

Oxfordshire YJS

Weapons Intervention Toolkit



W.I.T

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Key information for helping deliver this course

The workbook should be worked through in the order it appears. This is because it begins with motivational and identity work with the young person, introducing concepts which will be drawn upon throughout the rest of the tool kit. It then encourages the young person to develop protective behaviour tools. It finally progresses to focusing on developing skills such as de-escalation, risk assessment, and how behaviour changes when we are in a group.

This course is split into two levels- yellow and green. The young people YJS work with can range hugely with age, maturity and learning needs. If the young person you are working with is less mature or may struggle with understanding some concepts, then use the yellow workbook. If the young person is older or appears to enjoy slightly more challenging material, then use the green version. It's important to check in with the young person throughout the delivery of this course and if you think they are struggling with the material/ not being challenged enough, you can always swap between the different versions.

Information written in italics is for you as tips, or to explain why you are doing the exercise.

The workbook has a "script" for you to use. You don't have to stick to the script at all, it just gives you a guideline in how to introduce and explain the exercises if you prefer more guidance. This is down to you as the worker, adapting how you use/ deliver this book to your own delivery style.

As this is a pilot the pre and post questionnaires are really important to complete so we can see if the toolkit is useful. Please return scanned questionnaires to kate.netten@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Theoretical background to this course

OK, here's the theory bit. You can skip past this bit if you are not interested. This section is for the workers like to have an understanding of the background to things before they can get their head around it.

As YJS workers, we know most of the young people caught in possession of bladed articles don't set out with the intention to use the weapon they carry; they have them because they are scared and have something 'just in case'. They are frightened. Previous intervention approaches often involved showing young people grizzly hospital photos of stabbing victims to highlight potential consequences. Often our young people are more than aware of the consequences, including the legal implications of further weapon convictions, knowing someone or experiencing knife violence first hand. Instead, this approach teaches 'de-escalation' to young people as an empowering skill.

As professionals working on the front line each day, we use de-escalation skills regularly, often without even realising we are doing it. We frequently have to deliver negative news or provide feedback to the young people we work with. Sometimes the young people attend appointments feeling very wound up about something completely unrelated. We will quickly read their body language, listen to what they are saying, notice their tone of voice and adapt to ensure a situation doesn't escalate. Our goal is to help them calm down and make some sense of what is going on. A lot of the young people we work with don't necessarily have these skills themselves. Often they have been raised in environments where aggression or anger is met with aggression back, and situations escalate. Many have experienced traumatic experiences, leaving them with the long term emotional consequences of this.

Arguably, there is quite a buzz in ensuring a situation doesn't escalate and using our skills to manage a situation in a positive way. As Dahlberg (2001 cited in Gavine MacGillivray and Williams 2014) found; enhancing a young person's capacity to manage risk factors and develop resilience is an important area for violence prevention. This is a big job, and not easy or straight forward. What works for one young person might not work for another. We've all been to training events where months later, however good the training, we can only remember one or two things from it. We have to be realistic about how much the young person is going to absorb and take on board from our supervision sessions with them. This workbook takes a range of approaches. The young person may tune into one session more than another. It's ultimately down to the young person themselves what (or if) they are going to put it into practice out of the sessions. All we can do is show them the tools and encourage them to try them out. It's important we are clear we are not encouraging the young people to rush into dangerous situations, over confident at their abilities to resolve issues. This workbook looks at protective behaviour and risk assessing scenarios too.

This workbook uses 5 approaches highlighted in Barnett and Howard's (2017) review of intervention work addressing offending:

- a) **Build skills**- it will encourage the young person to feel confident they have some skills to be able to de-escalate a situation rather than make it worse. "violence is a response to and mechanism utilised by young people for overcoming experiences of vulnerability and adversity" (McAra and McVie 2016). It will use social skills rather than threats, weapons and violence to solve issues.
- b) **Identity**- this is such an important area for young people. The workbook will use 'reframing' strategies, starting to develop an understanding of how they view themselves in their own narrative. It encourages them to start thinking there is more than one way of looking at events. This workbook holds the message we are all able to change. Research has found this a highly important area to work with adolescents; how something they experience now isn't fixed and can change, and others around them can change too (Yeagar's study is cited in Hoffman 2016). The next chapter of their life doesn't erase the past but the future can be different. To ensure there is a trauma informed approach to this work, it is important to consider the use of violence in the context of experiencing victimization. McAra and McVie (2016) found it can be a means of retaining status and power within the peer group (McAra and McVie 2016). This workbook also recognises that young people today often exist in two 'realities' and their identity through Social Media is very important to them.
- c) With regards to **targeting factors**- the 'central eight' factors have demonstrated a relationship with re-offending (attitudes, self management/ impulse control, social network, lack of support/ pro social relationships, substance misuse, unemployment, lack of positive leisure activities and homelessness). It would be impossible to cover all of them in one small intervention. Some of these are much bigger than an individual (such as the current housing crisis), but a number will be addressed; attitudes, self-management, problem solving, social networks and pro social support.
- d) **Motivation**- Ultimately the worker's motivation is often for the young person to feel safer so they don't feel they have to carry a weapon 'just in case', but that's not necessarily theirs. This often tricky area is approached by looking at what is in our control and what is outside our control, using the stoicism approach (currently implemented at HMP Huntercombe). It's likely the young person will be resistant to this intervention as the weapon to them is their protection, and we need to acknowledge that. We can't expect them to just drop it and not replace it with anything. The skills and tools are what we are offering them.
- e) **Implementation** – this is a pilot, there are questionnaires before and after the work as a means of seeing if there is any change for the young person once they have completed the intervention. This is a one-to-one approach so is resource intensive but also means it could be more varied in how it is delivered. The practitioner will be key in identifying pace, what tone to use, if necessary which exercises to avoid, depending on the individual young person. One particular 'session' may in reality take several different appointments.

Pre-intervention questionnaire

Please read these statements and tick the answer you think most

1. "I think people can change"

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

2. "If someone threatened me (or someone close to me), the way to deal with it is to threaten them back"

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

3. "If I feel unsafe, having a weapon makes me safe again".

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

4. "I feel like people are always winding me up".

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Session 1

Introduction

AIM OF TODAY'S SESSION: To introduce this toolkit. Explore the motivation and triggers for the young person's offence, introduction to CBT

MATERIALS NEEDED: A3 sheet of plain paper and three different coloured pens. A photocopy or print out of the iceberg worksheet on page 9

Exercise - what happened?

This course will last for 10 sessions. We will look at a range of things linked to weapon possession and offending. You will find some sessions more useful or interesting than others, everyone is different. Over the next few weeks, we are going to look at the human brain, talk about what we can and can't control, ask if it's possible to change, discuss life stories, explore different ways of look at things, safety plan, learn de-escalation skills, identify what particular situations are risky for you and talk about friendship and trust.

The first thing I want to do though, is listen to YOU.

Note to officer- this exercise helps you to make sure we are aiming the intervention at the right people. For example, if during this exercise they disclose they had a weapon because they enjoy violence in a sadistic sounding way, then this isn't the course for them! Talk to your line manager if this is the case. We go straight into a discussion about weapons because that is why they are doing this course. They know why they are here, so let's get on with it...

