

## **The name exercise**

There's nothing as important to us as our name. Hearing it, saying it, writing it. Our feeling about our name are deep rooted and emotional. Our name sums up who we are. Using personal names as a starting point for sharing, talking and writing can allow us to understand, perhaps in a light-hearted way, how individuals see themselves.

Throughout our lives we have all been called a variety of different names based on our given name. Some of these are family names, some known only to a certain few. When we hear names uttered by certain voices we feel a variety of emotion. My eldest brother – Big D as we called him, was one of the few in my family to call me 'Bean'. When I say that in my head I hear his voice, picture him and link into many memories associated with growing up, and being with him. There's a wealth of possibilities there for extension.

## ***So what's in a name?***

In my time I have been called: Geraldine, Ged, Gerry, Ger and Bean

- What have you been called?
- How did these names start?
- Who used them?
- How do you feel about these names?
- Do you have a favourite?
- What does hearing your name make you think of?
- Who do you like to say it?

Write how you feel about your name. If you write them in single lines you could call it a poem. It doesn't have to rhyme. If the closeness of the names feels too uncomfortable you could do this in pairs.

Ask your partner a little about themselves and then YOU write a poem based on what they tell you. Read it to them. Hearing about ourselves through someone else removes them slightly from the 'feeling'.

### **Geraldine's Poem**

Geraldine is also known as Ged  
Some of her friends call her Gerry  
But she calls her Uncle that  
And the name Gerry doesn't feel feminine.  
Special people call her Bean  
When she thinks of a special person saying that she sees her brother's face.