

~~No knives~~
Better lives

ACTIVE BYSTANDER PACKAGE

NAE DANGER

Toolkit

Aimed at practitioners and facilitators working directly with young people aged 10-16.



ACTIVE BYSTANDER PACKAGE

NAE DANGER

Toolkit

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Background



Background

Some young people we were working with gave feedback that they found the term active bystander and the 5Ds of bystander intervention (Distract, Document, Delay, Delegate and Direct) unclear and hard to understand. As they formed the core of our active bystander resources, we conducted research to see if this was a wider young people.

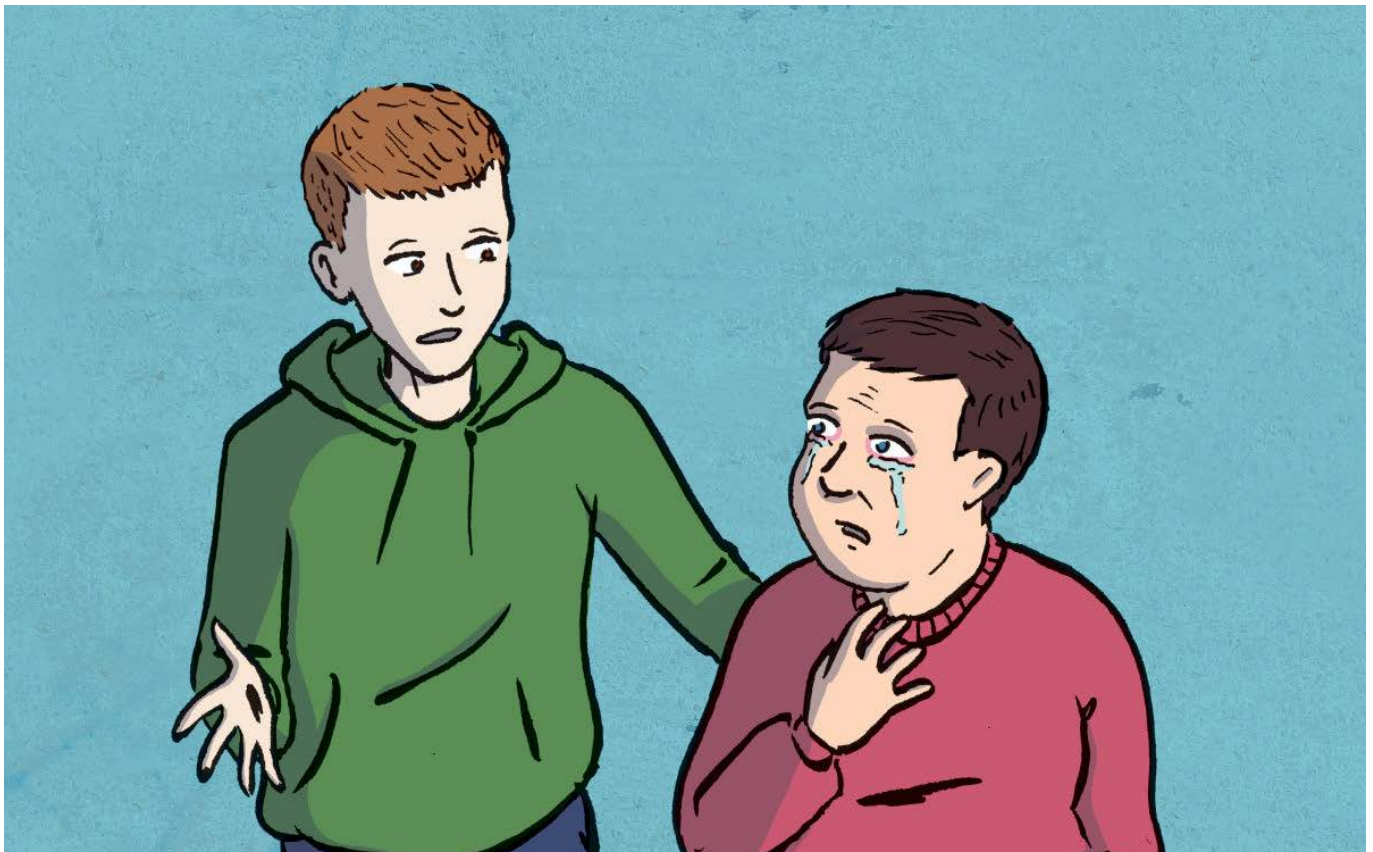
The findings from this have allowed us to create our new **STEPS to being an active bystander** approach and Nae Danger package, in consultation with young people.

What is an Active Bystander?

An active bystander is someone who takes steps to **safely** make a difference when something isn't right like knife crime or similar risky situations. They might distract people, tell an adult, or check in with someone afterwards. Being an active bystander is about supporting others and helping to keep everyone safe, **without putting themselves at risk**.

The STEPS Approach

Following feedback from our focus groups that some young people found the language used in 5Ds of bystander intervention confusing, we created a simplified version in consultation with them. **When discussing these options with young people, it is essential to remind them to only take action when it is safe and appropriate for them to do so.**



STEPS to Being an Active Bystander

STEP UP

Recognise the problem and intervene directly.

Act in the moment to address the behaviour. This could involve calmly talking to the person who is about to cause harm or the person experiencing it.

Only step up if you feel it's safe and appropriate to do so.

TELL AN ADULT

Get help from a trusted adult such as a youth worker or teacher.

If someone's safety is at risk, reporting the issue—even anonymously through services like Fearless—can make a big difference. This isn't about grassing; it's about getting the right support for you and your friend.

EVIDENCE

Take notes of what has happened, including what you saw, heard, or know about the situation.

Be aware if you take photos or videos, it can make things worse, upset the people involved, or spread hurtful content if shared. Filming might also make others feel unsafe and could get you into trouble. If the situation becomes a criminal investigation, the Police could confiscate your phone. Instead, focus on remembering or writing down what you saw and heard so you can explain it clearly if needed.

PULL ATTENTION AWAY

Take the focus off the problem and shift their attention to something safer.

