

A note to families regarding PUSH's premier of *Jekyll and Hyde*

From Heather Stevenson, Director of PUSH Pins (PUSH Physical Theatre for children)

Welcome to *Jekyll and Hyde*! We are so glad you are about to take this journey with us.

Jekyll and Hyde deals with mature subject matter. The script uses complex vocabulary, dusted with 'adult' language for an irate Mr. Hyde. The movement showcases a variety of styles, including mime, ballet, vaudeville, and acrobatic partnering. The movement is both violent and seductive in nature, emphasizing the allure of selfishness. Emotional conflict prompts violent outbursts between characters. The intimate setting here at Blackfriars pushes these emotionally charged events practically onto your laps, as audience members.

With this in mind, we came up with a few questions to use as conversation-starters for you and your children, perhaps on the way home. We call it "Car Talk." Questions open conversation; thoughtful responses lead to trusted relationships.

Car Talk Questions:

1. Mr. Hyde is the *evil* within Dr. Jekyll. The play introduces other aspects of Jekyll: anxiety and lust. These clash against the good in Mr. Hyde. They create 'inner struggle' between all that is good and right and all that is self-serving and destructive.
 - Have you experienced that feeling of 'inner struggle?' Have you *wanted* to behave in a different way than you *were* behaving?
 - Have you experienced emotional conflict concerning what you're expected to believe versus what you would like to explore about your *own* beliefs?
2. When someone is described as a "Jekyll and Hyde," it is referring to how quickly he or she can change from 'everything is fine' to anger. It's like a *switch is flipped*, turning the anger on without warning to the people around him. These relationships can feel unsafe because you never know when that switch will flip. Sometimes you may suspect what's triggering that response and stay away from anything that might do so.
 - Have you seen a parent, teacher, friend or coach have a "Jekyll and Hyde" moment, where their emotions change suddenly from contentment to anger? How did that make you feel?
3. Strong emotions often build up physical energy. In our family, we recommend behavioral choices for our kids when feeling anxious or angry: yelling into a pillow, writing in a journal, exercising, doing laps around the house.
 - Are there tools you can use to calm your worry or settle your anger without causing harm to yourself or others?

We all struggle. We are complex human beings. I have found that when I am willing to learn about myself and strive to improve my responses to stress, I become emotionally *safe* for others. Remember that uneasy feeling you have when someone has an outburst? It can put you on edge, not knowing who is there – Jekyll or Hyde.

Dealing with the consequences of our actions is a real thing. Whether our actions are accidental or intentional, results naturally follow. We can make excuses and run from them, or stand up and handle these consequences honestly. The choice is ours.

If you think it would be a good idea to talk to a trusted adult about your inner Jekyll and Hyde, please ask to speak to a school counselor. They are there to help you. Or, ask your parent to set up an appointment for you to speak with someone outside of school.

The PUSH Team at Blackfriars Theater hopes you enjoy the show!

Heather R. Stevenson

Co-founding Director, PUSH Physical Theatre