

NAE DANGER

A young person's bystander guide to understanding how to safely intervene in a situation when someone you know is carrying a knife



'NAE DANGER'

'Nae danger' is a phrase commonly used by Scottish people meaning 'not a chance,' or 'no way!'

WE WERE JUST FIVE ORDINARY TEENAGERS.
NO DIFFERENT TO ANYONE ELSE.



WHO IS IT FOR?

This resource is intended to help young people understand how to safely intervene in a situation where they know or suspect that someone they know is carrying a knife. It introduces our approach to being an active bystander. We want to encourage young people to be empowered to take action and to actively debate and challenge what actions to take in the situation described.

This makes the resource different from many others that automatically reach for 'reporting' as the only viable response. We want to offer a viable alternative to young people who see 'grassing' on their mates as unacceptable and thereby allow knife carrying to continue.

It is aimed at 11-16 year olds and can also be used as a training tool for peer educators, volunteers, youth workers and other face to face workers in communities.

WHAT IS AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?

A bystander is a person who observes or knows about a situation (such as knife carrying). They know that the behaviour is unacceptable and is likely to have destructive consequences or result in injury or death. An active bystander takes steps that make a difference.



Taking active steps to help a friend might prevent knife carrying in the first case. Intervening earlier if you know a friend is upset or in trouble with an individual or a gang could prevent an escalation to knife carrying behaviour.

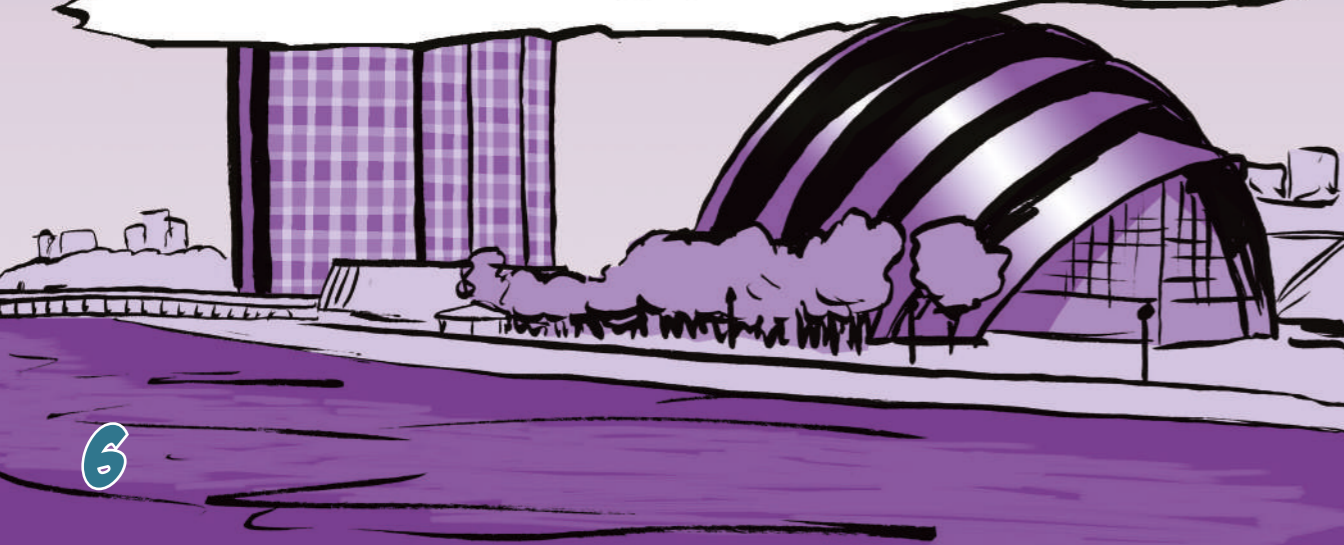
SCOTLAND IS A MUCH MORE PEACEFUL AND SAFER PLACE THAN IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO. NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THIS.

GLASGOW SHEDS MURDER CAPITAL REPUTATION AS YOUTH CRIME FALLS

Scotland started treating knife crime as a public health issue - and violence plummeted.

SCOTLAND IS SHOWING HOW TO WIN THE FIGHT AGAINST KNIFE CRIME

How Scotland reduced knife deaths among young people



THE TRUTH ABOUT KNIFE CARRYING

Knife carrying is not normal. You are unlikely to ever meet anyone carrying a knife.

Crimes associated with offensive weapons like knives have reduced in Scotland by 61% over the last ten years. We have seen a significant reduction in the number of young people under 18 convicted of handling an offensive weapon, from 456 in 2008-09 to 68 in 2017-18.