This can de-escalate tension and create an opportunity to address the issue later in a safer environment. This could include changing a subject to something more positive or asking them to do something different with you.

SUPPORT LATER

Follow up and check in with the person after the situation.

Checking in privately shows that you care and can help them feel supported in finding safer ways to cope with their situation.

Grassing

In some Scottish communities, the term grassing carries significant stigma. It refers to informing authorities about others' behaviour and is often discouraged due to cultural beliefs ("we don't grass") or fear of retaliation ("grasses get slashes"). This can discourage young people from taking necessary action in situations involving knife carrying or other risks.

Rather than pressuring young people to report, our approach offers alternative actions for them to consider.

These include:

- **Speaking to a friend who might be at risk of carrying a knife.**
- **Encouraging them to seek help from a trusted adult (e.g. teacher, youth worker, or parent).**
- **Exploring positive ways to resolve conflicts.**

In serious situations—such as when violence or death is a potential risk—telling someone becomes critical.

Saving a life or preventing harm is far more important than the fear of being called a grass. This can also mean reporting anonymously through services like Fearless or Crimestoppers.

It is, however, important for the limitations of this to be made clear to the young people. Anonymous reporting can make the Police investigate something, but it cannot be used as evidence.

Youth Work Outcomes

The activities within this package align with the Youth Work Outcomes developed by YouthLink Scotland, supporting young people to build confidence, resilience, and positive relationships.

Learn more about the Youth Work Outcomes at: [YouthLink Scotland - Youth Work Outcomes](#).

This resource meets the following Youth Work Outcomes:

1. Young people are confident, resilient, and optimistic for the future.
2. Young people manage personal, social, and formal relationships.
3. Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
4. Young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment.

Our **Nae Danger** resources aim to empower young people to use the STEPS approach confidently, equipping them to make a positive difference while **prioritising safety** in situations involving knife crime and youth violence.

Scottish Curriculum for Excellence

The activities within this package also align with the principles of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, fostering the four capacities in young people to become: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These activities also support the broader goal of fostering personal growth and positive social engagement.

This resource meets the following Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes, which practitioners can adapt to suit the needs and abilities of their learners across second, third and fourth levels:

HEALTH AND WELLBEING (HWB):

Second Level:

I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible.

(HWB 2-16a)

I know and can demonstrate how to keep myself and others safe and how to respond in unsafe or emergency situations.

(HWB 2-17a)

Third/Fourth Level:

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging, unsafe, or risky situations.

(HWB 3-16a / HWB 4-16a)

Through contributing my views, time, and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community.

(HWB 3-13a / HWB 4-13a)

SOCIAL STUDIES (SOC):

Second Level:

I can consider ways of looking after my school or community and can encourage others to care for their environment.

(SOC 2-08a)

I can discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence.

(SOC 2-06a)

Third/Fourth Level:

I can discuss the motives and consequences of people's actions and explain how they have impacted on others.

(SOC 3-15a / SOC 4-15a)

I can discuss and assess the effectiveness of strategies for tackling social issues.

(SOC 3-16a / SOC 4-16a)

LITERACY (LIT):

Second Level:

When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions, and use these to build on thinking.

(LIT 2-02a)

Third/Fourth Level:

I can communicate clearly when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning.

(LIT 3-02a / LIT 4-02a)

ACTIVE BYSTANDER PACKAGE

Toolkit

Delivering Active Bystander Sessions



NAE DANGER Package Overview



TOOLKIT

This toolkit includes activities and strategies to help young people (10-16) safely challenge harmful behaviors, support peers, and explore alternatives to reporting.



PRESENTATION PACK

Utilise our pre-made slides to deliver a presentation aimed at increasing young people's knowledge and understanding of being an active bystander.



YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

A resource for young people to help them gain an understanding of what an active bystander is and the steps they can take to become one.



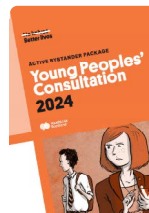
POSTERS

Two printable posters displaying the STEPS to being an active bystander with a call to action.



PEER EDUCATION MODULE

Young people are one of our strongest resources in tackling youth violence. These resources allow trained peer educators to teach other young people about being active bystanders.



YOUNG PEOPLES' CONSULTATIONS REPORT

A short report consolidating the outcome of focus groups carried out with young people to explore the use of the term active bystander and the 5Ds of bystander intervention.



VIRTUAL REALITY GAME FACILITATOR GUIDE

This user manual explains how to download our virtual reality game onto your own headsets and run your own VR Workshops.



ONLINE COURSE

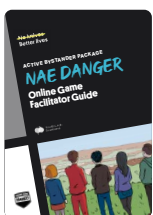
Additional information on our new resources can be found on our Learning Hub:

Nae Danger - Toolkit

Nae Danger - Toolbox

Virtual Reality Game Guide

Multiplayer Online Game Guide



MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAME FACILITATOR GUIDE

Develop your understanding of our online multiplayer game and how you can use this with groups of young people online or in person.

Before You Begin

Get Clued Up

Educate yourself about knife crime, violence and violence prevention. Find out the facts so that you can give correct information, free of judgement. Utilise our free micro-module courses on our learning hub to further develop your knowledge.

Get Local/Recent Knowledge

Refer to local and recent stories or news events to make the conversation with young people relevant. Find out about any local services you can refer them to, such as a local youth or sports group.

Adapt to Learners' Levels

Tailor the sessions to meet the developmental level and understanding of your group. For younger learners, focus on simpler concepts like recognising risks and seeking help. For older groups, delve deeper into exploring complex scenarios, discussing societal issues and debating potential solutions. This flexibility ensures that all participants can engage meaningfully with the resources and feel empowered to act as active bystanders.

Understand "Grassing" Culture

Recognise that for some young people, the fear of being labelled a grass can prevent them from stepping up as an active bystander. Address this concern with sensitivity and avoid dismissing their experiences. Use activities and discussions to show the difference between grassing and taking action to protect someone's safety. Reinforce the importance of building trust and ensuring anonymity when reporting concerns.

