

# Knife Session Plan

## Learning Intentions:

To understand the potential impact of carrying a knife.

To recognise the role of bystanders and ways in which bystanders could intervene

## Key Learning Outcomes:

### HWB 1/2/3/4-03a

I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

### HWB 1/2/3/4-04a

I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave.

### HWB 1/2/3/4-05a

I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others.

### LIT 3-02a

When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion. I can respond in ways appropriate to my role and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking.

## UNCRC Children's Rights

**Article 2** states that children have the right to protection against discrimination.

**Article 19** states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.

**Article 29** states that children have the right to an education which encourages them to respect other people's rights and values.

## GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicators:

Safe, Healthy, Respected, Responsible, Included.

## RSHP: Second level:

<https://rshp.scot/second-level/#protectingme>

## Success Criteria:

I can speak about the potential impact of carrying a knife

I know different ways I can safely intervene and support if I see this abuse.

**Preparation:**

- Prepare 5 min icebreaker activity (you can develop your own, or see session plan below for an example)
- PowerPoint slides or handout sheet(s) of scenario / train of thought / options (ppt. download available)
- Slides or flipchart with Agree Disagree Unsure statement (ppt. download available)
- Agree and Disagree signs
- A link to the 'Knife' animation. (download available) **\*\*Optional\*\***
- Current relevant statistics from <http://noknivesbetterlives.com/youngpeople/the-facts>

**Resources:**

- Projector & PowerPoint (if being used)
- Flipchart / whiteboard
- Marker pens
- Your Group Agreement (pin/tack this up in the room)
- Gender box flipcharts (pin/tack this up in the room)

**Other Useful resources:**

[A summary of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood \(RSHP\) resources | Resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

<http://www.gov.scot/topics/justice/policies/reducing-crime/reducing-violence>

## Introduction (2 minutes)

Welcome the group and inform them that **this session will explore the issue of knife carrying in Scotland. The session aims to raise awareness of the issue as well as supporting the group in situations when they are aware of a friend/classmate who is or may be carrying a knife or other weapon to/in school.**

Refer to the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria on the slide and also the Children's Rights articles this session will cover.

Refer to group agreement and ask if pupils would like to add / change anything.

**Remind the group that the issues raised in the lesson can be difficult and there might be people in the class with personal experiences. The group agreement is there so that everyone feels safe, included and supported.**

**If anyone needs support during the lesson they can ask a mentor or speak to the teacher who is nearby.**

**At the end of the lesson, mentors will put up a list of places in and out of school that can offer support if anyone needs it. They can also get these at any time from mentors or staff.**

# Icebreaker Activity (5 minutes)

**Example Icebreaker: Dynamite & Shields** - need space to move around in

Ask group members to pick another group member without giving it away to anyone. That person will be their “dynamite”.

Tell the group that their first task is to move around the room trying to keep as far away from their “dynamite” as possible. Do this for one minute. Give the group instructions like “change direction” “speed up”

When the group has stopped ask them to pick a different group member, again without giving it away. This second person will be their ‘shield’.

Explain to the group that their second task is to move around the room again trying to keep their “shield” in between them and their “dynamite”. Tell the group that when they hear you count down from ten they must freeze when you get to zero.

Ask the group to move around again. Do this for one minute or two, giving instructions that keep everyone moving and changing direction. Countdown from ten to zero and shout “stop”

Ask participants to use their left hand to point to their shield and their right hand to point to their “dynamite”. Anyone whose shield is between them and their “dynamite” is still alive!

## LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

Facilitate a brief discussion around the activity. Questions could include:

What did it feel like trying to avoid your “dynamite” in the first part of the exercise? Who was in control of the situation? Who or what is the “dynamite” in your life? What was it like trying to stay behind your shield? Who was in control of the situation? Who or what are the “shields” in your life?

## Scenario (5 minutes)

Remind the class that for this session they will be bystanders to an incident involving a friend, classmate or someone they know.