So, today let's look at all the reasons why you had a weapon on the day you were caught. Can you tell me what was going on at the time, what you were thinking and what you were feeling? I'm going to write on this sheet whilst you talk me through it..

Prompts to help expand if they struggle here....

- Ok, so what was going on locally in [school/ local patch/ town/ village/ college] at the time?
- Did you family/ carers know what was going on? What were your friends saying?

- What about social media? What were people saying to each other on that?
- What do you think was going on nationally at the time with knives? Was there much in the media?
- How was that making you feel?

Write visibly on the A3 sheet key words they use to demonstrate you are listening to what they say. Use a different pen colour to write down thoughts, another pen for feelings and another for behaviour. Don't challenge much (unless you feel it necessary), this exercise is designed to show you are interested in what they have to say. You've probably covered this with them to some extent already e.g. PSR stage, so it doesn't need to be a long exercise.

I've been using different colour pens to show what you told me can be divided into thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The reason this is useful is because for you a lot was going on, but no one else can read your mind. They only see the actions or behaviour, they can't see your thoughts or feelings. Let's look at this worksheet to explore it more....

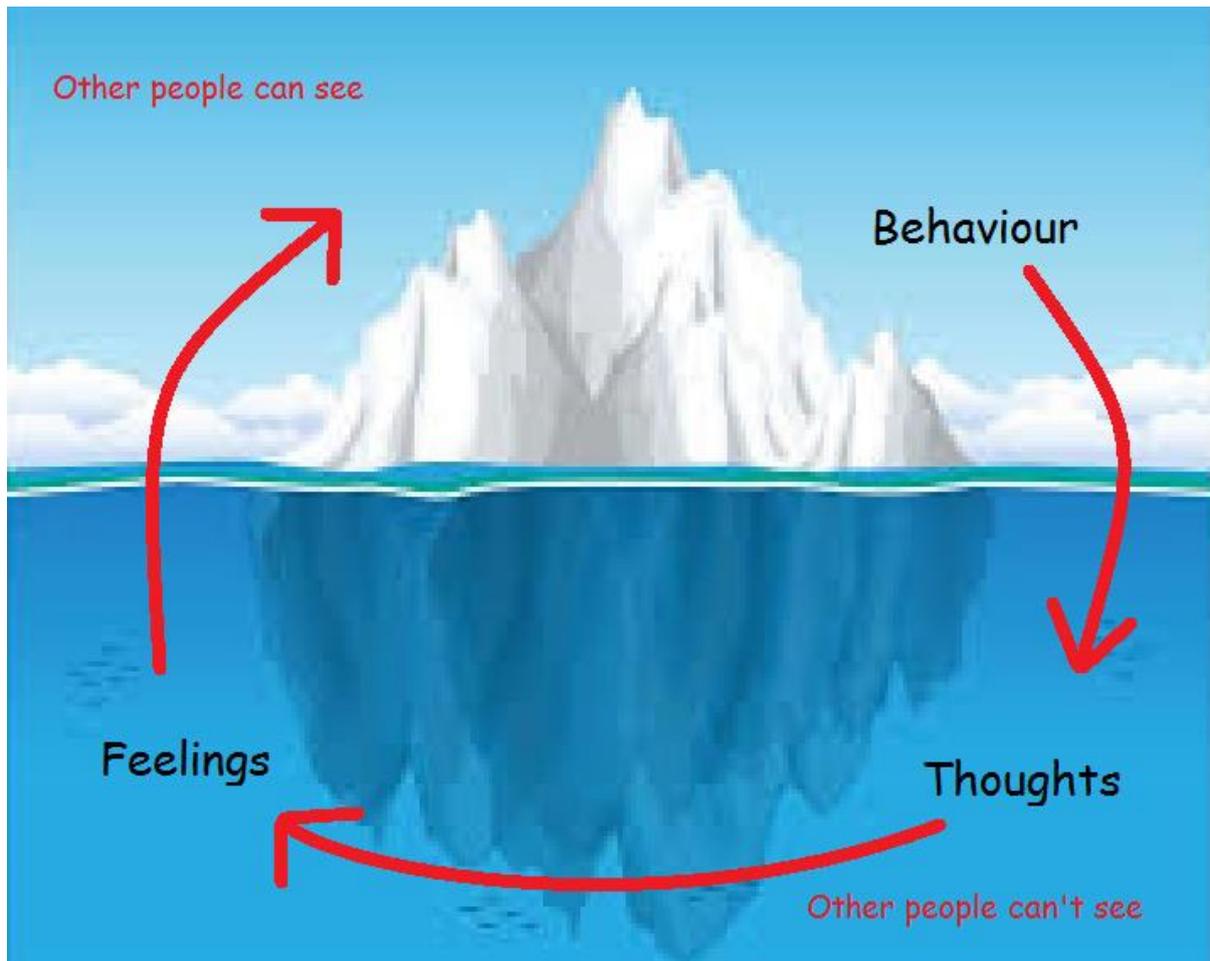
Show the young person the worksheet on the next page, and talk them through how thoughts and feelings are going on underneath the iceberg, only the tip of the iceberg shows. Use the information they gave you about the reason they had a weapon, and write on the picture, encouraging them to work out where it fits on the iceberg to demonstrate the differences between thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

If they are struggling with this exercise, use an example pretending you had a really bad day earlier in the week. Bring the exercise to life, e.g. oversleeping so you got to work late, then turning up at the wrong place for a meeting because you'd rushed and not looked at your diary properly. You then had to race to the meeting and the traffic was bad so you were even later. A colleague makes a comment etc. You then really snapped at a family member when you got home from work that evening. Now break it down so you can talk about how you had been feeling, use thoughts like 'this makes it look like I can't do my job' and how that feeds into the feelings- worried, anxious, irritable etc. and how that came out in a behaviour which was being mean to your family member, who would have felt like it had come out of nowhere. Bring this story to life as much as possible, showing them how your thoughts fuelled your feelings which then fuelled your behaviour. Draw lots of arrows back and forth!

Session 1 learning points:

- You should have a good breakdown of the offence, so you have an understanding of motivation and triggers for the young person as to why they had the weapon
- You have introduced the CBT triangle looking at how thoughts and feelings can impact our behaviour.