Clarify the Term Active Bystander

Our research highlighted that some young people find the term active bystander confusing, especially when it is simply referred to as bystander. Ensure you clearly define what it means to be an active bystander and don't just refer to it as being a bystander as this has a different meaning. Highlight the positive actions and steps involved in being an active bystander to help young people fully understand their role and the impact they can have.

Build a Supportive Environment

Create a safe and inclusive space where young people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences. Reinforce that no question or concern is too small and that their voices are valued. Encourage open dialogue and use positive reinforcement to build confidence and resilience.

ACTIVE BYSTANDER PACKAGE
Toolkit

Activities

3



Activities

This section is divided into three categories to help facilitators guide young people through the process of becoming confident and effective active bystanders.

1. Understanding the Basics (Learning the Key Concepts)

- Step Up
- In the Corner
- Unlock the Power

2. Preparing to Step Up (Practicing in a Safe Space)

- In the Hot Seat
- The Bystanders
- What if?

3. Taking Action (Applying Knowledge to a Real-life Scenario)

- The Great Debate
- Nae Danger
- Active Bystander Challenge
- Bounce into Action
- The Target

4. Example Session Plans

- 40 Minutes
- 60 Minutes
- 90 Minutes

1. Understanding the Basics

Step Up

An Introduction to the STEPS Approach

Time required	30 minutes
Objectives	To introduce the concept of being an active bystander and to explore what it looks like in real-life scenarios
Description	A scenario activity looking at steps young people can take to become active bystanders
Resources required	Scenario Cards STEPS Poster

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask the young people what an active bystander is. Use a whiteboard/flipchart paper to note key characteristics (e.g. recognising harmful situations, deciding when it is safe to intervene, asking for help).
2. Introduce and display the STEPS acronym to help the young people think about the different strategies they can use. Link this to the key characteristics they came up with.
3. Divide your young people into small groups and give each group a printed scenario. Using the acronym STEPS, have them discuss and identify:
 - The harmful behaviour in the scenario
 - Where they could step up as an active bystander (What 'STEPS' strategy could they use?)
 - Potential risk to themselves and others and how to tackle these safely
4. Summarise the key points and encourage the young people to reflect on how they can apply these skills in their daily lives. For the scenarios that don't explicitly mention knife crime, discuss how it could escalate to this.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Emphasise the importance of young people keeping themselves safe.
- Be aware of your groups lived experience and any triggers these conversations could have.
- Add in your own scenarios that are relevant to the group.

STEP Up - Scenario Cards

SCENARIO 1:

You're walking down the school corridor when you see your friend, Jamie, being cornered by a group of older pupils. They shove him against the wall and threaten him. You notice a few other people watching from a distance.

SCENARIO 2:

At an empty with your friend Alex, you see your two other friends, Sam and Jordan, get into an argument. Things quickly get worse, and Jordan suddenly pulls out a knife in anger. Everyone in the room goes silent, and you can see the fear in Sam's eyes.

SCENARIO 3:

While waiting at the bus stop with some school pals, you see your younger neighbor Taylor being picked on by a group of boys. They start making fun of her clothes and throwing small objects at her. As tensions rise, one of the boys suddenly unzips his bag and pulls out a knife, showing it off to his friends while smirking. The group laughs, but Taylor's face turns pale with fear.

SCENARIO 4:

You're walking home from school when you see two boys you know, Luke and Ryan, start to fight on the street. A group of people gather around to watch, and some begin recording the fight on their phones. The fight becomes more intense, and you can see that neither of them is willing to back down.

SCENARIO 5:

You're in a group chat with some friends when a couple of them start making fun of another school friend, Morgan. They're sharing embarrassing photos and sending cruel comments. Morgan is still in the chat but isn't responding. You notice that some people are joining in while others, including you, are staying silent.

SCENARIO 6:

You're walking home from school when you take a shortcut through a quiet alleyway. Up ahead, you see two boys from your school arguing. Their voices are raised, and their body language is tense. A small group has gathered around them, watching. Suddenly, one of the boys reaches into his jacket and pulls out a knife. The other boy takes a step back, his hands raised, looking scared.

NAE DANGER

STEPS to being an active bystander



An active bystander is someone who takes steps to **safely make a difference** when something isn't right like knife crime or violence.

S

Support Later
Follow up and check in with the person after the situation.

P

Pull Attention Away
Take the focus off the problem and shift their attention to something safer.

Evidence

Take notes of what has happened, including what you saw, heard, or know about the situation.

Tell An Adult

Get help from a trusted adult such as a youth worker or teacher.

Step Up

Recognise the problem and intervene directly.

S

What Would You Do?

You spot your pal showing off with a knife and making jokes about using it.

Every Step You Take Can Make A Difference.

By being an active bystander you can help keep your friends safe and prevent harm.

In the Corner

Four Corners Opinion Game

Time required	30 minutes
Objectives	To encourage young people to think about being an active bystander in real-life situations
Description	Four corners game to explore young people's thoughts and opinions on when and how they would become active bystanders
Resources required	Corner signs (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) Statements

WHAT TO DO

1. Place the four signs in different corners of the room.
2. Read each statement aloud and ask the young people to move to the corner that best represents their opinion.
3. In each corner, young people discuss why they chose their answer.
4. Invite young people from selected corners to share their thoughts with the whole group.
5. Highlight examples of where the young people would have been active bystanders and emphasise the positive influence that peers can have on each other.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

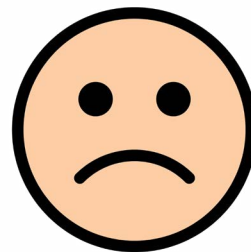
- Ensure the young people understand that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Be mindful of young people who may feel pressured to align with their peers; create space for quieter voices to be heard.
- Use follow-up questions to deepen the discussion and relate it back to the STEPS approach.



**STRONGLY
AGREE**



AGREE



DISAGREE



**STRONGLY
DISAGREE**

STATEMENTS:**If I see a friend carrying a knife, I should report it to someone I trust.**

Discuss the responsibility of reporting and the potential consequences for relationships and safety. Is it grassing if you are stopping your friend from making a life changing mistake?

Stepping in to stop an argument before it gets worse can help prevent violence.