However, we can often get a different picture from the press and social media who report on stories that will sell papers or result in more hits to their site. This can make us feel that knife carrying is far worse than it actually is.

WHY DO SOME YOUNG PEOPLE CARRY KNIVES?

Young people tell us that they carry knives because they are scared. This can often be the result of conflict with other young people, or as a result of territorialism. If knife carrying becomes normalised then fear can escalate. This can lead to even more knife carrying.

Social media and the news can sometimes fuel fears that everyone carries knives even when they don't.



EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN REASONS FOR CARRYING, BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE YOU SAFER.

I STARTED CARRYING BECAUSE I THOUGHT EVERYONE ELSE WAS.

I FELT SAFER WHEN I WAS OUT OF MY OWN AREA IF I WAS CARRYING.

I WAS WRONG.

IF I HADN'T HAD A KNIFE IT WOULD HAVE JUST BEEN A REGULAR FIGHT AND NO-ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN STABBED.

SO I DECIDED TO CALL IT IN ANONYMOUSLY TO FEARLESS. THERE WAS NAE DANGER I WAS LETTING ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO ONE OF MY BESTIES.



A WORD ABOUT 'GRASSING'

'Grassing' is a slang word meaning informing the authorities. It is commonly used in association with reporting crimes. In some communities in Scotland there can be an unwritten code about not informing the police, even when you hear about a serious crime. This is reinforced by both culture (we don't grass) and fear (we hurt grasses). The threat can be real or imagined.

This resource is not about forcing you to report knife carrying if you don't want to or are afraid of being labelled a grass. There are other options that you can explore and still be an 'active bystander.' You could try talking to your friend to find out why they have started carrying a knife for example.

HOWEVER

We would strongly encourage you to tell someone if you know about knife carrying, especially if you know that there is a potential for violence and death. This is different and potentially very dangerous. You can always do this anonymously if you want.

Saving a life outweighs the fear of being called a 'grass' – what if it was a member of your family who was saved? What if it was your best friend? Being a so-called 'grass' can actually fit with being a good friend. You could save a life or prevent someone ending up in prison.

If you know someone is in danger of being hurt or killed, then phone Crimestoppers on www.crimestoppers-uk.org 0800 555 111 or Fearless on www.fearless.org

YOU WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

YOU WILL NOT BE AT RISK FOR GRASSING.

INTERVENING IN A KNIFE CARRYING SITUATION USING THE 5DS

A peer to peer bystander approach to knife carrying.

When you know that someone is knife carrying and you make a choice to intervene in order to potentially save a life, the 5Ds are different methods of intervention that you can use.



Intervening in a knife carrying situation is risky and you need to think through the possibilities in order to stay safe. Thinking through the 5Ds, and assessing the risk you personally face will help you to work out what action you will take. There is no one method that is better than another and you may wish to use a combination of strategies. A lot depends on the situation you want to intervene in and how well you know the person carrying the knife.

What are the risks to you personally?

Which of the 5Ds do you think would work best? Is there a combination you could use?

ONLY INTERVENE WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO

WHEN HE TOLD ME I FREAKED OUT.
IT WAS A REALLY BAD IDEA
TO CARRY A KNIFE.

DON'T TELL
ANYONE...

ARE YOU AFF YER HEID?
YOU COULD GET KILLED OR
DONE FOR MURDER!



STEPPING INTO THE BYSTANDER ROLE

THE SITUATION.

Your friend has been the victim of recent bullying at school. Over the last few months they have been mixing with a 'different' crowd and you haven't seen as much of them. You have noticed some 'flaming' i.e. deliberately provoking on social media and an argument involving your friend. One day they come into school and show you that they have a knife in their pocket.

What can you do in this situation?

Over the following pages we will explore a number of options relating to the 5Ds.

DIRECT

You can take direct action.

Only take direct action if you feel safe to do so or if you feel that your friend will listen to you.

You may wish to take them somewhere quiet so that you will not be overheard.

Try and stay calm if you decide to speak to your friend directly – you don't want to agitate them further or make them feel even more unsafe.

You have two key points to make:

- Carrying a knife does not make you safer
- If you don't feel safe we can talk through some options that don't involve knife carrying

HOWEVER

Remember to only take DIRECT action if you feel safe to do so.