Thoughts feelings and behaviour iceberg

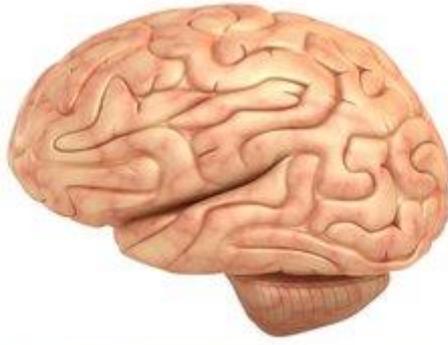


Session 2

Chimp paradox – the different parts of our brain

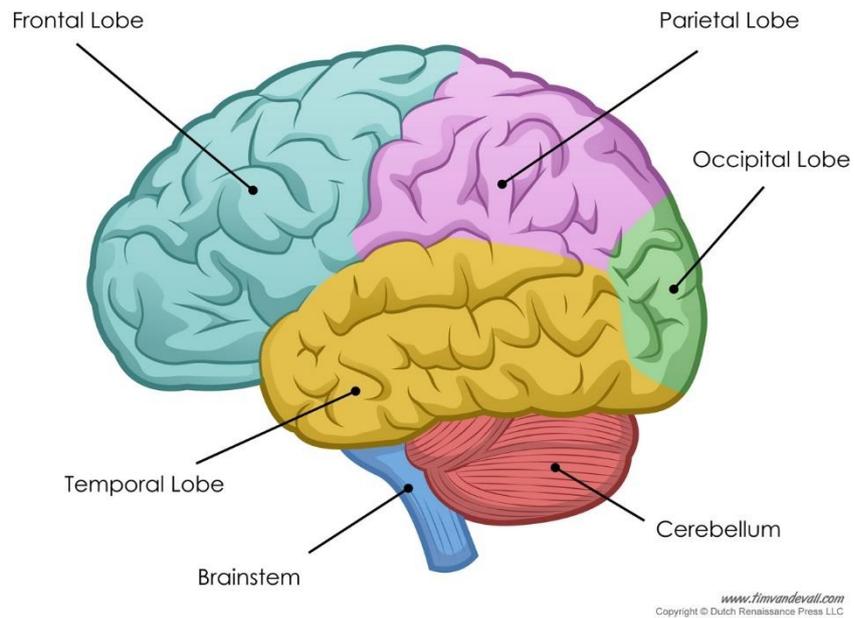
AIM OF TODAY'S SESSION: To introduce the young person to different sections of the brain (the 'chimp' and 'human') and the role they play in behaviour. To be able to identify when something is in our control and when something is outside of our control.

MATERIALS NEEDED: A photocopy or print out of the chimp & human worksheet on **page 12** and the 'can and can't control' worksheets on **pages 15** and **16** plus scissors to cut the cards out.



Our brains are very complicated, and the teenage brain goes through a lot of changes. This session is not going to be a science lesson, don't worry! But, it is useful to get an idea of what is going on in our heads to help us understand why we act certain ways.

Dr Peters wrote a book called "the Chimp paradox". He talks about the brain being divided into different parts and having different uses. Their technical names are the frontal, limbic and parietal, but Dr Peters calls them the human, the chimp and the computer. You are the human. Your chimp is the emotional bit and the computer is the storage area and where we do a lot of automatic thinking. Any one of them can take control but usually they work together. Lets have a look at the chimp and the human parts a bit more.....



Read through the worksheet on the next page. Encourage the young person to think of scenarios in their life or in other people's lives where the chimp has been in charge, and others when the human has been in charge. It might be worth googling the news or football recently to see if there are any stories in the press which help demonstrate the chimp being in control vs the human being in control.

The chimp



The chimp is the emotional part and it does not always work with facts. It works with what it thinks is the truth. It's quick to judge. Sometimes this can be helpful, but it's not always reliable and can change quickly. The chimp can be:

- Paranoid
- Jump to conclusions
- Catastrophic (check you understand the meaning of this word)
- Irrational

The human



Humans like to work out what is happening by getting the facts. Finding out the information to try and work out the truth. The human can:

- Use evidence
- Be rational
- Balance judgement

Both the chimp and the human can type into the computer part in our brain, and the more they type, the more automatic thoughts come into the computer part our brain.

You need to work out who is in charge. If you find you are having feelings thoughts or behaviours that you do not want, you are being hijacked by your chimp, and ideally the chimp should not be typing into the computer too much. You are always responsible for your chimp, you just have to work out how to manage it, and it's the human part which can do this.

**Motivation and Stoicism
(Traylor and Small 2017)**



Let's talk about motivation for doing this Course. As your YOS officer, my motivation to do this course with you is to help you start to feel you no longer need to carry a weapon any more. I want to help you with ideas of how to solve problems in your life differently, it's about helping you have confidence in yourself. But what about you? When I usually ask how people feel about doing a course with YOS, people often tell me "*because I have to*" or "*the Court told me to*", and that makes sense. You are here because you have to be, it's something outside of your control, and that can be annoying. How are you feeling about doing this course?

The can and can't control exercise

There are some things we can control and some things we can't. For example, this course is part of your Order. That is out of your control. Trying to control events which we can't, makes things feel worse. But how you get through this course IS in YOUR control. Let's look at these cards and put them in one of two piles- things you can control and things you can't control ...Can you think of one to add in the last box that's been left blank?

Photo copy or print the following two worksheets and use scissors cut the first sheet into cards for the young person to place onto the second sheet in either 'in my control' side or 'outside of my control' side....

What my friends think of me	How many 'likes' I get on social media	Being on this Court Order
What I say to myself	What I eat	What I wear
What people say about me	What time the bus actually arrives	What I say
My health	Hitting someone who has wronged me	

In my control

Outside of my control

So, from this exercise we've seen you can't control what your mates are going to say, or what someone you hate does, but you can control what you do back, that's the thoughts and feelings bit in the iceberg we looked at last week. This course is going to help you with how to do this.



Sometimes our chimp in the brain can get angry about things outside of our control, so we need the human in our brain to talk to our chimp to calm it down and work out if it is inside or outside of our control.

Learning points:

- You are responsible for your chimp.
- If you focus more on what you can control rather than what you can't, the stuff you can't control tends to get better anyway.

Session 3

Change

Aim: To encourage the young person to believe they can change. To start to gain an insight into how they see themselves and what they hope for the future.

Materials: internet access on a device like your work mobile or laptop.

Discussion- can people change?

Do you think change is possible? Do you think a person can change?

See what the young person says, to really draw out this discussion, ask if they think personality can change.

How have you changed?

Approach this exercise with caution if the young person had experienced a trauma within the time frame you discuss. You may feel this would not be suitable to complete this particular exercise if it risks triggering remembering events.

Think back to when you were ____ (2 years ago).
What were you doing with your time then? What school year were you in? Who were you hanging out with? What kinds of things were you worrying about then? What films were out then? What sort of social media were people mainly using? What was big on the TV/ the news/ celebrities at that time?

Help them by asking them to scan through their phone (this only works if they back up their photos using something like 'google photos' as it's likely they will have changed phones a few times, they can still see some pictures to help remind them of what they were doing then). They might be able to check their social media accounts for posts they made two years ago. Alternatively, Google search the year in question. Look at music charts, fashion, gadgets, news, local news. You really want to bring to life what it was like for them then.