Consider the risks and benefits of intervening early in a disagreement. Remind them of the importance of keeping themselves safe.

Calling the police when you see someone with a weapon is the best way to protect everyone involved.

Discuss the role of police in these situations and any concerns about calling. Highlight anonymous reporting for young people through Fearless.

It's safer for you to walk away from a situation where a weapon is involved, even if someone could get hurt.

Reflect on the decision between keeping yourself safe and helping others. Can you walk away but still help in a safer way? Relate this back to the STEPS approach.

Young people can have a significant impact in preventing knife crime in their communities by supporting each other.

Consider the collective power of youth and peer influence in reducing violence. Explain how small steps can collectively make a big impact.

Talking to someone you know is involved in knife crime could help them make better choices.

Discuss the impact conversations can have on influencing friend's behaviours and the potential risks.

Schools and communities should do more to educate young people about the dangers of knife crime.

Consider the role of education and youth-work in prevention and how effective it can be.

Social media can be used effectively to discourage violence and knife crime among young people.

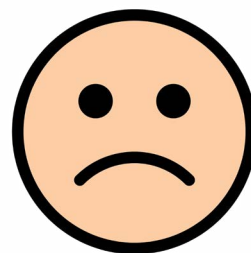
Explore the power and limitations of social media campaigns in shaping behaviours such as the Quit Fighting for Likes campaign.

I would feel comfortable intervening if I saw someone being threatened with a knife.

Reflect on the feelings of fear, courage and the possible outcomes of intervening. Emphasis on the importance of keeping themselves safe and the alternatives.

It's more effective to speak to someone privately if I'm worried, they might get involved in knife crime.

Discuss the effectiveness of private conversations versus public interventions.

**STRONGLY
AGREE****AGREE****DISAGREE****STRONGLY
DISAGREE**

In the Corner - Signs



**STRONGLY
AGREE**



AGREE



DISAGREE



**STRONGLY
DISAGREE**

Unlock the Power

Barriers and Solutions

Time required	20 minutes
Objectives	Identify barriers to being an active bystander and explore realistic solutions
Description	Explore the barriers to being an active bystander and ways to address them
Resources required	Lock and key template Pens

WHAT TO DO

1. Begin by discussing common barriers to being an active bystander such as fear of retaliation, peer pressure, or uncertainty about what to do.
2. Hand out the lock and key templates and ask the young people to write down one barrier they feel prevents people from acting as active bystanders on the lock.
3. Allow the young people to walk around the room, when you say stop, they must share their barrier with the closest person to them. Repeat this to get different perspectives from different people.
4. Ask the young people to return to their seats and write down a solution or strategy to address one of the barriers they discussed on the image of the key.
5. Bring the group together to share some of the barriers and solutions. Highlight how solutions can overlap each other and reinforce the STEPS approach.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Highlight that barriers to being an active bystander are common but most can be overcome with support and preparation.
- Display the locks and keys as a visual reminder of the steps they can take to reduce barriers.
- Be prepared to address any misconceptions or concerns participants may raise about intervening, especially grassing.

Unlock the Power- Lock & Key Template



2. Preparing to Step Up

In the Hot Seat

Scenario Based Decision Making

Time required	20 minutes
Objectives	To help young people think about how to step up in harmful situations using the STEPS approach
Description	Young people take turns sitting in the hot seat and responding to scenarios where they must decide how to act as an active bystander using the STEPS approach
Resources required	Scenario cards (Page 13) - or make up their own

WHAT TO DO

1. Arrange chairs in a circle, with one chair designated as the hot seat.
2. Have one young person sitting on the hot seat, while another reads a scenario card aloud to them.
3. The person in the hot seat decides how they would intervene using the STEPS approach:
 - **Step Up** – Recognise the problem and intervene directly if safe to do so.
 - **Tell An Adult** – Get help from a trusted adult such as a youth worker or teacher.
 - **Evidence** – Take notes of what has happened, including what you saw, heard, or know about the situation.
 - **Pull Attention Away** – Take the focus off the problem and shift their attention to something safer.
 - **Support Later** – Follow up and check in with the person after the situation.
4. Rotate the young people in the hot seat to ensure everyone has a chance to respond to at least one scenario.
5. Group Discussion: After each scenario, discuss:
 - What was the best way to handle the situation?
 - What challenges might someone face when stepping in?
 - How can young people stay safe while helping?
 - What support is available for those affected by youth violence?

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Support discussions after each response to reinforce learning.
- Emphasise that there can be multiple ways to intervene, and the best option depends on their safety and comfort level.

The Bystanders

Why Don't People Step Up?

Time required	30 minutes
Objectives	Explore the reasons why people don't intervene and discuss solutions to these barriers
Description	Participants reflect on fictional stories of knife crime where no one intervened and discuss the reasons behind the lack of action
Resources required	Print out of stories/comic strip

WHAT TO DO

1. Split the young people into groups and give them each a story.
2. Give the young people time to read through their stories and come up with reasons why they think no-one stepped up. Ask them to identify where someone could have prevented it from escalating.
3. Ask each group to share their thoughts.
4. Provide each group with a different reason people might not intervene to focus on and ask them to brainstorm solutions to overcome it.
5. Groups present their findings to the larger group.
6. Summarise the key points and solutions to barriers.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Be sensitive to young people's feelings; ensure discussions remain respectful.
- Highlight that understanding barriers is the first step to overcoming them.
- More comic strip versions are available online in our peer education resources.



The Bystanders - Stories

STORY 1:

It's Just a Game

On a Saturday afternoon, a group of friends meet at the local pitch for a game of football. One of the players, Connor, gets increasingly annoyed when his teammate Fraser keeps missing easy goals. The two exchange words, and Connor starts taunting Fraser in front of the others. The tension builds when Connor pulls out a knife he's been carrying, shouting, "Mon then, let's see how tough you really are!"

The other boys stand frozen, unsure what to do. Some laugh nervously, assuming it's a joke, while others quietly step back. No one intervenes as Fraser backs away, visibly shaken. Connor throws the knife onto the grass and storms off, muttering threats under his breath.

