



The **Ben Kinsella** Trust  
Stop Knife Crime

# Gangs: Lesson Two

A lesson plan for teachers, youth workers and other practitioners working with young people

Key Stage 3

Key Stage 4

## Teacher notes

These resources have been created for KS3 and KS4. They have been written with flexibility in mind, allowing you to use them according to the needs of your pupils. It is important you use your professional judgement on the suitability of this resource for each individual in your cohort.

With this in mind, a needs (baseline) assessment is provided for each lesson. This will enable you to understand existing knowledge and learning, along with gaps, and will ensure you meet the needs of your cohort in these lessons.

Assessment for learning throughout the lesson is enabled through class discussion and activities and an assessment of learning at the end of each lesson provides time to reflect, clarify and evidence pupil learning.

The two 'Gangs' lessons offer more detail than the remainder of the lessons in the series. However, it is still crucial that you decide on what is best for you depending on your pupils understanding or experience of gangs. There are a few options with the two lessons in the gangs series. Some suggestions include; using Lesson 1 for KS3 and/or children who do not live in environments where they have much experience of crime or as a 'start' into the subject and Lesson 2 for KS4 for cohorts who may live in environments where there are gangs and where they may themselves be involved in gangs.

In order to ascertain this, and prior to teaching, it is strongly recommended that you read through the lesson plans and familiarise yourself with all of the resources and films, along with the websites/organisations which you will be signposting to. Consider your cohort and whether there is anything further required to make this accessible/fully inclusive, taking into account each individual's needs and adapting or differentiating the lesson if and where required to meet these.

Please note, if/when altering lessons, steer clear of adding any further content which may elicit your class to feel frightened, ashamed or distressed and be sure

not to unknowingly glamorise or make risky behaviours seem appealing.

Check for any child protection, vulnerable children, SEN or other issues and read all Government guidelines and relevant school policies, asking SLT (Senior Leadership Teams) if you are unsure about anything. If you don't know already, it is imperative that you find out who pupils can go to with any worries whilst they are at school – including any specific adults and where they can be located - you will be sharing this with them in the plenary of each lesson.

When you are happy these are the right lessons for your pupils, spend some time researching the subject - it is important you understand some of the complexities before you teach it.

The Home Office has produced Teacher Guidance with some further notes on teaching this subject – see #knifefree. If your school or organisation is based in London, you might also find the London needs you alive toolkit from The Mayor's Office For Policing And Crime (MOPAC) useful.

Always start each lesson by creating a working agreement with each class to maintain a safe and respectful environment for all. Write these with your pupils. Examples might include showing respect, not disclosing private information about themselves or others, not chatting about others afterwards and to always seek support if needed.

Finally, always remember to signpost to useful organisations in each lesson so your pupils can go to trusted websites for more information and support should they need to. [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk), [www.knifefree.co.uk](http://www.knifefree.co.uk), [www.fearless.org](http://www.fearless.org), [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk) (and 999 for emergencies).

# Gangs

## Learning objectives:

- To understand that life is a series of choices
- To recognise and develop positive reasoning skills
- To learn how to make the right choices

## Learning outcomes:

- I can explain how life is a series of choices
- I can develop positive reasoning skills
- I can explain how to make the right choices
- I know where to go for more support

## Keywords

Gangs

Loyalty

Choices

Violence

Consequences

Crime

## Important notes

This is the second of two lessons on Gangs, but it is written as a stand alone lesson. If you have previously taught lesson 1 this could work well as an extension and a chance to explore the personal implications of choices further. You should use your professional judgement on the suitability of this resource for each individual in your cohort. Research the subject thoroughly and ensure you know where to signpost young people who need help. Please refer to the teacher notes for further guidance.

## Resources

- Video: Male Ex-Gang Member Interview [2.25 mins, subtitled] <https://youtu.be/emUQLDd5syw>
- Large A2 sheets
- Coloured board pens
- The attached worksheet (1 copy per 4- 6 pupils)
- List of who to go to for support in school and other local organisations

## Starter | 5 mins

- Create a working agreement with the class (See teacher notes).
- Assessment: Ask class to write someone of their age a note about how to know if they are making a good or bad decision.
- Share the objectives.
- Explain that life is a series of choices for many of us. Some we will get right and some we won't. Some choices can lead us down dangerous paths that we wish we hadn't taken.
- Tell the class: The brain is still developing right up until we reach 25 years old. It has been shown that the last areas to develop are those that help with things like our judgement, decision making and problem solving. Alongside this, adolescent brains also have more of a focus on rewards. So, some choices we make as a young person are not always thought through carefully and could put us into difficult situations as we search for rewards and excitement. Or maybe we just fall into things without realising the difficult journey we are now on.

## Main | 45 mins

### Discussion

- In pairs or small groups pupils think of realistic examples of potentially dangerous situations/choices. (These could include ideas such as criminal gangs, drinking underage, taking drugs, abusive sexual relationships, hanging around with bullies, getting involved in crime.)

### Tell them

- It can be extremely easy to get pulled into potentially dangerous situations and not realise when we might be losing control of our lives or getting in over our heads.

### Show the video

- The story of a male ex gang member  
<https://youtu.be/emUQLDd5syw>



### Summarise the video through discussion

- Elijah fell into a life of crime and it took him some time to realise that he was stuck on a negative cycle and that he had the power to change it. In the video Elijah says:

*“My last prison sentence I was like ‘You know what, I gotta change my life’... It wasn’t easy because I lost a lot of friends along the way because some of my friends wanted to stay in the whole gang culture and some of them wanted to stay with me, so I lost a lot of friends along the way, it was a bit rocky at the beginning.”*

Elijah took 5 years in prison (as two different prison sentences) until he realised the negative path he was on - that’s a very long time BUT he made the right choice eventually and now runs a successful record label.

