

'A Summer Story' – No Knives Better Lives

Lesson Plan

Teachers notes

'A Summer Story' is a resource about young people, violence and knife carrying that promotes dialogue, encourages responsible behaviour and helps young people see how they can be a good friend.

Trigger Warning:

The story contains implied violence and references to weapons, rather than explicit detail. However, similar incidents have occurred in recent times. We encourage local staff to use their judgement when deciding whether it is appropriate to use this material with their young people.

The resource invites young people to consider potential consequences based on their age, stage, and community context. As a result, different groups of young people may explore varying levels of violence. As with all our resources, the intention is to promote safety and support active violence reduction, rather than to create fear or contribute to existing trauma.

About:

[YouthLink Scotland](#)

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work and the collective voice for the sector in Scotland.

YouthLink Scotland runs the [No Knives, Better Lives](#) programme, which works in partnership with young people and practitioners to understand and address the drivers of youth violence and knife carrying.

This activity is for school classroom sessions, led by a teacher or other worker. Specifically, it is designed for just before the end of the school year.

Aim:

Young people learn about safe responses to violence amongst peers. Look at how to spot signs of escalating violence, how to stay safe but still help and how to report issues.

Age and stage:

This resource is aimed primarily at young people aged 13-16, it may also be appropriate for younger or older pupils depending on the context.

Commented [EK1]: do we want to be as specific in relation to knife? maybe just end at violence?

Commented [VR2R1]: knife carrying would be the current concern rather than knife crime

Introduction:

A Summer Story is a short, comic book style story. The themes of the story are violence prevention, being an active bystander, spotting situations escalating and personal safety. The context is young people “hanging out’ at the beach in the summer where lots of other young people are present.

Pupils are asked to relate to the story and think about ways they might have spotted the situation escalating and what they might have done in a similar situation.

Structure 45 minute class:

5 minutes: introduction to the topic: Peer to peer violence

10 minutes: reading the story, initial questions and comments

15 minutes: small group discussions and idea generation

10 minutes: group feedback

5 minutes questions and comments

Resources :

A ‘comic book’ with accompanying slideshow showing the 6 pages of the story. Pages 1-5 are the story itself and page 6 is a range of questions/discussion prompts for young people.

Link to: [***slides***](#) [***comic book***](#) [***Group handouts***](#)

Description:

After reading the comic together, young people are split into six groups, to discuss one theme each. Groups of between 3 and 6 young people are about right. There will be crossover between the discussions, so young people will not miss out by being in the ‘wrong’ group, they are looking at the same issue from different approaches.

Young people reflect on the situation as presented in the comic, and to see similarities with their own experiences, or realistic scenarios they can imagine.

Young people discuss their thoughts and ideas and present back to the whole class on ways they can see that could:

- Avoid the situation (acknowledging that it's nice to hang out with friends, and places like the beach or park are going to be busy)
- Keep themselves safe
- Keep their peers safe
- Spot trouble before it happens
- De-escalate incidents

- Prevent more serious incidents developing

Each group should feedback 2 or 3 actions that they could take to reduce the impact on either themselves, their friends or the wider community.

Further work:

There are a range of further materials on the site noknivesbetterlives.com.

Teachers can approach the NKBL team for support finding other suitable activities or finding a community partner in their area or other ways to support the delivery of violence prevention work in their area.