Later that evening, the group chats about the incident on WhatsApp. Some joke about Connor's temper, while others express concern about him carrying a knife.

STORY 2:

At the Station

A group of friends are waiting for their train after school. Among them is Jess, who recently fell out with another girl, Beth, over a rumour that spread online. Jess tells her friends that she plans to confront Beth and "teach her a lesson" for talking behind her back. She casually mentions she has a knife in her bag that her friend James asked her to carry for him, she brought it "just in case."

When Beth arrives on the platform, Jess confronts her in front of everyone. She pushes Beth and pulls out the knife, waving it around to intimidate her. A crowd forms, most bystanders pull out their phones to record. Beth looks terrified, pleading for Jess to stop.

Station security eventually arrives, but Jess hides the knife before they can search her. Beth is left shaken and avoids the station for weeks.

STORY 3:

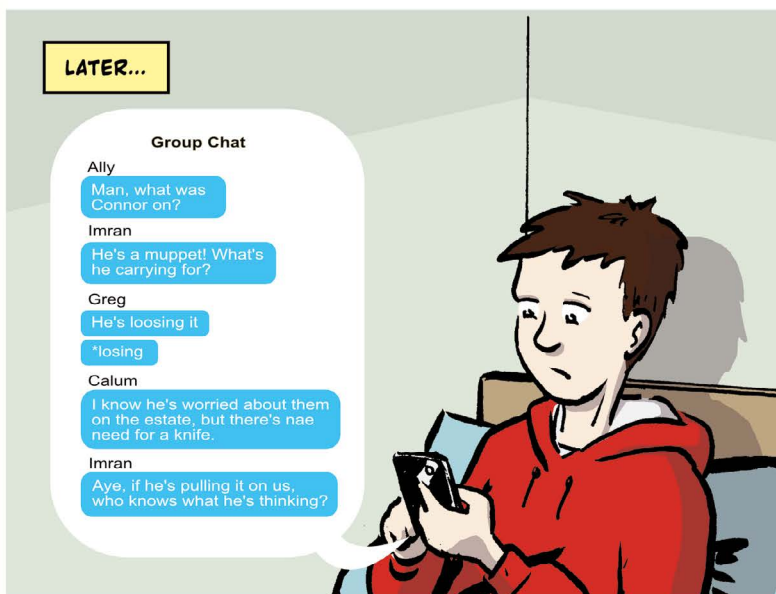
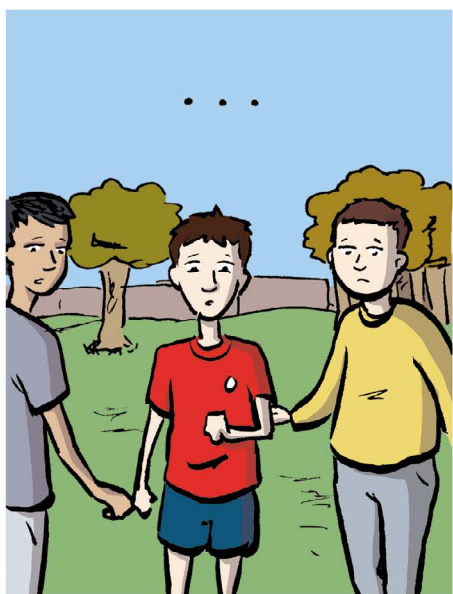
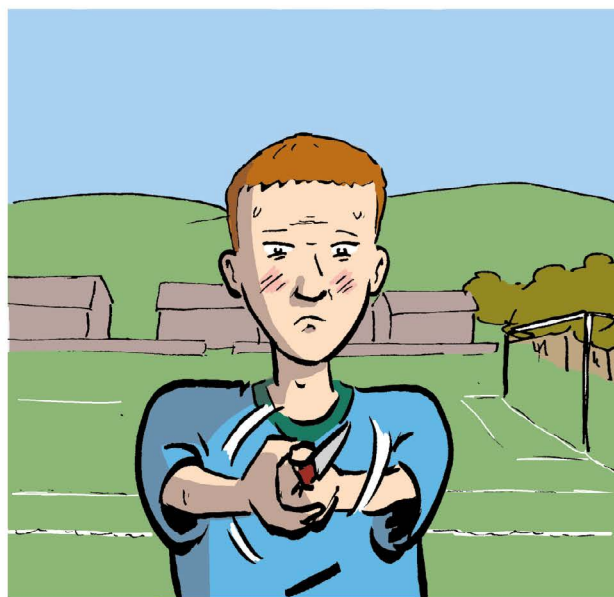
Doon the Alley

On a Friday night, two groups of teenagers cross paths outside a corner shop. There's been ongoing tension between them after a heated exchange at school earlier in the week. One boy, Callum, suggests they "settle it properly" and leads the group to a quiet alley. Several bystanders, including Callum's friends, follow out of curiosity.

In the alley, Callum confronts one of the boys from the other group and pulls out a knife. A scuffle breaks out, and the knife is used, leaving the other boy injured. Many of the bystanders stay silent. Some run away, and others record the incident on their phones instead of calling for help.

The injured boy's friends manage to get him to the hospital. Despite knowing who was involved, none of the bystanders report the incident.





What If?

Exploring Barriers and Solutions

Time required	20 minutes
Objectives	Build critical thinking around the barriers to being an active bystander
Description	Young people discuss hypothetical situations where taking action is difficult, brainstorming ways to overcome these challenges using the STEPS approach
Resources required	Printed or written "What if?" statements.

WHAT TO DO

1. Divide the young people into small groups and give them one What If statement each.
2. Ask the young people to discuss each statement and think about how they might take to overcome this. Encourage them to consider various options and perspectives.
3. After a few minutes of discussion, ask each group to share their ideas with the larger group.
4. Next, get each group to write a risk-taking scenario and give it to another group.
5. Give the groups time to come up with a response to how they could be an active bystander in that scenario.
6. When the groups feedback, others should challenge their solutions using what if statements.
7. Summarise the key takeaways, emphasising that there is no single correct answer for every situation, and being an active bystander means thinking critically and acting responsibly.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Reinforce that being an active bystander involves critical thinking and adaptability.
- Encourage young people to explore multiple perspectives and consider alternative actions.