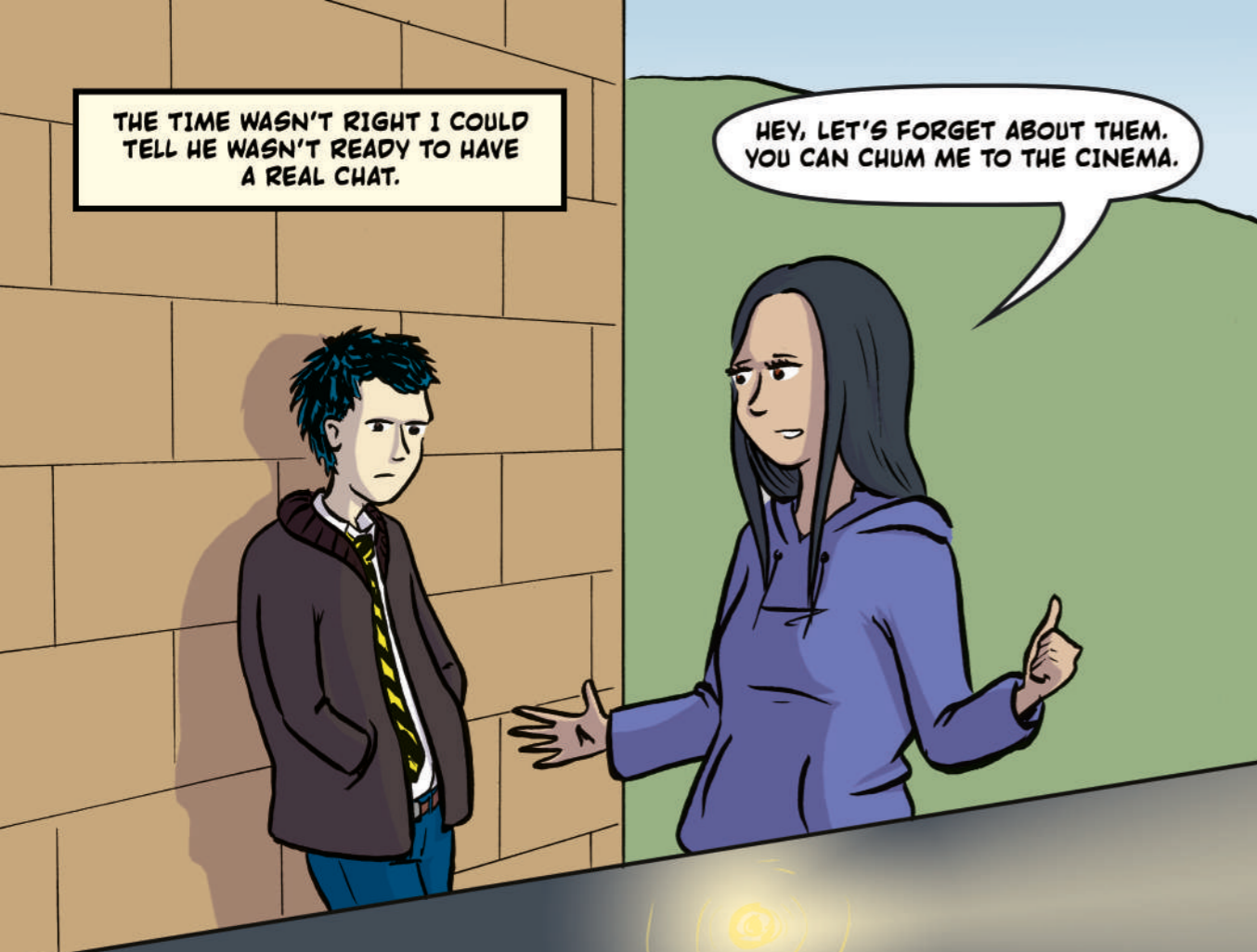
WE WENT SOMEWHERE QUIET. IF WE COULD JUST TALK THROUGH SOME OPTIONS... I THOUGHT IT WOULD HELP.

JUST AVOID THEM. OR MAYBE YOU COULD COME AND HANG OUT WITH ME AND THE SQUAD?

DON'T LET THEM GET TAE YOU...

THE TIME WASN'T RIGHT I COULD TELL HE WASN'T READY TO HAVE A REAL CHAT.

HEY, LET'S FORGET ABOUT THEM. YOU CAN CHUM ME TO THE CINEMA.



WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT LATER...



DISTRACT

You can distract the person carrying the knife by offering to do an activity or something that takes their mind off what is making them feel unsafe.

Distracting buys time and can allow you to reduce the danger of a confrontation by removing the person carrying the knife from any potential arena of conflict.

