



**TACKLING KNIFE CRIME**  
**LESSON PLAN 3**



## Lesson Overview:

To explore knife harm in relation to existing knowledge and decision making. Suitable for Y8 upwards

## Aims and Objectives:

1. To challenge reasons why young people may carry a knife
2. To understand how we make decisions in adolescence

## Lesson Type:

Activity and discussion based.

## Materials Needed:

Paper, pens

## Learning Outcomes:

- Young people understand the dangers of carrying a knife. Young people can describe why young people may feel they need to carry a knife.
- Young people begin to understand and can describe adolescent brain development.



# Introduction

This lesson plan is the third of three focused on knife crime.

The purpose of all of the sessions is to challenge pre-existing knowledge and change attitudes and opinions.

The sessions also aim to educate young people about the complexity of decision making and provide the opportunities for them to develop consequential thinking skills which can be applied in risky situations.

## This session

This session covers key points related to:

- Knife crime and the influences which may be present.
- Revisiting decision making and what this really means.
- How we can try and manage situations and get outcomes that keep us and others safe.

# Step 1 - Intro and activity

First, use the introductory statement below to introduce this session to the group.

***“Today we are going to complete our final session.***

***In the last session we looked at adolescent brain development and decision making. Today we’re going to explore this further and think about our own decision making skills and how we manage situations.***

***This is an important consideration for us all, making positive decisions which can keep us safe isn’t easy and when it comes to an issue such as knife crime the consequences don’t just affect us but others as well.***

***We are going to start the session by looking at a scenario and considering the factors that may affect the decisions of the young person it relates to.***

***Ok, let’s get started.”***

# Step 1 – Intro and activity

1. Now ask the group to discuss the scenario related to knife crime provided on the next page. You can print this out and provide to the group/s or you can project it on the whiteboard.

**PLEASE NOTE** – There are limitations in all scenarios as the real experiences of young people may differ to the scenario provided. If you do feel the scenario does not connect with the reality of the group, or individual groups within the session, then you can adapt the scenario.

2. Provide the scenario to the group and ask young people to discuss the situation.

After they have discussed the scenario generally we would like them to focus on the following key factors:

- **What are ALL of Josh's priorities in this situation?**
- **What are Josh's feelings in this situation? And to who?**
- **Is it going to be easy for Josh to avoid the consequences in this situation?**
- **The scenario states that there is pressure on Josh to use a knife, will it be easy for Josh not to do this if he doesn't want to?**

A crib sheet is provided after the scenario to provide you with talking points for each of these factors listed above.

3. After completion of this activity provide the statement below to the group:

***“So we have just looked at a scenario focused on knife crime, it should now be becoming clear that we are dealing with a complicated issue which can be difficult to manage.*”**

***But now let's think about how that scenario could have a different outcome.”***

# Scenario – Josh's story

Josh is 18. Tonight he's planning on going for a night out with his friends.

A few days ago an incident occurred between one of Josh's friends and another group of young people in their town.

There has been issues between them for months due to a falling out over money and it finally came to a head.

Josh's friend wasn't hurt but he's been angry ever since.

This friend suggests on WhatsApp they all carry that evening when they go out, just in case things things go wrong.

Josh doesn't usually carry a knife and never even thought about it before this issue with his friend a few months ago, he is reluctant, but does it anyway.

The night goes well until the early morning. They run into the other group of young people and a fight breaks out.

After the group run off, one of the group trips and is cornered by Josh.

Josh's friends know he's got a knife and start calling for him to use it.

# Scenario – Crib sheet

- **What are ALL of Josh's priorities in this situation?**
  - Josh doesn't want to carry a knife.
  - Josh doesn't want to 'let down' his friend/s.
  - Josh is likely to want to avoid the consequences of using a knife.
- **What are Josh's feelings in this situation? And to who?**
  - Josh has strong feelings towards his friends and doesn't want to let them down or be perceived in a certain way.
  - Josh is likely to have personal feelings of anxiety related to carrying a knife.
  - Josh is likely to feel scared in this situation.
- **Is it going to be easy for Josh to avoid the consequences in this situation?**
  - Will the pressure Josh feels and his competing priorities make this difficult?
- **The scenario states that there is pressure on Josh to use a knife, will it be easy for Josh not to do this if he doesn't want to?**
  - It is likely Josh is going to find this very difficult, it raises the point that should Josh have tried to avoid being in the situation in the first place while getting his priorities met?

# Step 2– Meeting our needs

1. We are now going to get the group thinking about how Josh could manage a situation like this while getting his need's met.

For the purposes of this activity it's important they consider how Josh could manage the situation given the realities discussed in the previous session related to feelings and priorities, not just knowledge.