What If? - Statements

<p>What if someone feels unsafe reporting to an adult?</p>	<p>What if someone isn't sure if it's serious enough to say something?</p>
<p>What if a friend denies carrying a knife but you strongly suspect they are?</p>	<p>What if someone pressures you to stay silent about their behaviour?</p>
<p>What if the person carrying the knife is someone you're afraid of?</p>	<p>What if you overhear a conversation but aren't directly involved?</p>
<p>What if a group of friends are encouraging risky behaviour and you're the only one hesitant?</p>	<p>What if you try to support someone who is being pressured into carrying a knife, but they don't want your help?</p>

3. Taking Action

The Great Debate

Active Bystander Vs A Grass

Time required	40 minutes
Objectives	To explore the differences between being a grass and an active bystander
Description	Debate aimed at getting young people to consider where the moral line is between grassing and being an active bystander
Resources required	None

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask the young people what grassing means to them. Take note of any key characteristics. Do the same for active bystanders. What do they notice?
2. Explain that there is a moral line where you need to decide at what point stepping up and helping someone is more important.
3. Split the group into two smaller groups giving them a stance.
4. They find out a friend is carrying a knife:

Group A (Grassing): Will argue that they wouldn't grass on their pal.

Group B (Active Bystander): Will argue that telling someone is essential for protecting others and preventing harm.
5. Facilitate a discussion reflecting on the arguments made by both sides.
6. Encourage young people to share their views and how the debate may have influenced their thinking about reporting harmful behaviour.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Be sensitive to young peoples' experiences and the cultural context around grassing.
- Ensure respectful discussion and provide everyone with an opportunity to contribute.
- Emphasise that being an active bystander involves making tough decisions and that safety is always the top priority.

Nae Danger

Role-play Scenario

Time required	30 minutes
Objectives	Understand how to apply the STEPS approach in realistic scenarios Explore the impact of "grassing culture" and ways to safely intervene
Description	Utilise our young person's guide to being an active bystander to help young people identify ways to intervene safely and effectively
Resources required	STEPS acronym displayed Young person's guide to being an active bystander Flip chart or whiteboard for group brainstorming

WHAT TO DO

1. Briefly recap what it means to be an active bystander.
2. Introduce the young person's guide to being an active bystander. Give them time to read through the first section, up to the scenario. You could do this in small groups or together.
3. Divide the group into small groups. Give each team one strategy from the STEPS approach.
4. Using the guide to help them, each team discusses how their strategy could be applied to the following situation:

"Your friend has been bullied, started hanging out with a new crowd, and one day shows you a knife they're carrying."

5. Ask each team to role-play different ways their approach might look and any risks there might be and present it to the group.
 - As they share, highlight connections between the steps and reinforce the importance of personal safety and empathy.
6. Discuss the challenges of intervening, including fears of being labelled a grass.

Ask:

- How can you balance helping a friend and keeping yourself safe?
- What are some anonymous ways to report if safety is a concern?

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Be sensitive to young people's experiences and perceptions of "grassing culture."
- Make sure the young people are aware of the limitations of anonymous reporting.
- Use examples from the toolkit to clarify misconceptions and emphasise the importance of small actions.

Active Bystander Challenge

Team Brainstorming Challenge

Time required	30 minutes
Objectives	Increase confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to be an active bystander using the STEPS approach
Description	Young people brainstorm active bystander strategies for specific scenarios
Resources required	Scenario cards Timer or stopwatch Whiteboard or flipchart for scoring STEPS acronym displayed

WHAT TO DO

1. Split the group into small teams of 3–4.
2. Give each team a scenario card.
3. Teams have 5 minutes to discuss and note down:
 - The harmful behaviour in the scenario.
 - Where they could intervene as active bystanders.
 - How they could apply each of the STEPS approach?
4. Each team presents their solutions to the group, explaining which steps they'd take and why.
5. Scoring:
Use a whiteboard or flipchart to award points based on creativity, relevance, and alignment with the STEPS approach.

Example scoring criteria:

Creativity: Unique ways to Step Up or Pull Attention Away.

Safety: Focus on actions that minimise risk.

Thoroughness: Application of multiple steps in the scenario.

Repeat this again with a different scenario.

6. Discuss the solutions as a group. Highlight key points, such as balancing personal safety with taking action, and encourage young people to reflect on how they could apply these strategies in their own lives.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- For the scenarios that don't explicitly mentioned knives, ask them to consider where youth violence could turn into knife crime.

Active Bystander Challenge - Scenario Cards

<p>SCENARIO 1:</p> <p>You notice a classmate being teased by a group during lunch. It starts as name-calling but escalates to throwing food at them. The person looks upset but doesn't say anything.</p>	<p>SCENARIO 2:</p> <p>A close friend confides in you that they're carrying a knife to "stay safe" after being threatened by someone outside of school. They don't seem convinced it's a big deal.</p>
<p>SCENARIO 3:</p> <p>In a group chat, some friends begin insulting another person, Sam, who isn't part of the chat. The messages get more aggressive, with someone suggesting confronting Sam in person and "do him in".</p>	<p>SCENARIO 4:</p> <p>You're on a bus when you notice a group of young people harassing someone, making rude comments and blocking their path as they try to move to another seat.</p>
<p>SCENARIO 5:</p> <p>At a party, a group starts pressuring your friend to do something they don't want to, like taking drugs or starting a fight with someone they've had problems with in the past.</p>	<p>SCENARIO 6:</p> <p>You're with a group of friends, and one of them suggests stealing snacks from a corner shop, saying it's "no big deal."</p>
<p>SCENARIO 7:</p> <p>A group of friends are planning to go to a party where there's a rumour of knives being brought. Your friend mentions taking one "just in case there's trouble."</p>	<p>SCENARIO 8:</p> <p>At the park, you see two boys arguing—both linked to rival schemes. One starts making threats while the other, though intimidated, refuses to back down. Suddenly, one pulls out a knife.</p>
<p>SCENARIO 9:</p> <p>During football practice, a teammate gets into a heated argument with another player. Someone suggests "sorting it out after practice" in a threatening tone.</p>	<p>SCENARIO 10:</p> <p>While walking home, your group starts talking about spray-painting some tags on a nearby building. One friend jokes about smashing a window to leave a mark.</p>