Show slide/ flipchart or share copy of scenario and ask for a volunteer to read the scenario (If, after asking twice, no one volunteers then read it yourself)

***Your friend has been getting bullied a bit lately. There has been a lot of name-calling which has also been happening over social media. Other people have been getting involved and joining in. Your friend has confided in you saying things are getting worse and they are sick of putting up with it. Others are talking about a big fight that is going to happen after school. At school, you notice what you think looks like a knife in your friend's bag.***

After reading the scenario, you can also show the group the 'Knives' animation. This is optional.

**Ask the group:**

**1. Is this realistic; is it the kind of thing that could happen?**

**2. Put your hand up if you feel there is something wrong with what is happening in this scenario...**

If most of the group raise their hand, before they are lowered ask them to look around the room and see how their friends/classmates have responded. If most don't put their hand up at this point – return to this question after the discussion part of the session.

**3. We've agreed that most of us think there is something wrong with this, so what are the red flags? What are the key words or phrases in this which make you think something is wrong?**

Ask pupils to discuss this for 30 seconds with the person beside them, then ask class to call them out – note the red flags down on flipchart/whiteboard as they are called out.

# Train of Thought (5 minutes)

Ask the group:

**As a bystander in this situation what questions might you have? What might you be thinking?**

This can be briefly discussed in pairs or groups and then shared

Ask for a volunteer to read the following train of thought (if after asking twice no one volunteers then read it yourself)

***What did I see? Was it a knife? It looked like one. Why would they think of bringing a knife to school? Should I tell someone about this? Will my friend get in trouble? What will people think of me if I speak to a teacher? Will I get called a grass? If I do nothing and someone gets hurt, how will I feel? Will I get in trouble? I'm sure they'd never use it, they're probably just protecting themselves. Then again they are my friend and I don't want them getting hurt or in trouble.***

**Nobody else is doing anything. What should I do?**

Ask the group:

1. Is there anything within that thought process which particularly stands out to you?
2. What reasons might someone give for not getting involved in this situation?

Suggestions may include: fear, think it's nothing to do with me, I might get into trouble, what if I get hurt? I'm over reacting

# Agree Disagree Unsure (15 minutes)

## **AGREE/DISAGREE/UNSURE**

Place your agree and disagree signs at opposite sides of the room.

Tell the group you are going to show them a statement (on ppt/flipchart) and they should decide whether they agree or disagree with the statement, then move to the relevant side of the room. If they are unsure, they can stand in the middle.

### Statement

#### **Carrying a knife for protection is sometimes ok**

Give a short amount of time for group to make their choice then ask 2-3 people in each group:  
**Why did you agree/disagree/Why are you unsure?**

#### **Ask the group:**

##### **1. Why do you think some people might carry a knife to protect themselves?**

Take some ideas from the group. Reasons might include they might be scared, they see it as the only option, they want to be the one in charge.

##### **2. What do you think the law around knife carrying says about carrying a knife for protection?**

There is no defence if you carry a knife, even for protection. You would be charged by the police.

##### **3. What are the likely consequences of carrying knives or other weapons in a situation like this, even for protection?**

As well as being charged by the police the person carrying the knife may hurt/kill another person. They may get hurt themselves.

Carrying of knives is against the law, even if you carry it to protect yourself. The reality is people get hurt. Even the person carrying the knife often gets hurt with their own knife. Remember in the scenario it is a friend that is involved.

##### **4. What other reasons might someone give for carrying a knife?**

Young people sometimes make the decision to carry a knife because they think that it is the "norm" - that lots of other people are or because their friends do and they want to fit in or have status. Knife carrying is not the norm, most young people would never carry a knife and it's not worth up to five years in prison just to look tough.

## **Statement 2**

### **There is a serious problem of young people carrying knives in Scottish schools.**

Give a short amount of time for group to make their choice then ask 2-3 people in each group:  
**Why did you agree/disagree/Why are you unsure?**

**Note** – this statement is designed to both reassure young people that these incidents whilst rare present the potential for individuals to be faced with challenging situations. Reassurance is not about downplaying the seriousness of knife carrying or telling young people that there is no problem whatsoever. Knife carrying is serious and one incident is one too many, but it's important not to exaggerate the extent of the problem so that young people do not feel disproportionately alarmed (and potentially more likely to carry a knife defensively) or have the impression that lots of other young are carrying knives (and potentially contributing to knife carrying because they think it's the norm).