Distracting can allow you more of an informal opportunity to DIRECTLY intervene later and have a conversation about knife carrying at a more appropriate time.

Distracting can take the knife carrier's mind off their problems for a while.

Distracting can help you get a bit closer by doing something fun together.

DISTRACTING buys you time. You will still have to DIRECTLY speak to your friend about knife carrying.

DELEGATE

You can always delegate to another person or someone with more authority to intervene. You may feel you can't talk to your friend or that it would carry more weight coming from someone else.

You can delegate to any of the following people:

- Another friend or a family member
- A partner
- A teacher
- A youth worker

Or report it to the police if you feel that someone is in danger of being hurt.

You can also report anonymously on either Crimestoppers or Fearless if you are afraid that there will be repercussions for yourself. There are lots of options. You are not alone in wanting to prevent knife carrying.

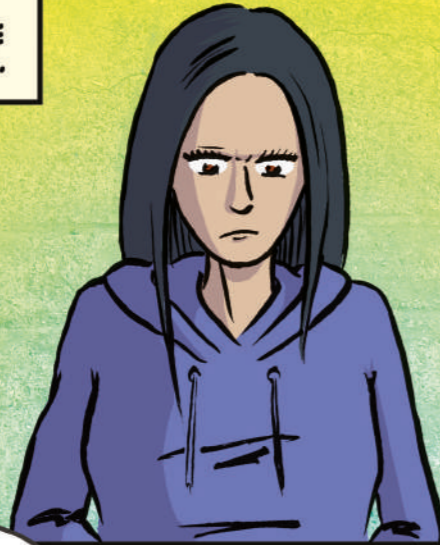
HIS BROTHER HAD ALWAYS BEEN POPULAR AND COULD HANDLE THE RADGES AND THE ROCKETS, SO I SPOKE TO HIM ABOUT THE KNIFE

I'M SCARED YOUR BRAR IS GONNAE END UP HURT OR HURTING SOMEONE ELSE.

I THINK HE'S MORE LIKELY TAE LISTEN TO YOU THAN ME.

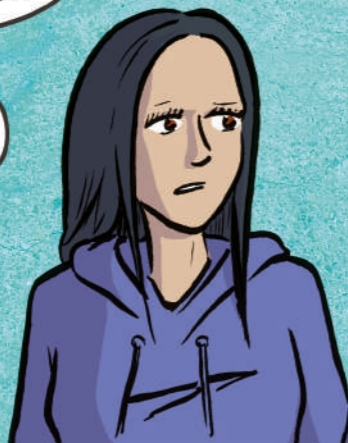


I BEGAN TAKING A MENTAL NOTE IN CASE IT WASN'T A ONE OFF.



THAT'S THREE DAYS IN THE LAST WEEK. I'M REALLY GETTING SCARED YOU'RE GOING TO USE IT!

LET'S TALK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN STOP CARRYING.



IT'S BEEN GOING ON NEARLY A WEEK. YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING.



DOCUMENT

If you decide not to talk to your friend immediately, make a note of any knife carrying instances. If the knife carrying is a one off and nothing happens, or your friend changes their mind about knife carrying, then you can always chalk it up to a rotten decision where thankfully nothing bad happened.

If your friend begins to regularly carry a knife, this 'normalises' knife carrying. They are less likely to believe you if you say that knife carrying is dangerous, especially if this has not been their experience.

Taking a note of knife carrying incidences will give you proof if you either decide to speak to your friend directly or delegate to someone else.

DELAY

Even after the person has given up knife carrying (or been caught), you can offer follow up support to prevent the circumstances from occurring again.

You can;

- Talk to them about bullying
- Check out from time to time that they are okay
- Be a friend!

Remember - knife carrying is not normal. Don't let friends normalise knife carrying as it can lead to other young people carrying knives and then become epidemic. Normalise other things – like looking out for one another, going to the youth club, playing football or some other activity.

IT WAS A REALLY BAD TIME FOR THEM
- PROBLEMS AT HOME, AT SCHOOL
AND IN THE COMMUNITY. IT SEEMS
MUCH BETTER NOW.
WE ALL LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.



I HAD A TOUGH TIME GROWING UP.
DAD WAS IN PRISON AND
MA WAS AN ALCOHOLIC.
I DIDN'T FIT IN AT SCHOOL.



IT FELT LIKE FAMILY. FOR THE
FIRST TIME I FELT LIKE I BELONGED.



BUT IT WENT BAD QUITE QUICKLY...



... AND I GOT INVOLVED IN
CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.



THEN IT WAS ALL ABOUT VIOLENCE
AND KNIFE CARRYING.



