

Dark Alley

Suggested follow up work

Brainstorming Exercise

- Question 1** Draw the pupils attention to: "**We have the right to feel safe all the time**". Then ask "*How does it feel when we are feeling safe?*" (The sort of answers that usually come include happy, secure, confident...)
- Question 2** "*Sometimes it is fun to feel scared or daring or having adventures. When are some of those times when it is fun to feel scared?*" (Common responses are roller coaster, scary movies, etc.)
- Question 3** "*There are things in common with those times when it is fun to feel scared. Can anyone tell us what is in common?*" (Responses usually include they are fun, scary, taking risks... however it is most important to have the group note that with all these acts we have a choice, the control is in our hands and we know it will stop, or there is a time limit on what is happening.)
- Question 4** "*Sometimes it is not fun to feel scared... what happens in our bodies when it is not fun to feel scared?*" (Typical responses include sweaty palms, heart beats faster, legs go like jelly, tummy feels weird...) Note that these are physical signs and not thoughts, and that these sensations are our EARLY WARNING SIGNS, they are the body's way of telling us we do not feel safe. If these signs appear it is the body's way of telling us to stop and ask ourselves, "Do I have a choice here, is this what I really want, or do I know that this will stop in a few minutes and I'll feel safe again?" Next remark to the pupils that - just like road signs, EWS are important signs that tell us to stop and think and take some action until we feel safe again.
- Question 5** "*Sometimes we may need help to feel safe again - who might be a person we could trust and talk to if we did not feel safe?*" Common answers include parents, relatives, teachers, neighbours, friend of parents, parents of friends...) Remember there is nothing so awful we can't talk about it with someone we trust.
- Question 6** "*What if you had to walk down a lane in the dark and you had your Early Warning Signs... How could you keep yourself feeling safe?*" Brainstorm possible options or strategies which could be used. Typical ideas include sing loudly, walk with a friend, only go when it is light, take a torch, telephone parents to meet you, take the dog... Remind people at the end how important it is if they are not feeling safe, they can talk to someone they trust and keep talking until they feel safe again because: "We all have the right to feel safe all the time - and there is nothing so awful we can't talk with someone we trust."

Further Help The above has been adapted from the Protective Behaviours Safety Programme. For further information please contact: Health Promotion Service or Police Schools Liaison Officers.