show to as many people as possible is deeply important to me as I truly believe that by speaking truthfully, I can create an environment in which young people can feel safe, seen, heard, and part of a community in which they do not have to suffer in silence.

As a freelance drama facilitator and workshop leader I have found that sharing these lived experiences can be profoundly impactful for young people of all backgrounds. My mental health struggles began in secondary school and I know that a show like this one would have greatly supported me in my journey to recovery. I hope that *Operation Shrink* can offer an opportunity for safe and open discussions to be had to support these young people.”

Ella McGran - Writer and Performer

Enhanced DBS Certified
2 years teaching experience
Level 1 Safeguarding
Level 3 First Aid Certified
BA Theatre and Social Change

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STAFF AND STUDENT FEEDBACK

Staff Comments:

“Totally engaging. The message you send is really powerful and emotional, but with lots of help and hope that you can find yourself again, and recover.”

“Carry on what you are doing. You are making such a difference. Fabulous!!”

Student Comments:

“Brilliant performance piece”

“I learnt how common eating disorders can be”

“Really engaging”

“It was a monologue show instead of someone just reading off a powerpoint. Fantastic!”

“I loved the interactive activity.”

“I learnt that your body isn’t the issue”

“I loved the tap dancing, it was really cool”

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CONTACT DETAILS

For more information or to book a school visiting performance of *Operation Shrink* please contact:
ellakmcgran@outlook.com



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