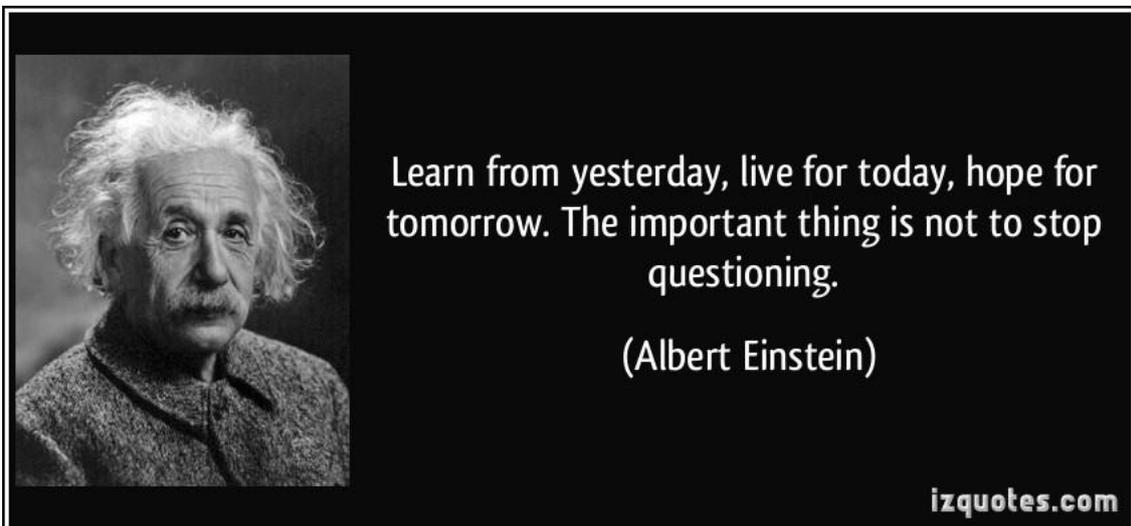
What has changed for you since then? Do you think you have changed as a person? In what way?

Encourage them to start seeing how much they have changed through the maturing process, life events and circumstances. The idea of this discussion is to give the young person hope that if so much can change in just two years for them already, then this is possible for them from now.

Your future self

So what do you think about your future? If you have changed that much in two years, do you think it is possible to change again in two years time? I wonder what will you be like in the future?

Encourage a discussion about this. If you feel comfortable sharing something not too personal about yourself, you could think of examples to help with this (like a goal of trying to get fit and healthy), if you prefer not to, are there any famous people you can think of to help aid this discussion? Anyone been getting into trouble like a reality star, who might be able to sort it out? You want to give a message of hope.



Learning point

You have changed a lot in two years. You will change a lot again in two years time. You can't change the past (that is outside your control), but you can learn from it (inside your control). Remember- the human part of your brain can use the information you have learned in the past and put it in your computer for the future. However, make sure it's not the chimp that is typing in the computer!

Session 4

“We are all the hero in our own story”

- Mary McCarthy (writer and activist in the 20th century)

Aim: To use narrative stories to convey a message of meaning, hope and purpose for the young person.

Materials- a photo copy or print out of the ‘life story’ table on **page 24**, pen and paper

What do you think the following quote means?:



You might want to print out this quote for them to take away and think about on their journey back from the appointment.

If you look back on your life so far, it's been pretty interesting already, but if someone made a film of your life, you are still in the first part of that movie. As your YOS officer I only know some information about you. Going to Court for an offence is only part of your story, like a page or a chapter in a book. Your story can and will change depending on what you think, feel and do. Changing your life in a different direction after Court is tough, it takes work, but it makes a good story. Remember, you are the hero!

Let's look at Tom's story. He was sentenced to a 12 month Referral Order for "Possession of a Bladed Article".

Tom's story

*Tom was 15 when he was attacked. He ended up in hospital for two nights as he needed surgery for a broken finger and internal and external stitches between his nose and mouth. He also had to have dental surgery due to having his front tooth knocked out during the assault. Although he didn't like to admit it, the attack had scared the hell out of him. Tom and his mate had been assaulted by a group of 4 lads in Banbury, and he couldn't get it out of his head.

I first met Tom when I was having to write his Pre-Sentence Report for Court as he had been convicted of Possession of a Bladed article. He told me he carried the knife on him after the attack as he was scared he was going to be assaulted again, and he said he had the knife to scare away any potential attacker. He said he would never use the knife, telling me; *"nobody deserves to get stabbed or die, I am just not going to get hospitalised again"*.

The thing that worried Tom was as a result of being assaulted, his mum and Social Worker had told him to report the lads to the Police. The group were arrested and convicted of ABH, but Tom said he was now seen as a 'grass' and there were ongoing tensions. He told me *"if I bump into any of them, they would get me again. 100%. That's why I need the knife"*.

1. What do you think? Does the knife protect Tom? If so, in what way? In what way might the knife make things worse?
2. What if he is confronted by someone? What if they have a knife too?
3. How in control is Tom really?

*Name and location changed to protect the young person's identity.

Your life story

OK, so what about your story?

*Show the young person the 'life story' table on **page 24** work with them to fill it in. Research shows 'meaning, hope and purpose' are key ingredients for people's wellbeing in their lives (Wilson 2011). This exercise aims to use the young person's own narrative to help draw these three out.*

Some practitioners may feel concerned regarding disclosures of possible trauma in the young person's past or present. Remember, they are only going to disclose to you what they want to. If they don't feel comfortable doing it they won't. If they do disclose anything, the most important thing to do is listen, believe them, reassure them, thank them for telling you and be open if there is anything you are going to do (re: safeguarding) afterwards. If you feel anxious about this, then speak to your line manager ahead of this exercise.

Life story continued

Past- What are some of the biggest things you have dealt with in your life, how did you do it? <i>Meaning</i>	Present Who you are now? How have you changed from 1 year ago? What are your strengths now? <i>Hope</i>	Future How will your life be different in 1 years' time? In what way will you change? <i>Purpose</i>

Past (continued)	Present (continued)	Future (continued)



Now, think about the chimp and human in your brain. Who do you want to be in charge of your life story?

Learning Point:

Just because
the past didn't
turn out like you
wanted it to,
doesn't mean your
future can't be
better than you
ever imagined.

Session 5

Redirecting and reframing

Aim: To introduce the concept of schemas and how we all filter events around us differently depending on our 'filters'.

Materials- pen and paper. Photo copy or printout of the picture of schemas on **page 29** Pair of rainbow glasses which comes with the workbook.

In the last session we looked at the story of your life so far. As you have grown up you will have developed beliefs about life along the way. The way we understand the world is extremely important, and to make bigger changes in our life, sometimes we have to make changes in how we think about what is going on around us.

Our beliefs are sometimes called schemas by psychologists. We have developed these as we have grown up because of information the chimp and human in our brains have been putting into the computer part of it. Schemas have a huge influence on how we think about stuff around us. Let's look at this picture to explain it more...

*(use the picture on **page 29** to guide through the scenario)*

Think of a schema being like a pair of sunglasses. Everything you see is filtered through the lens of the sunglasses. If you have a 'sunglasses' schema that says 'everyone hates me', then everything you see around you will be filtered through those sunglasses.

Show the young person the pair of glasses and ask them to put them on to help demonstrate the idea of the glasses filtering what happens on the outside world into our brains. Take time to make sure they grasp the concept of our own individual "filters" making us interpret events on the outside differently.

Let's look at an example of how our schemas affect us...You are supposed to meet someone at the top of the high street, but they are late. If your sunglasses schema is that everyone hates you, then you might think something like *"they are late on purpose so they don't have to spend as much time with me"* or *"they are late because they don't give a shit about*

me". Someone who does not have that schema, might think if someone is late to meet them "*maybe the bus is running late*" or "*maybe they overslept*". Now, let's say the person finally arrives 15 minutes late and says sorry. How do you think the person who believes everyone hates them is going to act differently to the person who thinks the bus was running late?

