



## SOME PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Know what knives and other items you have in the kitchen and toolbox. Check that they are all there
- Keep tabs on what is delivered to your home and look out for any online purchases. Knives can come in all shapes and sizes; recently a US company was found to be advertising on Instagram, knives disguised as lipsticks and combs – clearly aimed at young women
- Keep engaged with kids' lives; keep an eye on their social media accounts
- Think about searching their bag and room – is there evidence of drugs, extra money, new clothes?
- Consider other hiding places
- Remember it might not be a knife but some other weapon
- Know where they are and who they are with
- Encourage them to hang out in safe areas wherever possible

**REMEMBER - The conversation that you have today could save someone's life tomorrow.**



# KNIVES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### **#starttheconversation**

Police and charities that work in the area of violent crime agree that the best way to reduce street violence and the use of knives is to stop young people from carrying them in the first place. This will only happen through education; young people need to be better informed about the dangers and the consequences of carrying knives.

Too many young people still believe that carrying a knife will help them defend themselves, or that if you stab

someone in a certain place on their body, that won't cause serious injury.

This leaflet aims to help parents and other adults to raise the subject with young people and have the conversation to improve their awareness and understanding.

All young people should be encouraged to have this conversation – **EVEN IF YOU DON'T THINK IT IS RELEVANT TO YOUR CHILD OR THE YOUNG PERSON THAT YOU KNOW.** It is relevant to **ALL** young people.

## Getting started

Find the right time and place – somewhere the young person feels safe and relaxed. Ensure you won't be interrupted. Let them know you are not there to judge them.

## Listen

Don't expect or demand them to talk. If they do, be patient and try not to react badly to what they tell you. Let them have the voice in this conversation.

## Encourage them to share their fears

And, where appropriate, share your own fears – tell them how much you worry about their safety and their future.

## Be positive

Reassure them that the vast majority of young people don't carry knives. If they are scared of someone or something, tell them it can be dealt with without the need for them to carry a knife.

## Stick to the facts

Prepare well and know your facts. You will gain credibility in their eyes if you sound knowledgeable and clued-up.

## Be clear about false 'bravery'

Emphasise that if someone pulls a knife on them, the safest, wisest and bravest thing to do is to walk. Children fear backlash and being targeted by a wider group for not stepping up to a situation or individual. Remind them that this moment will pass and attention will move away from them in time.

Standing their ground can have lasting, devastating consequences.

## The impact

If they were to be stabbed, who else would be affected by that? Help them to think through what would happen and the impact on others, such as their siblings, parents and friends.

## Make it relevant

Refer to recent news stories or local events. Also, try to make yourself relevant to the conversation, as it's likely the young person will think you are old and out-of-touch and have no idea about the challenges they face. Are there examples you can draw on from your own childhood or personal experience?

## Suggest alternatives

Tell them about fun, safe activities for young people in their area.

## If they are already involved in knife crime

If you learn some worrying things about the young person, try not to react badly. You could end up pushing them away. Use the conversation to help them understand the risks and consequences – they could go to prison for life, or end up dead themselves.

If you believe they have actually used a knife on someone, you must report it. Better that they end up in trouble with the law now than injured or killed later.



## Turning their backs on crime

Tell them that anyone can dispose of a knife at any Word 4 Weapons knife bin, located across London and soon in Yorkshire. [www.word4weapons.co.uk](http://www.word4weapons.co.uk).

## KNIFE CRIME - THE FACTS

- Young men aged 18 to 30 are at highest risk of being involved in knife crime.
- It is a criminal offence to have in a public place any item that has a blade including scissors and craft knives.
- It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy a knife of any sort.
- It is not legal to carry a knife for self-defence.
- If you are caught by police carrying a knife, even if it was for your protection or you were carrying it for someone else, you will be arrested and prosecuted.
- If you use a knife, even in self-defence, you could be charged with assault with intent, or even worse.
- You can go to prison even if you didn't use the knife.
- Police can stop and search anyone they believe is carrying a knife.
- If you carry a knife there is a much higher chance that you will get stabbed yourself, than if you don't carry one.
- If someone is injured or killed by a knife in your presence, you could be prosecuted even if you didn't touch the knife. You could even go to prison for murder in what is called 'joint enterprise'.
- There is no 'safe place' to stab someone. A wound in the arm or leg can still kill someone, and if a knife punctures an artery you can bleed to death within five minutes.
- A criminal record for knife use or possession can stop you from being accepted into college or university, and make it harder to get a job. Many countries won't let you in, such as the USA and Australia.