

Lesson 3: Planning for personal safety

The purposes of this lesson are:

- to revise the strategy *Trust, Talk, Take control*
- to understand what is involved in developing a safety plan
- to use the steps *Trust, Talk, Take control* to develop plans to manage risk situations
- to develop plans that are tailored to meet individual needs and circumstances.

Materials needed:

Handouts 3.1, 3.2

Handout 3.3 cut into sections. One copy of the *planning steps* for each group. One scenario per group.

Butchers paper and textas.

Suggested activities	Notes for the teacher
<p><i>Trust, Talk, Take control</i> Distribute Handout 3.1, <i>Trust, Talk, Take control</i>. Explain that this strategy will be used as a way to develop plans to manage the parts of a situation that are within our control.</p> <p>Ask the students to work in pairs. Choose one of the scenarios and complete questions 1-3. Alternatively, ask the students to recall a time when they were younger and something like this happened to them or someone they know.</p> <p>Ask the students to share their responses with another pair and discuss questions 4 and 5.</p> <p>Q 4. <i>When have you or someone you know used a strategy similar to Trust, Talk, Take control?</i></p> <p>Q 5. <i>When using this strategy in a real-life situation, which part do you think would be the easiest? Which part would be the hardest? Why?</i></p> <p>Share some of the points raised in the discussion with the class.</p> <p>Concluding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is "Trust, Talk, Take control" a useful strategy? Why?</i> • <i>Will all parts of this strategy be relevant in every situation? Why?</i> 	<p>Personal safety plans enable young people to remain "cool, calm and collected" in risk situations and give them more chance of making the best decisions in difficult situations.</p> <p>All people develop ways of knowing when they are definitely feeling unsafe, when the situation is getting out of control or is beginning to make them feel uneasy. This "knowing" comes from "trusting" individual feelings. It is important that young people develop this ability so that there are not too many false alarms but they are warned about potential dangers.</p> <p>It is important that young people have a small group of trusted people to whom they can talk if they have concerns, especially someone close to their own age. "Talking" to someone means that feelings and reactions to a situation can be tested.</p> <p>The people chosen to talk to need to be able to listen and give sensible advice, while respecting the individual's ability to decide which solutions feel most comfortable. At least some network people need to be adults who are in a position to help if necessary.</p> <p>"Taking control" means having a plan to manage the part or parts of the situation that are within control. Once a course of action is decided, people can regain their sense of being in control, which enables them to be calmer and means they are more likely to succeed with their plan.</p>

Suggested activities	Notes for the teacher
<p>Planning for safety</p> <p>In small groups, students discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of planning for personal safety • the meaning of planning as it is used in relation to personal safety • the parts involved in the planning process. <p>Ask for feedback from the groups and make a summary of responses on a whiteboard.</p> <p>Distribute Handout 3.2, <i>The importance of personal safety plans</i>, which aims to reinforce the points made in discussion. Ask the students to complete this individually and rank the points in order of importance to them and explain their rankings.</p> <p>Explain to the students that they will now develop a plan, using the strategy <i>Trust, Talk, Take control</i>.</p> <p>Divide the class into five groups. Distribute Handout 3.3, <i>Difficult situations</i>. Ask the students to choose one scenario or develop one of their own.</p> <p>Each group is to develop a safety plan for their scenario, using the steps on the handout, and to record their answers to each step on butchers paper.</p> <p>On completion of the activity, display the safety plans around the room. Ask each group to describe their scenario briefly and present their safety plan to the class.</p>	<p>It may also be necessary to discuss any inappropriate responses to scenarios and come up with alternative positive responses. It is important that students' plans are positive in that they are assertive, respect the rights of others and are appropriate for the context. Not all parts of this strategy will be relevant in every situation, but other parts might still be used. For example, in a situation that requires immediate action, it may be impractical to find someone else to talk to for the Talk stage, but it may still be relevant to Trust one's feelings and "reading" of the situation. In these situations, the Talk stage may simply involve listening to "self-talk" i.e. the thoughts going through the brain.</p> <p>This strategy may also be used in situations involving bullying, harassment or discrimination.</p> <p>Planning is about preparing ahead of time. It helps students to identify their skills, strengths and attributes that will support them in difficult situations. It requires predicting situations or thinking of real-life situations and assessing the risks. Planning involves considering the options and the consequences of alternative courses of action and choosing the best action that is possible and realistic.</p> <p>A plan does not need to be extensive. It can and should be brief, if the situation requires an immediate response. Planning means that some thought has gone into the proposed action and it is not simply a reaction to stress.</p> <p>When students are developing safety plans for their scenario, some may begin to reveal sensitive and personal information which they may regret later or which may compromise somebody else. Teachers should be alert and use protective interrupting strategies to discourage disclosure of any nature.</p> <p>Debriefing students may be necessary after activities that involve discussion of personal experiences, case studies or scenarios. It is important to allow sufficient time in the lesson for effective debriefing. Debriefing aims to dissipate the strong feelings that a student may experience, disengage the students from the activity, identify that their</p>

Suggested activities	Notes for the teacher
	<p>response was connected to that activity and place the activity in perspective. Debriefing could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making it clear the activity is over • asking how they felt about the activity and if there is anything else that they want to say • asking the students how they feel now and what lesson they have next. <p>Note: Students can learn the debriefing process and debrief each other.</p>

Trust, Talk, Take control

If you feel uncomfortable, uneasy or unsafe in a situation you could use the following strategy:

Trust	your feelings your thoughts your reading of the situation
Talk	about it to someone in your network
Take control	by using your own plan to become comfortable and safe.

