

“The Choice” Knife Free FE Project

Teachers & Tutors Guide

Section 1: Introduction and Format

The Lancashire Colleges, with the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network have worked with AftaThought Training Consultants to create and deliver a resource to:

- Educate and prevent young people from feeling the need to carry knives
- Challenge myths and misconceptions around knife crime
- Raise awareness of the risks and consequences of carrying knives
- Build resilience and confidence among students to make them feel safer in their communities and reduce the extent to which they feel the need to carry a knife.

The sessions have been funded by the Home Office Serious Violence Fund, and have been designed to be used by Lancashire’s colleges however they may be suitable for other institutions.

Please note: The nature of the session can be a trigger to some students.

Please advise your class that if at any point during the session they feel unsafe, worried or anxious, it’s important that they seek help and support from yourself or the college safeguarding staff. There are also independent organisations that can help, details are included on page 8 of this pack, and also in the Student Pack, along with locations of knife amnesty bins. Please feel free to add your own contact details to the students pack of any additional signposting information which may be useful, e.g. pastoral care within the college.

The Choice

The Choice is a short film which was developed with the input from staff across Lancashire’s colleges. The film reflects the experiences of young people and their experience of knife crime. The style is very much like a TV ‘reconstruction’ with the incident being recreated by actors.

The film follows the story of Harry, a student who is experiencing a situation where he first receives threats online, followed by a physical assault. At this point, Harry makes the choice to carry a knife which he takes from his family home.

If you wanted to run a short session with your group of students a week or so beforehand to prepare them for the main session, a short 1 minute trailer, which can be played to the students during this session, can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/497001064/26ef1a4170>.

How it works

The facilitator on the film will introduce each section and task students with things to look out for. Please invite your students to take notes if they wish to. At the end of each section, the things the students were tasked to look out for appear in text on the video. Pause the video at this point to invite your students to discuss their responses to the questions. Students should be encouraged to take part as much as possible

as the exercise is to deepen learning and understanding. Quick polls to ascertain levels of understanding could also be undertaken, such as a show of hands. Please ensure all students receive a copy of the 'student pack' as this contains important signposting information.

The pack includes a breakdown of each section of the film below, including the questions the groups are tasked with by the facilitator, and some discussion points for tutors/teachers to consider when asking the group for their feedback. The link here takes you through to 'The Choice' video.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qy3DPQdKbbfjyizYP6O7IIChYVszwzzX/view>

That's all there is to it! You're ready to play the film to the group and start the workshop!

The Choice - Introduction

Introduction questions for discussion with your group	Discussion Points (pause the vide at 2:04 to discuss)
Why do you think people get involved in knife crime?	Answers often include - it's about stabbing/ murders. But it also includes people who choose to carry a knife or a sharp object.
How big of a problem do you think it is in your area?	Students usually tell us that it is - however in Lancashire rates are low.

Play the video after your discussion to hear more facts and information around these issues The Choice

Part 1 – Synopsis

- Harry lives at home with his mum and 4 year old brother, James. He is in the early stages of a relationship with Ella – both Harry and Ella students at a local college. Harry has been receiving threatening texts after he intervened when Ella was receiving unwelcome texts from another lad.
- Ella thinks they should tell the police but Harry thinks he's okay because he's blocked the lad. Ella, in hindsight, thinks she should have told the police.
- One night, Harry is at a bus stop when he is assaulted by one lad while another films the attack. The video soon goes around the college and Ella tells Harry other people have seen it.
- Harry leaves the house for college but before leaving, he goes to the kitchen, takes a kitchen knife and puts it in his bag.

Part1	Questions for discussion with your group	Discussion Points to consider (pause the video at 10:40 to discuss)
1.1	What reasons do you hear for people carrying knives?	Answers often include; to feel safer/for protection etc. How valid do students think any of these points are?
1.2	What do you think the potential consequences of carrying a knife are?	Increased risk of becoming injured/death. What about legal, personal and emotional consequences as well?

1.3	How many people are likely to be affected by the choices 'Harry' makes in this film?	Family (mum and little brother), friends at college, staff at college, professionals (ambulance service/ police etc)?
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Play the video after your discussion to hear more facts and information around these issues

Part 2 – Synopsis

- Zoe is a Youth Worker. She re-tells a story of when she was younger and a boyfriend gave her a knife to carry. For about 12 months, because of the way her life was at that point, it was normal for her to carry the knife, like a phone. She says that she was in a park and she interpreted the way someone looked at her as 'disrespectful' and so she pulled the knife on them before her friend dragged her away. She was arrested and sentenced to 14 months in prison for possession of an offensive weapon.
- Ella (in silhouette) remembers seeing Harry's knife but she said nothing. She said Harry wasn't the type to carry a knife and he wasn't doing it to hurt someone. She says he was worried that if he was attacked again, what would he do if the offender had a knife?
- Neal, a Youth Worker, talks about the perception young people have about knife crime is often very different from the reality.