Hopefully the young person will identify that the person who holds the schema that people hate them is likely to be moody/ angry or upset, and the person who does not hold that schema is likely to accept the explanation and move on quickly. It's exactly the same scenario for both people, but the outcome of how they feel is completely different.

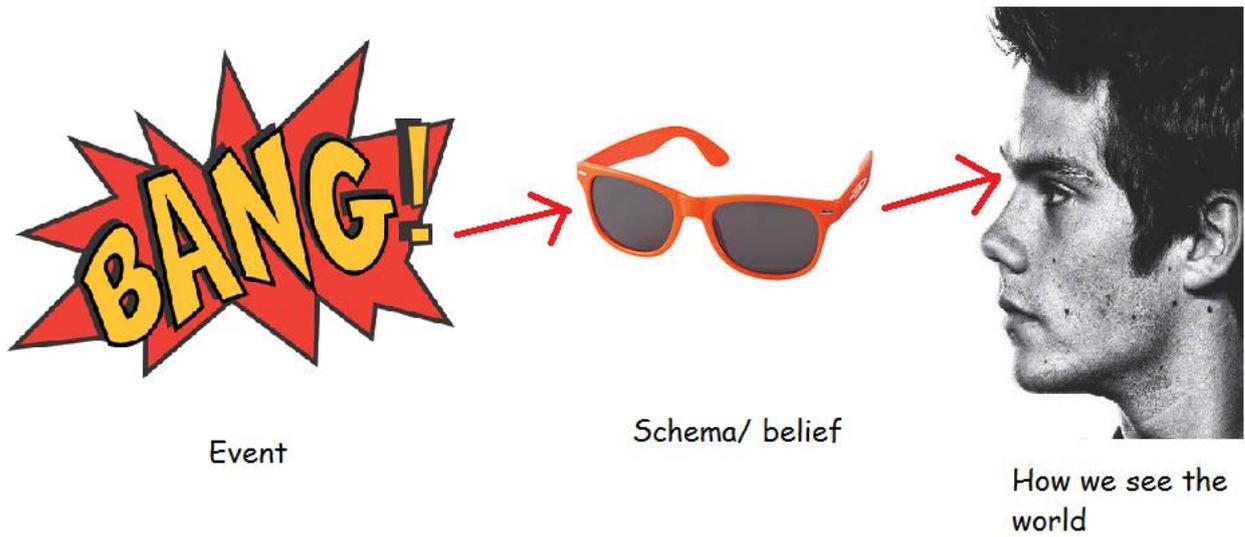
Let's look at another example (taken from Wilson 2011). Use the schema picture to back up what you are saying when you read through this scenario

James and Rob both go to college. James thinks he is stupid. His schema is that he isn't clever enough to do his GCSEs. He gets a bad mark in a test he takes in the first term in year 9 "*That just proves I shouldn't even be here*" he thinks. He skips some lessons and doesn't really revise for the next test. James does even worse in the second test which doesn't surprise him at all. Because his schema is that he's not clever, it means he gives up trying or revising which of course means he will do poorly. Now, let's look at Rob. He got the same bad mark as James on the first test. But he doesn't have the schema James has though. So when he gets the bad mark, he thinks to himself "*I guess how I used to work in years 7 and 8 won't work for year 9. I need to work out what I need to do differently*". He attends all the lessons, asks questions and reads the notes. His hard work pays off and he gets a good mark in the second test. This gives him new confidence at being able to stick with his GCSEs.

Now our schemas are something we hold close, we think it's the truth and it's hard to shift. We all have them, and they affect us every day.

So, how can we change them? Let's go back to thinking about the chimp and the human typing into the computer in our brains. Which one do we want typing into our computers? If the chimp is doing it, we might find ourselves reacting very quickly to what happens around us. Remember the earlier session where there are some things we can control and some things we can't? What do you think? How can you make sure the human is in control of your brain rather than the chimp in how you see the world?

How schemas/ automatic thoughts work



Session 6

Skills building- protective behaviours

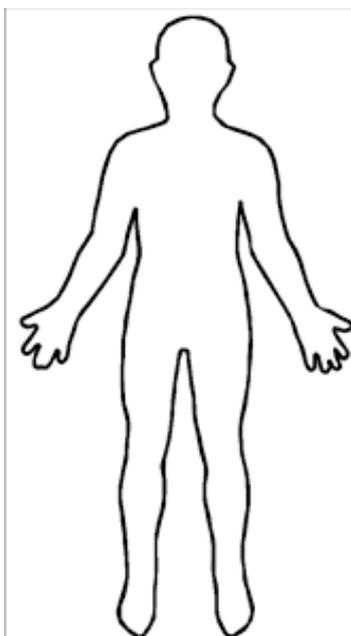
Aim- Encourage the young person to reflect on feeling safe, and how there is a continuum of safety. To learn what safety is and to start developing a safety plan and support network.

Materials- A3 sheet of paper, pens.

The protective Behaviours Consortium have produced some strategies to help with this.

In today's session, we are going to talk about feeling safe. Everyone has a right to feel safe. At the time you had the weapon on you, it's likely you were not feeling safe at all. Lots of things were going on. We are going to look at some quick ways to help if you think your safety is at risk.

Firstly, tell me, how do you know when you feel unsafe? What signs does your body give you?



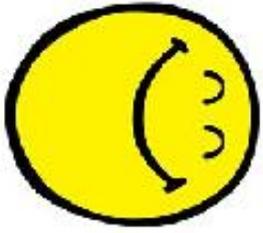
On a large piece of paper, draw an outline of a body like the image above and ask them what signs their body gives them if they are feeling unsafe- e.g. sweaty hands, racing heartbeat, sick feeling in the stomach.

Can you tell me a place where you feel safe? *This could be anywhere from school, a friend's house, it might be somewhere they used to go in the past.*

Ok so what places have you not felt safe? *Encourage them to reflect on places or situations they have been in when they have no longer felt safe.*

So, we've identified where you feel safe and not safe. Sometimes it's not very clear cut. Sometimes, it's actually fun to feel a bit unsafe. Can you think of examples?

Show them the picture of the safety continuum on the next page....



Feeling safe

Fun to feel scared



Risking on purpose



Feeling unsafe





The chimp part of our brain is often in charge when we are risking on purpose, and if we let the monkey stay in control, things can quickly move along the line from feeling fun to feeling scared and unsafe.

We talked earlier about how our body can give us early signs when we are not feeling safe anymore, but you need to use the human part of your brain too. When something might have felt fun starts to feel unsafe and not fun anymore. Katie Wrench is an art psychotherapist, and she came up with this:

SAFETY = CHOICE + CONTROL + TIME LIMIT

So, lets think about it a bit. A roller coaster is something you can choose to go on, it's in your control to do it, and you know the ride is going to end soon, so there is a time limit. That's an example of risking on purpose which is fun. It's when you don't feel you have choice or control or don't know when it's going to end that is when things feel unsafe.

