

Young Runaways lesson 2: Space to be safe

Aims

- To help the children develop a strong awareness of the potential risks and dangers faced by young runaways.
- To identify ideas and strategies for ensuring personal safety, and the safety of friends, and to recognise the importance of these personal safety strategies within the context of running away, as well as in everyday life when interacting with people in a range of different places including online.

Resources

Activity sheets:

- Top tips for staying safe
- Getting the message across

Group size

Class

Small youth group

Audience

KS2 - Years 5 & 6

Age 9-11 years

Delivery time

One hour



Learning objectives

By the end of the session the children will:

- be able to describe the risks involved in running away
- understand the importance of telling someone where you are or where you are going
- be more aware of 'stranger danger'
- identify ways of being safe in a range of settings.

Learning outcomes

- All children will be more aware of the potential risks to young people running away, and will be able to identify a place where they are likely to be safe if alone.
- Most children will also be able to identify key strategies to help them stay safe and will draft their idea for communicating key safety messages to share with their peers.
- Some children will also complete their ideas for communicating key messages.

Young Runaways lesson 2: Space to be safe

Introduction (15 minutes)

- Begin by asking the children to work with a partner for a couple of minutes to answer the following question:

'If you were feeling angry or if no one was listening to you or if you felt lonely.... where might you or someone like you go?'

The children will find it helpful to think about real places in their known locality. Bring the class back together and ask for volunteers to give their suggestions.

Encourage discussion by asking the following questions:

- Where would you go?
- Why would you go there?
- Who might be there?
- Are there any risks in going there alone?

To help children think about the potential risk of different places you may want to include suggestions from the following list:

- Woodland/field/forest
- Town/shopping centre
- Relatives/friends house
- Playground (consider night- and day-time)
- Big/fast roads
- Near a river/sea
- Quarry/sand pit
- Somewhere familiar
- Somewhere unfamiliar
- A stranger's house
- To meet someone they have been chatting to online
- Somewhere that is hidden away/no one else around, e.g. disused warehouse
- Somewhere no one else knows they go to/have been to before
- A place where adults tend to gather – outside pubs/bars/clubs



It is possible that children may identify relatively safe places to go, for example their garden shed or their gran's house. **Encourage them to think about why these places could be a safer choice as well as identifying other riskier places.**

Young Runaways lesson 2: Space to be safe

Group activity - Being safe (35 minutes)

Explain that, although it's great to have friends, it's also true that sometimes we want to be on our own.

- Can the children give examples of times when we might want to be on our own? (E.g. we may want to work things out quietly, or we need to calm down after an argument.)
- Why is it important to always let someone know where you are? (Because they will worry that you are at risk. You know you are safe – but how do they know?)

Ask the children to work in groups of four or five and to draw up a list of 'top tips' which they would give to children to remind them about how to 'stay safe'.

Allow around five minutes for this and then bring the class back together and write their suggestions on the board.

Make sure that the following strategies have been included, even if the words are different:

- Think through your options and check the impulse to run away (by running away you are putting yourself in a risky situation. Identify someone you trust who you can talk to).
- Be aware of 'stranger danger' (Although adults can be helpful and can give support, not all adults always have our best interests at heart. This includes meeting people we don't know 'online'. They may sound friendly but you cannot be sure about this. Be aware that if someone is giving you gifts/being really nice to you, they may want things in exchange that can put you in a harmful situation.)
- If you feel worried or concerned for yourself or a friend you must make sure that you talk to someone that you trust, for example, your teacher or parents.
- Always let someone know where you are.
- Find out about organisations that can offer help and support (there are helpful websites and helplines for children – see lesson three for more about this).

Getting the message across

The children can now work on their own or with a partner to devise a way to communicate their 'Being safe top tips' to other children. They can choose the best way to do this. Encourage them to think of different approaches, such as:

- information on the school website
- a poster in the school entrance hall or library
- a podcast
- an information leaflet.

Ask them to complete a first draft of their approach by the end of the lesson.

Young Runaways lesson 2: Space to be safe

Plenary (10 mins)

- Invite the children to share their ideas and take the opportunity to re-cap on the main messages about recognising risky situations and being safe. Emphasise what the children can do instead of running away, e.g. talk to a trusted friend, find a helpful website.
- Tell the children about the CEOP Report Abuse Button and discuss what to do if they are concerned about something online. If possible show them an example.
- Remind the children to talk to a trusted adult as soon as possible and not to get into conversations online with people they don't know or have not seen. They should not share personal information, e.g. name, where they live, where they go to school, age etc.
- Ask them - 'Would you tell a stranger in the road that information about yourself?' The answer should be 'no', so don't be tempted to share it online.