Bounce into Action

Knowledge Check Game

Time required	15 minutes
Objectives	To reinforce understanding of the STEPS approach
Description	Young people toss a beach ball with questions about the STEPS approach, discussing responses as a group
Resources required	Whiteboard pen Striped beach ball

WHAT TO DO

1. Each section of the beach ball should contain a different letter of the STEPS acronym and a general section.
2. Have the young people stand in a circle and carefully throw the ball to each other.
3. When someone catches the ball, they read aloud the section under their right thumb and the facilitator will ask them a question from that section.
4. If they struggle with an answer, the group can help or discuss it together.
5. Continue tossing the ball until all questions are answered or time is up.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Keep the game moving to maintain energy.
- Ensure everyone has a chance to answer at least one question.
- Remind them of expectations and safety when throwing the ball.



Example Questions

STEP UP:

- What's one way you can Step Up in a group setting without escalating the situation?
- When might it be unsafe to Step Up directly?
- Can you name a situation where stepping up might involve speaking to the person directly?
- How can you Step Up without putting yourself in harm's way?

TELL AN ADULT:

- Who are the trusted adults you can turn to in a difficult situation?
- Why is it important to tell an adult, even if it feels like grassing?
- What could you say to a trusted adult if you were worried about someone carrying a knife?
- Why might young people hesitate to tell an adult, and how can we address this?

EVIDENCE:

- What key details should you take note of when witnessing a risky situation?
- How can taking notes help you decide what to do next?
- Why is it useful to remember details of what happened?
- How could explaining the situation to a friend or adult help stop risky behaviour?
- What are the risks involved with videoing/ taking photos?

PULL ATTENTION AWAY:

- What's a creative way to distract someone who's becoming aggressive?
- How can Pulling Attention Away help to de-escalate a tense situation?
- What are some distractions you could use if you see an argument getting heated?
- How can redirecting focus help everyone involved?

SUPPORT LATER:

- Why is it important to check in with someone after an incident?
- How can showing support privately make a difference?
- What's a kind way to follow up with a friend who was involved in a risky situation?
- How can offering support privately help reduce stigma?

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- Which step do you think is the hardest to use and why?
- How can you combine two step to make a situation safer for everyone?
- If someone you know is acting differently and showing signs of carrying a knife, what could you do using the STEPS approach?
- You overhear a classmate talking about bringing a knife to a party. What's the safest way to handle this?
- What is a limitation of anonymous reporting?
- What if someone refuses your help? Which steps could you still use?
- How might Pull Attention Away and Support Later work together in a situation?

REFLECTION:

- Which steps do you feel most comfortable using, and why?
- How can practicing these steps make you a better friend or peer?

The Target

Point Scoring Question Game

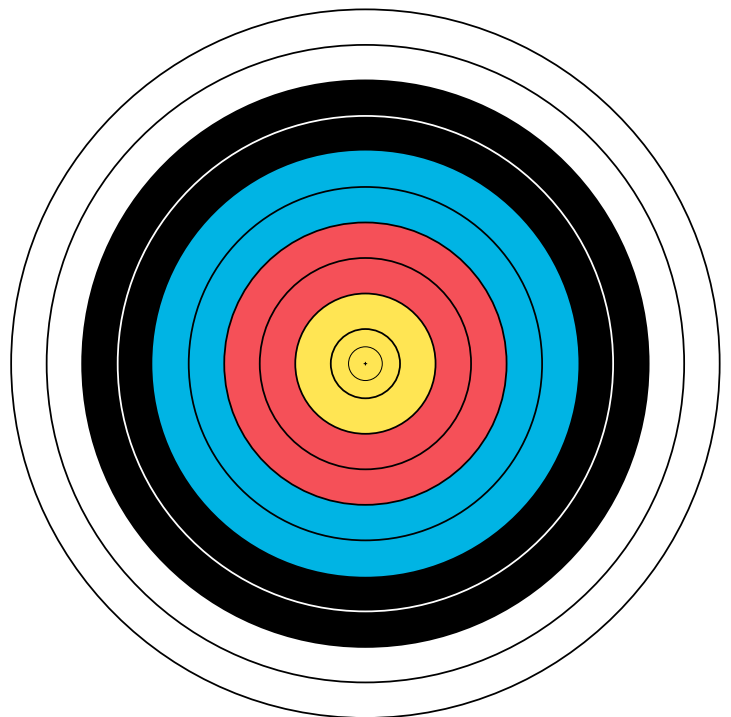
Time required	20 minutes
Objectives	To engage young people in identifying appropriate active bystander actions
Description	Young people throw balls at a target to earn points for correctly answering questions related to STEPS
Resources required	A ball A target (drawn on a whiteboard, flipchart, or on the ground with chalk) Scenario cards (Page 13) Questions (Page 33)

WHAT TO DO

1. Set up a target with different point values marked on it.
2. Divide the young people into small teams.
3. One person from each team steps up, throws (or rolls) a ball at the target, and earns points based on where it lands.
4. After throwing, the young people must answer a question from the facilitator. If they answer correctly, their team earns the points; if not, the question is passed to the next team.
5. The game continues until all questions have been answered or time is up. The team with the most points wins.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Encourage detailed explanations for answers, not just naming the STEPS approach but also how to apply them.
- Keep the atmosphere light and fun to promote teamwork.
- You could get each team to create the questions to ask other teams based on what they have learned.