We are aiming for young people to avoid simplistic answers, such as **'He just should say no, he won't use a knife'** or **'Just don't go out with your friends'**.

Whilst these may be valid for some young people who are strong enough to make these decisions, it is likely that many young people who find themselves in a scenario such as this would experience pressure and have priorities that may make engagement more likely.

2. After discussion provide the following questions to your group and discuss each in turn:

- **We have to get our needs met in any situation, when our friends are involved this can be complicated as we may have a 'need' towards them as well as what we really want to do. What do you think?**
- **How can we manage things then? Could Josh have found a way to avoid the situation that he clearly knew had potential risk? How could he have done this?**

The second question relates to the next part of the session, this is focused on how we think about and develop strategies for avoiding and managing risky or dangerous situations.



# Step 3– Excuses

1. We are now going to think about how we can realistically manage situations and meet our needs.

This reflects the complexity of decision making (Knowledge, Feelings, Priorities) that we have looked at in the previous sessions.

Ask young people to come up with a strategy for managing the situation. The parameters for the activity are:

- **It has to consider all of Josh’s priorities.**
- **It has to ensure that Josh does not find himself in the situation at the end of the scenario.**

Some examples:

1. **Josh could have made an excuse to not go out if he was anxious about the potential situation.**
2. **Josh could have invented a reason he needed to get home if he was anxious on the night out.**

2. After the group have come up with their strategies tell them the following:

***“We all have multiple priorities in the situations we find ourselves in and the pressure we feel in situations can be very real.***

***We all need to think about how we can manage situations to make sure our REAL needs are met and that we stay safe.***

***You should also remember you are not alone in this and there are people who can help.***

***Let’s think about what our support networks might be.”***

# Step 4 – Support network

Now we are going to complete a support network activity to help young people think about who might be able to provide support if they know or think someone is involved in a gang or at risk of knife crime.

It is important to encourage help seeking behaviours. Young people should seek the support of professionals if they have concerns about knife crime or gang involvement, whether this concerns a friend or peer or themselves.

## My Support Network

Young people should complete the worksheet on the next page focused on the development of a support network. The aim is to identify professionals and trusted adults who can provide support.

This activity should be completed individually by young people but you can encourage debate and discussion after everyone has completed their own network of support.

# My Support Network

<b>If I'm concerned about knife crime who can I talk to?</b>	<b>How can they help me?</b>
E.G – member of staff in school/college etc	They will know about other services who can provide support / provide reassurance to me

# Step 5 – Final activity

In this activity we are going to revisit some key learning points from the three sessions.

It is also an opportunity for young people to have a final discussion and ask any final questions they may have.

Work through the following discussion points in order and encourage any comments:

- **Knowledge** – We talked about knowledge and how it may not be a lack of knowledge that we are dealing with. We spoke about how many people have the knowledge and may take the risk anyway. **Can you remember what you already knew at the start of these sessions?**
- **Feelings**– We talked about how our feelings in a given situation and to certain people, like our friends, can have a real impact on our decisions. If we have strong feelings it can affect what we do. **Do you remember what some of these feelings which might influence us are? Did you think about how your feelings may affect your decisions?**
- **Priorities** – We talked about priorities and how we may have multiple needs in a situation. We can have a priority to not engage in a risk but other priorities can make it more likely that we might do it anyway. **Did you think about your priorities and how these could influence your decisions?**
- **Excuses**– We talked about how we may need to consider strategies for managing situations which ensure we can get ALL our needs met. **Can you remember the strategies you identified? Can you remember the ones we provided?**
- **Support Network** – Having someone you can talk to if your worried about knife crime and gang involvement is really important. There can be consequences if we try and do this all on our own, getting professionals to help is safer and more effective. **Can you remember your support network?**

# Session Close

We are now going to bring the session to a close. Use the following statement to summarise the learning from the session:

***“That brings these sessions to a close. We have covered a lot of information in these sessions and started to look deeper at why knife crime can happen even if people know the risks and consequences.***

***Remember, there is always support if you are worried about knife crime, gangs and gang involvement, for you, and your friends and peers.***

***I will provide you with some further details on where you can find support after we finish this session. (please see provided handout on the next page)***

***Thanks for all your hard work today, if anyone has any final comments or questions please share them.’***

# Sources of support – Handout

- **Childline** – Confidential helpline for any issue call **0800 1111**
- **Victim Support Essex** – You can seek advice from victim support if you've been a victim of crime, just phone **0808 17 81 694**
- **Children's Society** – Lots of info and advice on county Lines and exploitation – [www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)
- **Kooth** – Online free safe and anonymous support – [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**ESSEX**

**VIOLENCE &  
VULNERABILITY**

**UNIT**



the  
training  
effect

Produced by the Training Effect for the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit to support their campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of knife harm and carrying a knife.