Part2	Questions	Discussion Points (pause video at 15:44 to discuss)
2.1	Statistically, who is more likely to carry knives, males or females?	Statistically males are more likely to carry knives (the facilitator on the video will provide statistics around this). Why do your students think this?
2.2	What are the main reasons females carry knives?	Do the students think this is different to the earlier question about carrying knives and why?
2.3	What issues might Zoe be facing at that point in her life?	Identify issues faced by young people and share areas for support and help
2.4	Does Zoe commit a crime?	What do your students understand the law to be? May look at the term 'offensive weapon'

Play the video after your discussion to hear more facts and information around these issues

Part 3 – Synopsis

□ Back at Harry's home, Harry's mum is reading a bedtime story to James. Harry appears withdrawn, sitting alone at home. Ella has noticed Harry has become more withdrawn.

3	Questions	Discussion Points (pause the video at 18:14 to discuss)
3.1	How do you think Ella might be feeling?	<p>Worried/scared?</p> <p>How do you feel if someone seems to stop talking to you? Insecure? Rejected?</p> <p>You could also ask the class how they think Harry might be feeling- do the students recognise in themselves when they are worried or anxious about something- what advice would you give?</p> <p>How do you respond when a friend, family member is withdrawn? Ella says Harry has stopped talking – what was the friends response?</p>
3.2	What choices does Ella have at this point in time?	<p>Ella could talk to someone. Signpost to local areas for support (college tutors/ safeguard leads etc)</p>
		<p>Can students think of an example where someone helped them when you were worried or anxious? Discuss what might prevent them talking to these people/agencies- fear of consequences. What are your fears and what are the consequences of doing nothing?</p>

Play the video after your discussion to hear more facts and information around these issues

Section 4 – Synopsis

Ella tells us that Harry spoke to her when he was worried about being caught with the knife. She told him to put it in her bag.

4	Questions	Discussion Points (pause the video at 20:43 to discuss)
4.1	Is Harry aware of what he is asking Ella to do?	<p>Probably not- he's worried/anxious and thinking about himself. But the reality is, he's put someone he cared about at risk. Ella's now more likely to be a victim of knife crime/being arrested/getting a criminal record.</p> <p>How would Harry feel if this happened because of his choice?</p> <p>Are girls less likely to be stopped by the police?</p> <p>Why do you think Ella told Harry to put the knife in her bag?</p>

4.2	Is what Ella is doing a criminal offence?	Assess' students' awareness around law. What if she's just taking it to the police station/amnesty bin. If that's her intent, what could she do?
4.3	What choices does Ella have now?	Knife Amnesty Bin, Police station, support in college (these are listed in the student packs and at the bottom of this pack). What is she likely to do?

Play the video after your discussion to hear more facts and information around these issues

Part 5 – Synopsis

Zoe updates us with the consequences of her choice 7 years ago and the lasting impact on her life to date.

Harry leaves college and meets Ella, we see they are being watched by the 2 lads who attacked Harry at the bus stop. At one point, one of the lads is captured looking at the CCTV.

As we watch Harry and Ella walking together through the park, we hear an audio recording of the lad who we saw on the CCTV.

Part5	Questions	Discussion Points (pause the video to discuss at 26:36)
5.1	What do you notice one of these lads do- and why do you think he does this?	One of the lads was looking back to check the CCTV- what are the possible reasons for this? To check if he's being watched/ does he need help too? Is he aware he's about to do something wrong? The lad says "we were just having a laugh" when he filmed the footage.

Play the video after your discussion to hear more facts and information around these issues

Part 6 – Synopsis

- We continue to watch Harry's journey as he is followed by the 2 lads. At one point, we see him remove the knife from his bag and put it in his pocket. We can see him become increasingly anxious as he continues. We see the 2 lads follow him and again, one begins to film him as the other moves to attack Harry. Harry turns.
- We don't see the knife, but we know Harry was in possession of a knife and he is now lying on the floor and the 2 lads run away. We see the footage of the video Harry had recorded with his little brother earlier that day.