4. Example Session Plans

40-minute Session Plan

<p>Youthwork Outcomes: Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions, and take control. Young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment.</p>	<p>CfE Outcomes: HWB 2-16a: I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others. HWB 3-13a: Through contributing my views, time, and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change.</p>	<p>Objectives: Introduce the concept of being an active bystander. Develop initial confidence in recognising and addressing harmful situations.</p>	<p>Resources Required: Whiteboard/flipchart & pens Printed scenario cards (Step Up) Corner signs (Four Corners)</p>
<p>Session Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction – Overview of active bystanders and STEPS. 2. In the Corner – Four corners opinion game. 3. Step Up – Scenario activity on intervention strategies. 4. Reflection & Round-up – Group discussion on session takeaways. 			
<p>Notes to Facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage open discussions and reassure the young people that there are no wrong answers. • If the group is hesitant, give examples before asking for their own opinions. • Use real-world examples to relate activities to experiences of the young people in your group. 			



60-minute Session Plan

<p>Youthwork Outcomes: Young people are confident, resilient, and optimistic for the future. Young people manage personal, social, and formal relationships.</p>	<p>CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-16a: I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging, unsafe, or risky situations. SOC 3-15a: I can discuss the motives and consequences of people's actions and explain how they have impacted others.</p>	<p>Objectives: Explore the barriers to being an active bystander and ways to overcome them. Strengthen problem-solving skills when witnessing harmful behaviour.</p>	<p>Resources Required: Printed scenario cards (Step Up, The Bystanders) Lock & key templates (Unlock the Power) Flipchart or whiteboard</p>
<p>Session Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction – Recap or introduction of key concepts. 2. Step Up – Discussing intervention strategies. 3. Unlock the Power – Identifying barriers and brainstorming solutions. 4. The Bystanders – Discussion on why some young people don't intervene. 5. Reflection & Round-up – Open discussion and commitments on personal actions. 			
<p>Notes to Facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage personal stories while maintaining a safe space. • Consider using anonymous sticky notes for sensitive topics. 			

90-minute Session Plan

<p>Youthwork Outcomes:</p> <p>Young people manage personal, social, and formal relationships.</p> <p>Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions, and take control.</p>	<p>CfE Outcomes:</p> <p>HWB 4-16a: I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging, unsafe, or risky situations.</p> <p>SOC 4-16a: I can discuss and assess the effectiveness of strategies for tackling social issues.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Deepen understanding of intervention strategies and their effectiveness.</p> <p>Build confidence in applying the STEPS</p>	<p>Resources Required:</p> <p>Printed scenario cards (Step Up, Active Bystander Challenge)</p> <p>Debate cue cards (The Great Debate)</p> <p>Ball (Bounce into Action)</p> <p>Flipchart or whiteboard</p>
<p>Session Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction – Setting expectations, reviewing prior knowledge. 2. The Great Debate – Debate on grassing vs. active bystander. 3. Active Bystander Challenge – Small group scenario problem-solving. 4. Bounce into Action – Knowledge check game reinforcing STEPS. 5. Reflection & Round-up – Personal action planning and final thoughts. 			
<p>Notes to Facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a balance between discussions and interactive activities. • Be prepared for strong opinions in The Great Debate and guide discussions constructively. • Encourage young people to think about how to apply strategies in their daily lives. 			

ACTIVE BYSTANDER PACKAGE

Toolkit

Additional Resources

4



Tracking Behavioural Change

Individual Evaluation Tool

Time required	5 minutes
Objectives	To quickly find out what changes have occurred in young people's behaviour as a result of the session.
Resources required	Handout Pens

WHAT TO DO

Young people fill in the short grid individually. The statements can be changed to make most relevant to your session.

As a result of the Active Bystander session	LESS LIKELY	THE SAME	MORE LIKELY
I am more likely to step up and take action if I see a friend in a risky situation.			
I would speak to a trusted adult about a situation involving harm or danger.			
I will support my friends by checking in with them after difficult situations.			
I will take safer and more responsible actions to help others.			
I will use the STEPS approach to make a positive difference			

NAE DANGER

Certificate of Completion

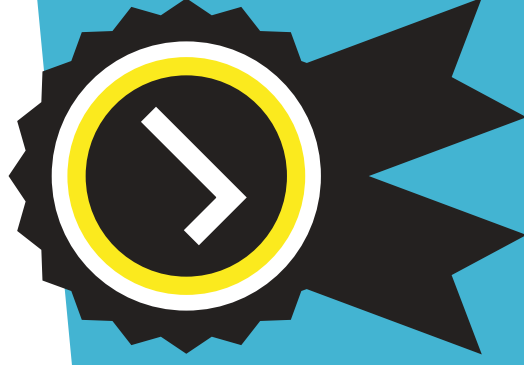
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

**TOOK PART IN ACTIVE BYSTANDER
TRAINING AND GROUPWORK**

DATE



SIGNED BY



Further Support

If the young people you are working with need further support, encourage them to reach out to the organisations below or sign post them to services local to you.

FEARLESS (CRIMESTOPPERS)

fearless.org

0800 555 111

An anonymous crime reporting service for young people. It also offers advice about criminality, including knife crime and resources to empower young people to make safer choices.

CREW

crew.scot

07860047501

A harm reduction and outreach charity based in Scotland. Confidential Text support service for anyone aged 13-25 (available Mon to Sat 1-5pm; 3-7pm on Thurs)

BREATHING SPACE

breathingspace.scot

0800 83 85 87

Sometimes our thoughts and feelings overwhelm us to the point where it becomes difficult to cope with everyday life. Breathing Space can give you someone to talk to when you are feeling down.

CHILDLINE

childline.org.uk

0800 1111

A free, private and confidential service for young people where you can talk about anything. Online, on the phone, anytime.

YOUNGMINDS

youngminds.org.uk

The UK's leading charity fighting for young people's mental health. Offers resources, tips, and a crisis text line for young people struggling with emotional challenges.

THE MIX

themix.org.uk

A free support service for young people under 25, offering advice on various issues, including crime, mental health, and relationships. The Mix provides a helpline, webchat, and forums for peer support.

VICTIM SUPPORT

victimsupport.org.uk

Provides free and confidential support for people affected by crime, including young people. It offers advice, advocacy, and emotional support, whether the crime is reported or not.

YouthLink Scotland
Caledonian Exchange
19A Canning Street
Edinburgh, EH3 8EG

T: 0131 313 2488
E: info@youthlink.scot
W: www.youthlink.scot

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