



Talking about knives and weapons

Talking with young people or young adults about knives and weapons can be difficult, whether you are a parent, professional or a friend.

People may not want to talk about the subject as they might be worried that they will get into trouble, will be seen by their friends as a 'grass' or 'snitch', or they feel that carrying a knife makes them feel safer.

This leaflet is intended to help you prepare for a conversation with someone about whether they are carrying a knife, why they are doing this and what you can do if they are.

Why do young people carry knives?

- **For protection:** People are afraid of being harmed and think they will be safer if they carry a knife
- **To gain respect:** People think they will get kudos and status amongst their friends if they are known to carry a knife

We should always remember that knife carrying is not normal and most people don't carry knives. Very few young people carry a knife with the intent to use it.

Your child could go to jail for up to 4 years if they're found in possession of a knife.

Talking about knives and weapons

Questions

- Be direct and don't be afraid to ask
- Explain why you are worried and why you are asking about knives and weapons
- Always try to find out why they are carrying a knife
- Listen and try not to lecture. Encourage people to share their fears and worries.
- Find out the days, times and places when they don't carry a weapon. Ask why they don't do this and what is it about these times and places that they feel safer or don't need to carry a weapon
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help

Next steps

- Focus on what the young person is good at, project a positive future for them
- Make sure that they always have someone they can speak with if they are worried. This may be a friend, an adult in their life or someone else
- Think about how you can increase the time when they aren't carrying a knife and what they are doing at those times
- Follow up with the person. Find times to talk regularly and give the person another chance to talk about their fears, worries and dreams
- If you are worried that someone is likely to be harmed then you should always report this, either to **Essex Police by calling 101** or **CrimeStoppers (0800 555 111** or online crimestoppers-uk.org)

In an emergency you should call 999.

Want to know more:

There are resources available for young people, parents and professionals on knives and weapons which provide more information.

There are also websites which can provide advice or offer support.

- No Knives Better Lives: Information for parents, young people and professionals on how to avoid harm from knives, and resources to help you talk about knives and weapons
www.noknivesbetterlives.com
- The Ben Kinsella Trust: Resources and information on knife crime. www.benkinsella.org.uk
- NSPCC: Information and advice to people involved in gangs as well as families and friends who are concerned. Telephone: **0808 800 5000** or visit www.nspcc.org.uk
- Essex: Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit
www.essexvvu.co.uk