It's good to have a safety network...



Helping hand- safety network

Ask the young person to draw around their hand on a piece of paper. On the palm ask them to write 'my safety network'. Tell them each finger on the hand is to represent someone they feel they could call if they were feeling unsafe. They could include a range of individuals such as a friend, family or professional person. It's likely that they would have different people for different scenarios, encourage them to think about a range of scenarios and who is the most realistic person they could reach out to.

Safety planning

The first thing is to prevent getting into the situation, but sometimes that is not possible. Here are tips on trying to keep safe:

- **Find a safe place**
- **If it is safe, call the police or someone from your safety network**
- **If calling the police, tell them your name, what is happening and where you are**
- **If calling a trusted person, you might want to use a previously agreed phrase or code to come and get you, e.g. "I left the iron on at home". You can then eyeball roll whilst on the phone pretending the person is really cross in the background and say you have to get back because they are furious with you.**

Encourage the young person to come up with a safety plan thinking about when and where, different possible scenarios. Write it down with them.

Learning point For the young person to start assessing risk, identifying cues and scenarios where they no longer feel safe and what strategies they should use to help make them feel safe again.

Session 7

Skills building- De escalation



Aim: to introduce the concept of de-escalation. To encourage the young person to start reading body language and signals people give. To learn some top tips in how to de-escalate a situation.

Materials - 2 x A3 sheets of plain paper and different coloured pens, laptop with internet access

Today we are going to look at the skill of de-escalation. Lots of people use de-escalation techniques in all sorts of situations, jobs, places, and some are starting to learn about how useful it is now... *Show this short clip* <https://twitter.com/guardian/status/869941119962034176>

What do you think de-escalation is? *See what their understanding is.*

Have you ever seen anyone managing to de-escalate a situation? Maybe you have managed it? When it looked like it was going to kick off, but it didn't? Think about school, at home, with your mates, in your neighbourhood. It's often tempting to be aggressive back at someone when they are being aggressive to you, but this can make things worse.

On a piece of A3 paper draw the outline of a person

Ok, so what are the physical signs we can see in someone else when they are about to kick off? Think about those early signs.

Write down what they say on the sheet of paper.

Prompts-

Balled fist, fidgeting, flaring nostril, clenched jaw, speech becoming rapid/louder, shaking, eye balling, pacing, head thrust forward, pointing movements.

Research (Dr Deborah Yurgelun-Todd) is finding that young people may have difficulty reading the faces of others around them, which means they can sometimes not read a situation before it is too late. They might think someone is showing anger when it is simply surprise or worry (Morgan 2013).

This clip is from 'Made in Chelsea'. It shows Alek meet up with his ex partner Louise and her new partner Ryan. Watch the body language of Ryan carefully...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QjdNK4m-fU> (stop the clip after the pushing bit !).

Did you see it coming? What signs was Ryan giving? What did Alek do?

Recognising it in other people is one thing, but what about ourselves? What other signs can we give when things are getting confrontational and aggressive? Think about the tone of your voice, your body language, what you are saying. Tell me what are you like when you can feel yourself losing your temper, what signs does your body give you?

So if someone else is about to kick off, you can tell because of their body language, what can you do to de-escalate it?

This is a useful quote: **“Calm can be just as contagious as fear”**

On another A3 sheet draw another body outline

When you want to de-escalate a situation, when the other person is losing control, it's important for you to have the most control over yourself. Remember- you can't control others but you can control you. You want to model the behaviour you want them to do. You want to appear calm and self-confident. Think about someone looking like they are going to kick off. How could you calm the situation down? Think about body language, voice, what you could say. Let's write them on this body..

Write the ideas the young person comes up with on the A3 body outline. The next page has some additional top tips to help as a prompt...

De-escalation top tips

- Maintain a neutral expression (*check they understand what this means*)
- Allow space between you. Don't get up close.
- Control your breathing
- Lower your voice and keep it even
- Listen
- Avoid threats
- Don't be defensive
- Don't be sarcastic.
- Make sure you are not displaying the same signs of agitation that can be seen in them: unclench your fists, do not hold eye contact and avoid standing square to the other person.
- Think about the chimp! When someone is aggressive, they are responding with their chimp instincts and not thinking about their actions. It's important you are in control of your chimp because two chimps meeting together is going to make the situation much worse.
- You may not always know what you are going to do, but keep in your head what you are not going to do. When they have the least control, it is time for you to have the most control over yourself.
- Approximately 55% of what we communicate is physical, 38% is through the tone of our voice and just 7% is through the words that we use. It is useful to remember this when you are trying to de-escalate. Make sure you are modelling the behaviour you want the other person to do.
- Remember the goal here is to show the skills you have at things not kicking off. This isn't about getting in someone's face, or winning. If you feel it's getting really unsafe, you need to get out of there.

So, let's think back to the clip with Alek and Ryan. What could Alek have done differently in that situation when he started to notice the signs Ryan's body was giving that he was getting agitated?

Encourage the young person to think not just about what Alek was saying, but his body language, tone of voice, expressions on his face, the use of sarcasm.

Now what about social media? This isn't physical face-to-face confrontation, but things can really build up on there. Dissing each other on Facebook. What do you think about de-escalating things when Social Media is involved?

Social media is an interesting one because people can't see each other's body language if getting into an argument. Someone might think it's a bit of banter and keep going, not seeing the other person and how they are reacting, so they don't back off. There can be a huge build up before the two people actually meet. Encourage a discussion with the young person about this. What are their views? It's important to acknowledge a young person's existence both in the 'real world' and in 'social media'. They have two 'realities' now that they are functioning in.

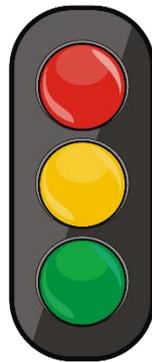
Learning point- a volatile situation doesn't come from nowhere. People usually give off lots of signs and warnings in advance if they are getting agitated. Responding to an aggressive person with aggression is likely to result in more aggression and or violence. Both you and the person would be using your chimps. You need to get your human to talk to your chimp and use strategies to calm the situation down.

Session 8

Skills building- what are my risky areas?

Aim- For the young person to identify different scenarios where risk could increase and strategies to reduce risk.

Materials- photo copy of worksheet on **page 41**, laptop with internet access



In today's session we are going to look at getting to know things which are particularly risky for you. We all have some things which really get to us, I personally can't stand _____ [*disclose something you feel comfortable with that winds you up in day to day life, like being cut up in a car*] and everyone is different. Let's think back to that clip from 'Made in Chelsea'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QjdNK4m-fU> (stop the clip after the pushing bit !).