**Ask the group:**

**1. What makes a problem serious?**

**2. Would a number of incidents make it serious or could just one incident make it a serious problem?**

**3. If it affected a friend would it become a serious problem?**

**4. Do you think knife carrying is an issue in schools?**

The statement can be used to reflect that the norm isn't to carry weapons. Whilst we can't ignore the fact it happens we can reassure young people that how they feel is actually how others feel on the issue.

*Crimes of handling offensive weapons have decreased 68% since 2006-07, to their second lowest level since 1984.*

*The number of young people under 18 convicted of handling an offensive weapon has fallen by 81% from 489 in 2006-07 to 92 in 2015-16.*

Statistically this is a huge change and it is important to acknowledge. It is also important to remember that these statistics are used here to illustrate that knife carrying is not the norm. **Reassurance** is the key point. Statistics will vary year on year and sometimes rise but knife carrying has never been the norm. It has been more problematic, but never the norm.

**5. Do you think that the way issues like knife carrying are reported in the media is helpful or unhelpful?**

Recent news articles have highlighted reports about knives in schools alongside pictures of machetes and large hunting knives. This does not accurately reflect the nature of any knife/weapon carrying in schools and can cause disproportionate alarm.



Ask group to raise their hands if they think bringing a knife or other weapon to school is not the right thing to do.

**Note** – likely that all of young people will raise their hands. Use this as an opportunity to have group look around the room. The raising of hands breaks down the group norms and helps individuals see that how they feel is how others feel.

## Discussion (5 minutes)

Ask group to sit down and again show the scenario.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Ask the group:

**1. What do friends do for each other?**

Look out for one another.

**2. Do you think it could be hard to stop a friend from doing something that may harm someone else or got them in trouble? Why might this be difficult for some people?**

Responses may include don't want to lose their friendship, don't want to get them into trouble, don't want to be a 'grass', their friend might be a strong person and the 'leader'.

**3. Why would it be important to do something here?**

Because the consequences of their actions could be very serious.

**4. What could be the consequences if you don't do something?**

That someone get seriously hurt/injured or that your friend end up with a criminal record.

**5. It says in the train of thought that telling a teacher or parent might end up with you being called a grass. Why would this stop some people from intervening?**

Because that's often seen as a bad thing to be and not being a good friend.

**6. If a friend is in trouble would speaking with a teacher or other adult make you a good friend?**

Yes!

# Responsibility

Refer to scenario, and **ask the group**:

**1. Do we have a responsibility to do something here?**

**2. Who do we have a responsibility to?**

You may need to prompt group:

**3. Do we have a responsibility to our friend? Why?**

What are the consequences if we do nothing here? What might happen? To our friend? To others?

**4. Do we have a responsibility to others around us that may get involved in any planned fight?**

What are the possible consequences for others?

**5. Do we have a responsibility to ourselves?**

We have a responsibility to keep ourselves safe, and to be able to say if we don't agree with something.

Explain to the group we are now going to explore some of the things we could do in this situation.

It might be helpful at this point to show the NKBL films One Knife, Many Lives (Mark's Story)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvC884FdpqM>

and "Paramedic"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoDyKJNzgw0>

The No Knives, Better Lives YouTube Channel has lots of useful short films including first-hand accounts from victims' families.

## Options (10 minutes)

If you have time you might ask the group to consider the pros and cons of these options in small groups first, before you discuss as a larger group.

When discussing options, consider the following:

### **Option 1: Do nothing. It's none of your business.**

**Ask the group:**

#### **1. Is this an option that some might consider using?**

We have already identified some of the reasons people might give for not getting involved.

#### **2. What might happen if you do nothing?**

Responses may include: your friend hurts or seriously injures someone. Your friend gets hurt or injured. Your friend get charged with the police and has a criminal record.

#### **3. What does doing nothing say to your friend?**

That you don't think there's anything wrong with what he's doing.

#### **4. What does doing nothing say to others?**

That this is okay and that you don't think there's a problem with it.