Part6	Questions	Discussion Points (pause the video at 32:41)
6.1	What did Ella choose to do with the knife?	She gave it back to Harry- why do you think she did this? What was the consequence of her choice?
6.2	What did Harry choose to do?	He took it out his bag and put it in his pocket- making it easy to get to. If Harry had made different choices would there have been a different outcome?
6.3	How do you think Ella is feeling now?	It was Harry's choice to pick up the knife, but Ella had opportunities and choices to make which could have lead to a different outcome. Would this make her feel upset/guilty/regretful?
6.4	How many other people will be affected by Harry's choice to carry a knife?	Knife crime doesn't just affect just 1 person. Consider the 'ripple effect' before this even gets to Harry's mum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passer by • Ambulance crew/ police / hospital staff • Police knocking on mums door • 4 year old child is a victim – lost their brother

Testimony ** Please be aware this part of the film is a true story**

This section is a testimony from a man who is currently serving a prison sentence for stabbing a man to death at a New Years Eve Party in Manchester.

Part 7	Questions	Discussion points
7.1	What opportunities did he have to make different choices?	He made the choice to carry the knife, and the choice to take it out. There is never a good reason to carry a knife.
7.2	What might his life be like if he'd made a different choice?	He might not be in prison.

Follow up activity- myths and misconceptions:

Now the students have watched the video and taken part in the discussions, they can complete the myths and misconceptions true or false activity. The answers are shown below for tutors/teachers; a blank version of the table is included as a worksheet in the students pack.

Statement	True or False	Statement	True or False
You'll only get a caution if you carry a knife but don't use it.	False. You can be sentenced to up to 4 years in jail for possession of an offensive weapon	Knife crime only affects young people connected with gangs	False. Knife crime can affect anyone. Innocent bystanders can suffer injury or trauma
You need a large knife to do any serious harm	False. Small knives can kill. Even if you don't intend to injure someone, you could end up killing them.	You are safer if you carry a knife	False. People who carry a weapon are more likely to be hospitalised with an injury caused by their own knife
There are safe places to stab someone	False. Even parts of the body such as arms or legs have major arteries which can lead to severe blood loss	Girls aren't involved in knife crime	False. Although statistically more boys carry knives than girls, it is on the increase among females
Carrying a knife is normal. Everyone does it.	False. Although this might be what people think, less than 3% of people carry knives	Police can stop and search you if they think you have a knife on you.	True. And you can be arrested and get a criminal record
You can't get done if the knife you are carrying isn't yours	False. The person carrying the knife is held responsible regardless	Knife Crime is a big problem in Lancashire	False. Knife crime is not a big problem in Lancashire
You can be sent to jail if someone is stabbed and you were with the offender	True. This is called 'joint enterprise'	You need a knife to protect yourself from other crimes	False. Carrying a knife actually increases your risk of being a victim of crime.

The following information is also included in the student packs:

Help and Support (In an emergency, always call 999)

You can anonymously report knife crime by calling CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111.

The following websites can provide help and support for young people concerned about being drawn into, or becoming victims of knife crime:

www.nestlancashire.org

www.trustedtoknow.co.uk

www.benkinsella.org.uk

www.noknivesbetterlives.com

NSPCC Gangs helpline 0808 800 5000 or www.nspcc.org.uk

Knife Amnesty Bin Locations

<p>Blackpool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84 Edgerton Road, Blackpool FY1 2NW • The Grange, Dinmore Avenue, Blackpool FY3 7RW • Blackpool Boys and Girls Club, Bowness Avenue, Blackpool FY1 6AA • 44 Bolton Street, Blackpool FY1 6AA 	<p>Burnley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Calico Group, Croft Street, Burnley BB1 2ED • Valley Street Community Centre, Burnley BB1 5LY
<p>Fleetwood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Street, Fleetwood, FY7 6SW • Milton Street Youth Centre, Fleetwood FY7 6QW 	<p>Lancaster & Morecambe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenayre Skate Park, Parliament Street, Lancaster LA1 1DQ • Near Youth Centre, Central Drive, Morecambe LA4 4DE
<p>Preston</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Princess Street, Avenham, Preston PR1 4HS • Kingsfold Community Centre, Kingsfold Drive, Preston PR1 6EQ • Leyland Leisure Centre, Leyland PR25 2EX 	<p>Rawtenstall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Waterfoot Police Station, Bacup Road, BB4 7JA
<p>Skelmersdale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digmoor Community Centre, Birleywood, Skelmersdale WN8 9BW • Tanhouse Community Centre, Ennerdale, Skelmersdale WN8 6AN 	<p>For further information about knife amnesty bins visit www.lancashire.police.uk</p>