Ryan has an issue with previous boyfriends of his partner's, and this is because of experiences he's had. He knows that about himself. His trigger is 'ex-boyfriends', and he probably has lots of schemas around this. Let's think of it like traffic lights. He's in a room, no ex-boyfriend is around, so it's green, everything is cool. Then ex-boyfriend comes into the room, so Ryan starts to feel edgy, he's clocked him and he doesn't like how it makes him feel- he's in amber. Then ex-boyfriend comes right up to him and starts trying to wind him up so we're in the red zone now. In that clip, it was really difficult from him. Does the traffic light stuff make sense? Green is everything is fine, amber is things are starting to look a bit tricky, red is things could kick off at any minute. We talked about control in session 2 of this workbook. You can't control other people or what happens around you. Ryan couldn't control Alek coming up to him and Louise at the party,

but Ryan CAN control how he reacts to Alek who obviously wants to get a reaction from Ryan. It's like Alek is playing with Ryan, wanting Ryan to do something in front of Louise. Ryan is like a toy car and Alek is playing with the remote control, trying to control him. Ryan's chimp comes in and bam. He pushes Alek. This is what Alek wanted. He wanted Ryan to look stupid in front of Louise. What Ryan tells himself and how he manages the situation, IS in his control, even when it's REALLY DIFFICULT.

Let's talk about you. Are there any particular things which you know are triggers for you? Certain people, certain behaviour? What are your 'red lights'? What are the things that really get to you? For example if someone says something about your family. They want you to react. They are holding the remote control and you are their toy car. How can you get control back? It's important that you know when a situation is getting risky, so you can then manage it. Now what about amber, what would an amber situation be like for you?

Use a photo copy the worksheet on the next page and get the young person to fill it in with you

After the young person has identified different scenarios, encourage them to start coming up with some strategies to get a red situation to amber, or an amber situation to green. It's important where possible that they identify the strategy to use as they are more likely to then use it in the future.

<p>Learning point- for the young person to have a good idea of different risky situations and what they need to do to reduce the risk.</p>

What are your red amber and green situations?



RED situations	AMBER situations	GREEN situations



Remember to think of the toy car. Are people sometimes using the remote control and getting a reaction from your chimp?

Session 9

Skills building- Group conflict, peer pressure

Aim: To encourage the young person to reflect on friendships, masculinity and roles people take in groups. A discussion about trust.

Materials: laptop with internet access, print out of the 'anatomy of trust' sheet on **page 45**



Today we are going to look at the influence our mates or associates can have on us. Peer pressure isn't always bad. It can help us fit in, succeed and survive. When everyone's doing something, we assume there's a good reason, and we follow along. Let's look at this clip....

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

It's nice to feel liked, to feel like you fit in, to be part of something, to be loyal, to know that your mates have your back, it's part of being human.

What is it like to be part of a group of mates? Often when there is a group, it's natural for people to take on different roles in that group. Sometimes there is someone older in the group. Maybe there is one louder member of the group, another who might be the quiet one. Others that back up the louder one. Usually there is a pecking order. Think about your group of friends, can you think of the different roles your mates take on when they are all together? Are you different on your own than when you are with your mates? Think about your chimp and your human, think about your schema sunglasses. Do

you think how you look at the world around you changes when you are with them?

The following clips and discussion points are aimed for males. It acknowledges how gender will play a powerful role in social situations. The majority of young people arrested for weapon possession are male, which is why this workbook looks at this. It is up to you as the practitioner if you are completing this intervention with a female. You might want to continue with the following clips to encourage a discussion about gender and culture, or you may prefer to skip this as you feel it is not relevant. If you want to skip, simply go to the next page and carry on from there.

In this clip a young person talks about looking out for people in his area. He sees it as his job....

<https://youtu.be/M-V3brhBecY?t=13m43s>

(play until 16 minutes 17 seconds)

What do you think about what Danny was saying? Does it sound familiar?

The interviewer is interested about the role of being a man for the young people on the estate. Here he's talking to some other young people about their area and being a man.

<https://youtu.be/VB0EqEnadOc?t=1m36s>

(play until 3 minutes 51 seconds)

The interviewer then goes and meets with the mums who live on the same estate as Danny...

<https://youtu.be/M-V3brhBecY?t=17m2s>

(play until 18 minutes 52 seconds)

What do you think about what they said? Do you think being male makes a difference to how you behave in groups? What do you think makes a man?

So, what makes a good friend? *Get the young person to put together a list of what they think are qualities of a good friend, e.g. trust, same sense of humour, looking out for each other.*

Sometimes, our mates can let us down. What does that feel like? Have you ever been let down by a mate? *Encourage them to think of examples of someone not being a good friend.*

How do we know someone is really our mate?

Someone called Brene Brown (2017) researched what trust is. She said:

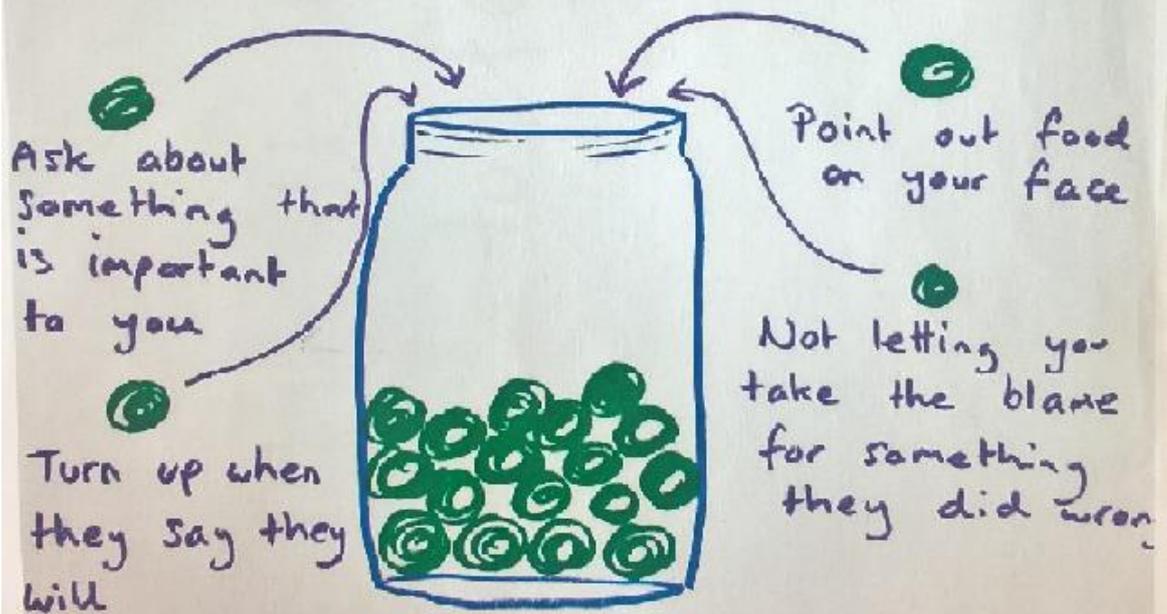


She describes building trust as being like a jar of marbles. Each marble is a sign a person is trustworthy. *Show the young person the 'anatomy of trust' print out on the next page...*

Anatomy of trust

Trust is like a jar of marbles. The marbles are the small moments that evidence a person to be trust worthy.

The more moments we share, the more the jar fills, the more trust we have for someone



The marbles are evidence someone is:

- reliable,
- not judging you,
- turning up when they say they will,
- asking about something important to you,
- not letting you take the blame for something they did wrong.
- They don't share information or experiences about you that aren't theirs to share, unless they are worried for your safety.