Task

In pairs, choose one the following scenarios and answer the questions using the strategy, *Trust, Talk, Take control*. Alternatively, recall a time when you were younger and something like this happened to you or someone you know.

Scenario 1: A group of students from another school have started to walk behind you in the morning, making jokes about you.

or

Scenario 2: A group of students have threatened to “get” your best friend on the way home from school. Your friend usually walks home and you catch a bus.

1. What feelings, thoughts or other signals might be experienced in this situation?
2. Who might be a suitable person to talk to about the situation? Why would this person or persons be helpful to talk to?
3. What solution might work here? What else might work in case the first solution does not?
4. When have you, or someone you know, used a strategy similar to *Trust, Talk, Take control*?
5. When using this strategy in a real-life situation, which part do you think would be the easiest? Which part would be the hardest? Why?

The importance of personal safety plans

Use the following words to complete the passage below. Each word may be used only once. Rank the points in order of importance to you. Be prepared to explain your rankings.

anxiety	real-life	collected	differently
solutions	difficult	new	actions
safety	control	comfortable	

- (a) We all need to take responsibility for our own _____.
- (b) We all have individual strengths and expectations and we will respond _____ to situations.
- (c) We are the “experts” on our own lives and usually know what is likely, possible and feels most _____ to do.
- (d) If we generate _____ to problems and have rehearsed behaviours necessary to counteract these, we are more likely to use them in a _____ situation than if we have to make them up on the spot.
- (e) Planning gives us a greater sense of being in _____ of situations and our lives and lowers general feelings of _____ (or enables us to stop unnecessary worrying).
- (f) Planning enables us to be “cool, calm and _____”, so we have more chance of making the best decisions in _____ situations.
- (g) If we can show that we have thought through strategies and consequences of _____ we can demonstrate to others (i.e. adults) that we are becoming more independent and are ready for _____ responsibilities.

Locate each of the following words in the text above and explain the meaning of the word as it is used in the text.

generate	
rehearsed	
counteract	
strategies	
consequences	
independent	
responsibilities	

Difficult situations

Steps in developing safety plans

Use the following planning steps (*Trust, Talk, Take control*) to develop plans to address the scenario or situation you have chosen.

1. *Trust* your feelings, your thoughts and your reading of the situation
 - What is the problem? (emotions? safety issues? concerns?)
2. *Talk* about it with the members of your group (part of your network)
 - What are the alternatives or choices of action and the related consequences?
3. *Take control* by using your own plan for becoming comfortable and safe
 - Which choice/s would work out best?
 - Can you do it? (is it possible and realistic?)

Scenario 1:

Prabha, Michael and Ria were down at the mall on Thursday night. They met their friends and saw a movie. Prabha's mother was picking them up at the bus stop later, where they usually waited.

As they were walking towards the bus stop, they had to walk past a group that always hung out near McDonalds. There were about 20 boys and girls in this group and they always made Prabha nervous. They all dressed in a similar way and made a lot of noise. She hesitated, but Ria and Michael seemed not to notice and were walking towards the group.

One boy from the group suddenly looked at them and then moved closer. Then he said loudly: "What are you staring at?" and "Hey you!" He was looking at Ria as he moved in front of them.

Michael slowed, and started to say: "She's not looking at you". Prabha grabbed his sleeve and kept walking. Ria had her head down and was walking faster.

They managed to walk around him but he and the rest of his group began to follow them. They were yelling and being stupid.

Prabha's heart was beating very fast. She knew that her mother would be there in about 5 minutes, if she was on time!

Scenario 2:

George had just got off a train on his way home from a football match. He had met a couple of his mates at the football stadium. There weren't many people around. As he was about to turn out of the station, two boys blocked his way. One gave him a bit of a push one way and the other pushed him back. The blond one put his hand on George's bag and the other grabbed his sunglasses.

George looked around for help but the nearest person had just turned the corner.

Scenario 3:

Joseph, Roland, Sophie and Nadia saw the boys driving around and waved and yelled at them. The car screeched around and pulled up beside them. "Hey! Come on, get in!" called Tony the driver, a friend of Roland's from football.

Roland looked in and saw that there was only one space. "Shove over", said Tony and the four of them squashed in, sitting half on top of the others.

The car took off and everyone was laughing and screaming. Tony was showing off his driving prowess. He was all over the road and getting faster and faster. Roland could tell by the look on Sophie's face that she was getting scared, and he didn't like it either.



Scenario 4:

Alex and Mikala were walking home from a friend's place. A group of their friends had been over for a video night. It wasn't far to Alex's home, so they decided to walk. They became aware of a car following them and realised that it must have been cruising the kerb slowly behind them for a few minutes before they really noticed it.

Mikala tried to sneak a look, but couldn't make out the figure behind the wheel. She glanced along the street. It was empty. She started to feel cold.



Scenario 5:

Rachel and Mira heard about the party from Shane at recess time. It was going to be Saturday night at Robert's house, a friend of his brother's. The girls remembered meeting him on the bus a couple of weeks ago. They were excited and began planning what to wear and how to get there.

Mira's parents were cool about her going. Rachel had a bit of difficulty though, because her parents didn't exactly know Robert or his parents. Rachel focussed on the fact that they knew Shane and his brother and eventually they said OK. They planned to catch a taxi there and Mira's dad agreed to pick them up at 12 o'clock.

About the time they arrived at the party so did the police! There must have been sixty people outside trying to get in and some of them were very aggressive. Rachel and Mira didn't have a hope of getting into the house or contacting anyone in there. They found themselves being moved along with the rest of the crowd up the street with no way of contacting Rachel's dad and no money to get a taxi, and surrounded by a group of strangers.