TALKING TERRITORIALISM

Some communities have very strong identities, especially in cities like Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee and in some ex-mining and fishing communities. It can feel as if you have to fight or join a gang to keep your territory safe from others. Even small areas of only a few streets can be territorial and there is often pressure to identify with these areas through 'tagging' i.e. graffiti marking out your turf, or issuing a challenge in another's turf. Sometimes this escalates into actual fighting.

Vulnerable young people can be at particular risk from joining local groups with strong territorial identities and rivalries.



DIRECTLY INTERVENING before things get really out of hand is a good move. Your friend could easily get pulled into more serious stuff. But if you act early enough you could stop a lot of trauma later on. Getting involved in gangs and violence never ends well.

GANGS, VIOLENCE & ESCALATION



Involvement in gangs can escalate into criminal activity and the constant fear of violence. For a small percentage of Scotland's young people this is the harsh everyday reality.

What do you say to someone who feels that they have no choice? How do you REASSURE them that it's not normal to carry a knife when it feels like it is?

FIRSTLY: Acknowledge their 'reality'. Value their experience.

SECONDLY: Explain that this isn't everybody's experience of 'reality'. Other young people have different experiences.

THIRDLY: Ask them to think of someone they admire who is not involved in violence – a potential role model.

FOURTHLY: Offer them support to develop a non-violent lifestyle. Give them hope that a peaceful and meaningful life can be achieved and make them believe it will happen.

FIFTHLY: Extra help is available such as the Navigator Programme or Aid and Abet mentors. Or perhaps a local youth worker or trusted adult could help?

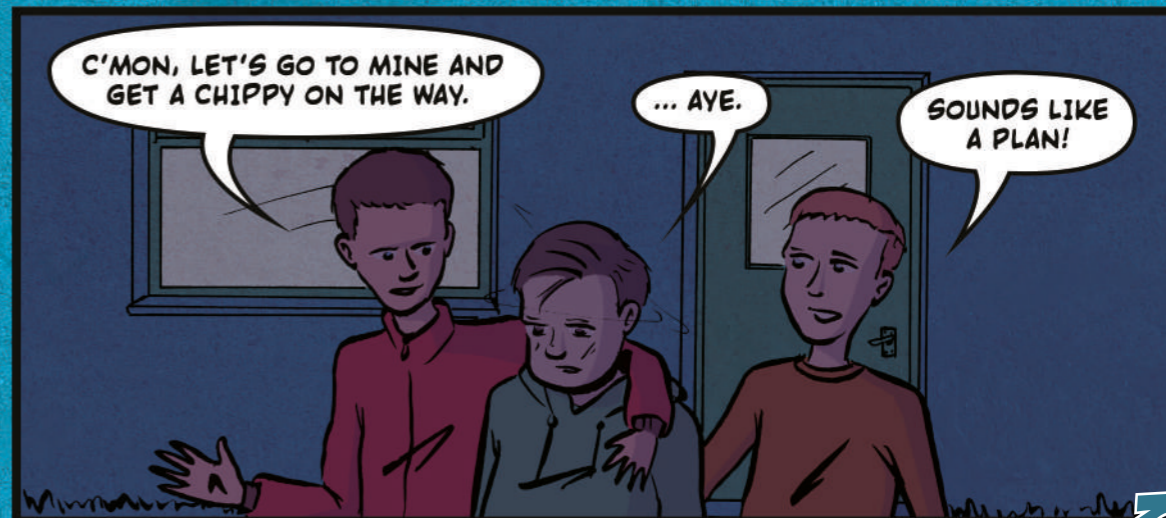
SIXTHLY: New hobbies such as football, boxing, or volunteering for a local charity can help develop new friendships and develop new skills away from gang-related activity.

ABOUT THE BEVVY

Alcohol is indicated in 46% of all knife related crimes, and spikes at weekends when drinking is more prevalent. Often these are house parties that have gotten out of control. Knives are easy to get hold of.

Alcohol can make people aggressive and hard to reason with. If there's tension or an argument kicks off, it can result in a fight.

If you are at a party and people are edgy and getting drunk, go home and take your pals with you.



FURTHER INFORMATION

You have a responsibility to keep yourself and others safe. Only challenge when it is safe to do so.

Further resources and activities to use with young people can be downloaded from the No Knives Better Lives website.

www.noknivesbetterlives.com

Illustrations by Steven Ingram.

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No knives, better lives.



www.noknivesbetterlives.com



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YouthLink
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The national agency for youth work



Investors in Diversity

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