

HONEST CONVERSATIONS



Having honest conversations with people about knife crime and serious violence can be hard, here is some guidance that you might find helpful.

1

IS IT THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE?

Making sure the time and place is going to allow you to have a honest conversation is vital. You may only see them for short periods of time, so planning for this conversation can help it go well.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Be open, direct and respectful.
- Find a balance between being too forceful /too vague.
- Take your time and use words they will understand.
- They might not think you know what you are talking about so a little preparation could help.
- Ensure you are clear on safeguarding and that you might need to share things they say with other people.

*There are lots of resources available to help you start the conversation, YouTube videos, games such as cards, cooking, lego or 'blob cards'.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Ensure you have enough time so you both don't feel rushed.
- What time of day is it, what have they just finished doing or what are they doing next? Are they too tired to concentrate, or hungry?
- Make sure there won't be any interruptions.
- Is the environment relaxed and quiet?
- Maybe plan a car ride or walk, have an activity to do?
- Are you somewhere they will feel safe?
- Things could get emotional so be prepared.

2

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Check in with yourself, if you are feeling nervous you might pass this on. Be honest and open and plan what you'd like to say before you start.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Try not to feel pressure to dive straight in
- Ask how their day has been, or what their week looks like.
- Show them you value what they are saying.
- Ask open questions.
- Don't demand or expect them to talk.
- Give them time to think about their responses, silence is ok.
- Listen and don't interrupt.
- Let them ask questions too.
- It is important they know they can open up to you and that they can be honest.
- Encourage them to share their fears.
- Don't rush to give them advice.
- Be realistic, the conversation may not go exactly as you had planned and that's okay, stay calm and try again next time.

3

MAKE SURE YOU LISTEN TOO

You may have key messages you want to get across or questions you would like to get answered but it is equally important to listen. They may have been looking for someone to talk to or have their own worries and concerns they need to share.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Ask how they are feeling.
- Ask what they are going to do straight after.
- Ensure there is support in place and they know how to access it.
- Encourage them to think differently about knife crime and violence. Walking away is the braver thing to do. What else is there to do in their community?
- Is anything else they would like to talk about or ask?
- If it is needed arrange a follow-up conversation.
- Make sure they are clear what your role is and how you're going to support, are you going to refer them?
- Agree any next steps /action following the conversation.

4

ENDING THE CONVERSATION

The conversation should always have an ending and maybe some next steps or actions to take away. Its important they don't feel exposed or confused and get support if they need or asked for it.

