

Good Conversations toolkit

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 toolkit 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.

Questions

- Tell them why you are worried or asking about knives and weapons
- Be direct and don't be afraid to ask
- 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.

Next steps

Focus on building strengths and positives for the person. 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 Kent Police by calling **101** or CrimeStoppers (**0800 555 111** or online crimestoppers-uk.org). In an emergency you should call **999**.

Knives are generally carried of three different reasons:

- People are afraid of being harmed and think that they will be safer if they carry a knife
- People get status amongst their friends if they are known to carry a knife
- They plan to use the knife for a reason

We should always remember that knife carrying is not normal and most people don't carry knives.

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.

If you want to know more then links are here:

National

- **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. Web: noknivesbetterlives.com
- **Ben Kinsella Trust** – Resources and information on knife crime. Web: benkinsella.org.uk
- **NSPCC** – Information and advice to people involved in gangs as well as families and friends who are concerned. Tel: **0808 800 5000** Web: nspcc.org.uk
- **Missing People Safe Call** – A specialist team offer support to professionals, parents and young people on gang involvement. Tel: **0208 392 5710** Web: missingpeople.org.uk

Kent & Medway

The **Kent Safeguarding Children** website has information and resources.

Web: kscmp.org.uk/guidance

Alternatively, contact the Violence Reduction Unit by email: **VRU**.

Programme.Delivery@kent.police.uk