### **Option 2: Talk with your friend and tell him what you saw. Tell him you want to help.**

**Ask the group:**

#### **1. Why might people choose this option?**

It tells your friend you are there for them. It might stop the fight from taking place.

#### **2. What could you say to your friend?**

Provide class with opportunity to develop a way that they could confidently speak to their friend.

#### **3. What might happen if you chose this option?**

Your friend might deny it and get angry at you.

#### **4. What could you do to make this option a bit safer for you?**

You are looking for the class to use other friends for support.

### **Option 3: Talk with your friends and come up with a way to deal with this together.**

**Ask the group:**

#### **1. Why might involving friends be a good option?**

It helps make this a safe option. Safety in numbers.

Note – Refer group to the occasions in the session where the class have demonstrated a shared understanding that carrying a knife is wrong and could be harmful. Say something like you have friends who agree with you.

**Option 4: Talk about this with a parent/carer, a teacher/adult you trust or MVP mentor.**

**Ask the group:**

**1. Why might this be a good option to choose?**

You can get advice and help.

**2. What might make this a difficult option for some people to choose?**

Some might think they might get in trouble. Ask – Would you get in trouble for trying to help a friend? No, you wouldn't.

Also telling others may be seen as 'grassing' or 'snitching'. Ask group to consider this issue? Is it relevant?

Say to group "if your friend is in trouble would telling someone else make you a good friend or a grass?"

**Option 5: Call the police / speak to the school police officer or report to Fearless.**

**Ask the group:**

**1. Why might this be a good option?**

Police are there to help you.

**2. What might make this a difficult option for some people to choose?**

Some people might think their friend will get in trouble. Ask – what's the alternative if you don't speak to someone? Someone might get hurt.

### **Option 4 & 5 Notes**

NOTE: Fearless is a site where young people can access non-judgemental information about crime. What makes this site unique is that it also provides young people with a safe place to give information about crime - 100% anonymously. Always.

They won't ask for your name, address, phone number etc. They can't trace your computer or IP address. It's as easy as writing a text message – it only takes a couple of minutes.

<http://www.fearless.org>

NOTE: Young people might be particularly concerned or interested about what would happen if they told an adult or the police. There is no one answer to this but it is important to be clear that all adults will have a duty of care and will have to act on the information and this may involve at least speaking to the police. It is important that young people understand that there will be consequences for their friend. Their parents will definitely be informed and depending on the circumstances and the decision of the school and Police Scotland, their friend may be charged or referred to a youth justice or social work services.

## Option 6: Personal option

Ask the group:

### 1. Is there anything else you could do?

Remember to explore the possible consequences for any additional options.

Thank the group for their answers and ideas.

## Accessing support (1 minute)

The last slide highlights places and organisations in which learners can access support if they have been impacted by the lesson in any way or are worried about a friend.

Ensure that in-schools supports are discussed, but make the mentees aware of where they can get support outside of school, so that they have a range of options.

You can add local supports to the slide, alongside the national ones already included, that you feel are relevant to your community/area. You can also discuss this with your supports in school and also partners.

## Conclusion (1 minute)

Let the group know that as leaders, they have the opportunity to make sure their school and community are supportive, safe and inclusive.

**Ask the group:**

**What have you learnt from today's session?**

You might want to note responses on flipchart.

Reinforce key messages from discussion to include:

- ✓ While knives are occasionally brought into schools it is not common behaviour
- ✓ The majority of us are aware that carrying knives is wrong, can be harmful and is against the law.
- ✓ Carrying a knife because you are scared is no excuse. You can still be prosecuted by the police.
- ✓ We have a responsibility to support our friends even when they are in trouble.
- ✓ There are a number of options we can choose from to challenge behaviour we don't agree with.
- ✓ Telling someone else to help a friend does not make you a grass. Friends look out for one another.
- ✓ Words like 'grass' and 'snitch' often stop us from being the friend we want to be.
- ✓ We have a responsibility to help our friends and keep ourselves safe.

## Accessing support

Leave this slide up as the lesson finishes and the mentees leave.