Trust takes time to build and can very quickly be broken. If you had a marble jar of trust, what would count as marbles for you? How do people show they can be trusted?

So what happens if our mates start getting us into situations which no longer feel safe? Our body starts to give off signals like we discussed in the session 6. What if someone asked you to do something you know is wrong and doesn't feel safe?

- What are 2 reasons you would do what they asked you even if you knew it was wrong?

Encourage them to think of things like embarrassed not to, scared of what they would do if you didn't do it, want to fit in

- What are 2 reasons you would not do what they asked?

Encourage them to think about reasons like 'I don't have to just do everything they say', draw out their 'human brain' answers and you can also remind them of the remote control car- are their mates controlling them? If needed, encourage them to think about their safety planning from session 6.

What do you think about the statement:

Even when no one is around to twist our arms, we can imagine it by doing what we think others want us to do (Wilson 2011).

Do you think that's true? If so, who's in charge there, your chimp, your human or your "mate"?

Let's think about the brain again. The teenage brain goes through lots of changes. Researchers are finding out more and more about it all the time. One thing they have discovered is that the adolescent brain is more sensitive to what we think about our mates than any other age group. For adolescents, being around peers makes us more likely to take risks because we are much more sensitive to what we think our mates think of us, and believe we will get approval by risky behaviour (First Look Evidence Summary 2017).

Here's a clip of research experiment on a teenager to see if they take more risks if they think their friends are around:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt9MyNo65eI>

Do you think that's true? Do you think you are more likely to take risks when mates are there than when they aren't?

Learning point: For the young person to reflect on group dynamics and how the influence can change how they behave. To encourage them to think about what makes a good friend.

Session 10

Review and some extra information

Aim: A discussion of some of the facts about weapon possession, including the law. To reflect on what the young person has found useful or not so useful in this toolkit.

Materials: Print out or photocopy of the 'post intervention questionnaire'

This is the final session of this course. Before we review what has been learned, it's interesting to have a discussion about weapon and knife crime more generally. We started this course by discussing your weapon possession, and that is how we are going to finish the course.

If you look at a newspaper or check the internet these days, it gives the impression that almost all young people are going around carrying knives or other weapons, but what is the reality? Although we will never really be able to know as not everyone is going to admit it (or be caught carrying one), we can still get some idea from statistics. The Ben Kinsella trust was set up to combat knife crime. In their survey of 3950 young people:

93% thought that knife crime is a problem, but interestingly 85% of those asked in the survey did not know anyone who carried one.

Carrying a weapon is not a 'norm' like some people make out. It's a sign that something is very wrong.

It's also important you know legal information about weapon crime:

- 2 strikes rule

In July 2015 a new law was introduced. If you are caught with a weapon and you've been caught with one before, and are aged between 12 and 17, you will face at least a 4 month Detention and Training Order. From June 2018 this will go up to at least a 6 months Detention and Training Order.

- It is illegal to sell a knife to anyone under 18 years old.

- If someone is injured or killed in your presence, even if you didn't actually do it, you could be sent to prison for murder under 'joint enterprise'.
- Some knives in the UK are banned which means you could be arrested and charged simply for owning one. These include flick knives, disguised knives, sword-sticks and gravity knives.

Summary- We have covered a lot in the last few weeks- talked about our brain and the chimp and human in it. We looked at what is in our control and what is outside it. We talked about change being possible, being the hero of your own life story and schemas. We have started to put together a tool kit of skills like protective behaviours, de-escalation, traffic lights and talking about how our mates and associates can really influence us. The marble jar. What would you say have been the parts of the course which have stuck in your brain most?

Do you think you will use any of it?

I need you to quickly complete this questionnaire now, and then the session is finished.

Post intervention questionnaire

Please read these statements and tick the answer you think most

1. "I think people can change"

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

2. "If someone threatened me (or someone close to me), the way to deal with it is to threaten them back"

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

3. "If I feel unsafe, having a weapon makes me safe again".

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

5. "I feel like people are always winding me up".

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Please let us know any other comments about how you found this toolkit

Thank you to:

Ali B, Lindsey D, Mark W, Jenny B, the PE team at Huntercombe, Fred T and Georgia B for their time in talking about this intervention.

Additional Resources

Further De-escalation skills tips

Taken from Prysor-Jones (2017)

De-escalation techniques are most successful when used early, before the person becomes physically aggressive. To do this, it is necessary to be aware of and spot early signs of agitation such as:

- balled fists
- fidgeting
- shaking
- 'eye-balling'
- head thrust forward
- clenched jaw
- speech becoming more rapid or high-pitched.
- Pacing is a cycle of feeding off someone's emotions and escalating. If they can make you as angry as them, it gives them permission to become even angrier and justify their own hostility.
- You may not always know what you are going to do, but keep in your head what you are not going to do. When they have the least control, it is time for you to have the most control over yourself.

Non-verbal techniques

Calm can be just as contagious as fear and the goal is to communicate that to the other person. Approximately 55% of what we communicate is physical, 38% is through the tone of our voice and just 7% is through the words that we use. It is useful to remember this when you are trying to de-escalate. Make sure you are modelling the behaviour you want the other person to do.

Techniques include the following.

Appear calm and self-assured

Make sure you are not displaying the same signs of agitation that can be seen in them: unclench your fists, do not hold eye contact and avoid standing square to the other person.

Maintain a neutral facial expression

Even our eyebrows can indicate we are surprised or angry, and similarly our mouths can betray our emotions unwittingly. Another natural reaction we often have when under stress is to smirk or giggle, which must be controlled.

Allow space

Entering a person's personal space can be useful to refocus on a task when the situation is calm, but when someone is agitated this can indicate aggression and

escalate the situation. Staying some distance away will also help keep you safe should they become physically aggressive.

Control your breathing

When we are stressed, angry or tense, our breathing becomes more shallow and rapid. If we take deeper, slower breaths, this will not only help keep us calm, but the child will begin to match our own breathing pattern. It can sometimes help to match the other person's breathing initially then gradually slow it down.

Verbal strategies

Lower your voice and keep your tone even.

It is hard to have an argument with someone who is not responding aggressively back to you.

Distraction and diversion are extremely useful.

When someone is aggressive, they are responding with their own fight-or-flight instincts and not thinking about their actions.

Distract them and engage their thinking brain, perhaps by changing the subject or commenting on something that is happening outside the window.

Do not get drawn into behaviours such as arguing back, which are designed to distract or upset you.

An interesting article about teaching prisoners skills in mediation as an alternative to violence....

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/10/can-prisoners-resolve-disputes-dartmoor-mediation>

Influence of associates

- Groups and Criminal Exploitation of Young People

If you are working with a young person who appears to be being exploited by an older, this might be an interesting clip to have a discussion about

It is advised you watch it first to decide if you think it is suitable depending on the person you are working with. One argument is the young person might think the person who is being interviewed is very 'obvious' and unlikeable so they would never 'fall' for that exploitation. However, it could get a good discussion going about exploitation generally...

This clip shows an older who targets young people to sell drugs for him being interviewed..

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_TP7PCPii8

He calls young people 'easy targets'. What do you think?

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