### Tell them

- Anthony Joshua, a famous boxer, made some bad choices like Elijah (and many other people, both male and female) when he was a teenager but decided to change his direction. Thankfully for him, he realised things had to change before having to go to prison and after a lot of hard work became a boxing world champion! He says:

*“People who do crime do it for a reward. But going to jail is no reward. Through crime your ambitions are low”*



**More information on Anthony's story - including video - can be found here:** <https://bbc.in/3gxoEog> & <https://bit.ly/3eqJvaP>

### Reflection

- Ask the class to reflect - Have you ever realised you had to change something about yourself? What did that feel like? (This can be quiet reflection or paired discussion according to your cohort.)

### Ask

- If you were falling into crime or something potentially dangerous for you, at what point do you think you would realise you had to change and to

walk away or say no? What signs might there be? Discuss this as a whole class and write their ideas down. These might include, parents and old friends saying they are worried about you, having a gut feeling you are being asked or doing something you know doesn't feel right, being around people whose behaviour you don't really like or agree with but going along with it because you feel afraid not to, feeling physically ill- not sleeping, stressed, worrying a lot, secretive, heart pounding, sweating, headaches...

- What about if the person you had to walk away from was your very best / oldest friend? Let them explore this as you see appropriate for your class. Highlight that often making the right decision doesn't always feel good to start with whilst your life is adjusting, but it does in the long term. To start with you may feel full of fear -will I be alone? Will everyone hate me? Will I be safe? Will I make any new friends? Just because you know it is the right thing to do it doesn't mean it always feels that way.

#### Tell them

- In the video Elijah talks about having to leave some friends behind. But he also says that some of them wanted to stay with him. This is brilliant! In having the courage to change his path he also helped some of his friends to do the same - his courage made him a leader. (Often we don't realise but other people might be feeling the same and it just takes one person to walk away or change to be able to help others to do the same).

## Activity

Before you begin, refer back to the working agreement and set clear expectations and boundaries. Sort the class into groups of between 4 – 6 pupils. Handout the worksheets, large A2 paper and coloured board pens to each group.

#### Tell them

Using a large piece of paper they are going to create and map out a simple story - This needs to be as real to life as possible. It can be set out however works for you and your cohort (E.g. A mind map, a visual map, paragraphs, bullet points, a comic strip or their choice?)

This simple story will follow the journey of a young person their age, getting more and more involved in a dangerous or criminal activity. This will need to be as realistic as possible. They will need to add approximately 3 or 4 'call to action points' – see worksheet for details.

On completion of the activity, allow each group to tell their story – keeping them quick and simple (If pupils don't want to share they don't have to but make sure they tell you).

## Optional Extension

You can extend the activity by allowing pupils to develop their stories into a drama. Whilst the story is acted out, the class can try to spot the 'call to action' points.

## Plenary | 10 mins

### Tell them

- We have seen how hearing that call to action and making the right choice for ourselves can be hard. We know though that it is often the first step that is the hardest and there are always things that can warn and help us. We can start by trusting our gut instincts, thinking of the pros and cons of a situation carefully and not making quick/rash decisions. We can find courage to talk to an adult face to face or on the phone and we can get support online - there are lots of organisations ready to help now or in the future.
- Assessment: pupils revisit their note written for the needs assessment and add any additional thoughts to it in another colour.
- Signpost where they can go if they are concerned about themselves, a friend or family member;
  - In the 'real world' - a friend or a family member, people in school who are available to talk to them (and where they are located in the building)
  - Organisations and helplines -
    - [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk),
    - [www.knifefree.co.uk](http://www.knifefree.co.uk),
    - [www.fearless.org](http://www.fearless.org),
    - [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)
    - (and 999 for emergencies)
- Remind them that many people have turned their lives around and now live healthy, safe, happy lives and it is never too late to make the right choice.
- Finally, revisit the working agreement to make sure they all feel safe as the lesson ends.

## Worksheet

### What you'll need

- This worksheet for instructions
- A group of between 4 – 6 pupils who will work well as a team
- 1 sheet of A2 paper and large coloured board pens

### Remember to

- Follow the working agreement
- Work as a team – make sure everyone is listened to and everyone has a chance to speak and add their opinions and thoughts

### Your task

Using the paper and pens you are going to work as a team to create and map out a simple story. This simple story will follow the journey of a young person your age, who gets more and more involved in a dangerous or criminal activity. This needs to be as real to life as possible.

Think about the character and the people who are not good for the individual but that end up surrounding, persuading, and pushing the main character to do things they don't feel in their gut are the right thing to do.

When something goes wrong and the character gets that gut feeling that this is not good/what they want this is going to be our 'Call to Action Point'. These Call to Action Points are when life presents a moment where someone could change their direction and walk away from a bad path.

These were some of Elijah's Call to Action Points: When the gang got bigger, when people talked about doing a robbery, when he was arrested the first time, when he went to prison the first time, second time? After one of his best friends got killed. (Elijah took the right action in his second visit to prison.)

Ask yourselves: Why might your character stay at each point? How could they go? Decide between you how these decisions will affect their life.

In the story you will need to add approximately 3-5 'Call to Action Points' and you will need to decide at what point in your story the right action is made and as a team, work out what your character would feel, do and who they could go to for help.

Rehearse and practice your story so you are ready to share it with the class.