



STUDENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE – SECONDARY SCHOOL

SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE & SAFETY IN SCHOOL

Youth Now was a project within a youth justice team based within Positive Steps in Oldham, a Charity who supports young people and adults in a variety of ways to help improve their lives. 'Youth Now' was a pilot to develop work independently within local schools, bringing ideas from a contextual safeguarding approach into the setting, in order to improve the safety of young people in the local community and school and reduce serious youth violence.

As part of their work, the Team developed and implemented a 'School Safety Audit' to determine the nature and extent of serious youth violence connected to the school. This approach was based on adapted tools taken from previous schools-based research within the CS Network developed by the ['Beyond Referrals' project](#), on Harmful Sexual Behaviours in school settings.

This tool outlines the **student focus group** work with one secondary school. To carry out a full School Safety Audit you would need to use all tools in conjunction with each other.

Introduction:

What is it we are doing?

A pilot project to improve the safety of pupils in schools and local communities and reduce Serious Youth Violence.

Check if any further questions based on the **Information Sheet** already provided?

FACILITATOR instruction to group participants:

Youth Now is a team which forms part of Positive Steps in Oldham. Positive Steps is a Charity who supports young people and adults in a variety of ways to help improve lives. Youth Now is part of a pilot study working independently within local schools to improve the safety of young people in your local community and reduce serious youth violence.

We would like to hear about any issues that could affect your safety and wellbeing both in school, outside of school grounds, in the local area or online. The session will take approximately 30 – 45 minutes. Any questions before we start?

Get group members to sign a consent form and explain that the session is being recorded for the researcher only, to analyse the results.

[This discussion will be facilitated and recorded over Teams]

Exercise 1. Safety Issues (group discussion)

Set up:

Set up Room to record responses on flip charts:

Flip chart 1: safety issues in school,

Flip 2: safety issues outside of school grounds,

Flip 3: safety issues in the local area,

Flip 4: online

[Online/Remote – co-workers to record answers on an information grid – safety issues]

FACILITATOR instruction to group participants:

Tell us about these experiences that you have had or know about that has affected your sense of safety of you or your friends...

[Online/Remote - This discussion will be facilitated and recorded over Teams]

1. What was the issue?
2. Where did it happen? *Prompt:* Draw out specific places/spaces in each discussion.
3. How was this issue resolved? *Prompt:* Did you solve it between yourselves, did you tell someone e.g. school, professionals, parents, siblings, others?
4. If it was not resolved, why wasn't it? *Prompt:* What happened? What was missing to resolve this?

Exercise 2. Top serious youth violence themes in more depth (group discussion)

Set up:

Set up 4 flip charts around the room with titles – Weapons, Bullying, Discrimination and Violence (see below)

[Online/Remote – co-workers to record answers on the attached information grid – top concerning themes]

FACILITATOR instruction to group participants:

You may have seen us around school chatting to different pupils, about the issue of safety. Some of the top themes which came out of these discussions were around

1. *Weapons, knives, making weapons*
2. *Bullying*
3. *Discrimination - racism, sexuality, disability , emotional health*
4. *Violence (both verbally and physically)*

Briefly discuss each topic to check out group understanding of what each topic may involve using hypothetical examples. Then ask each member of the group to move to the flip chart they feel they have experience of, or which one makes they feel most at risk.

Repeat this 4 times, for :

1. In school, 2. Outside of school, 3. Local community/neighbourhood, 4. Online

For each locality, discuss;

1. What was the issue?
2. Where did it happen? *Prompt: Draw out specific places or spaces in each discussion.*
3. How was this issue resolved? *Prompt: Did you solve it between yourselves, did you tell someone school, professionals, parents, siblings, others?*
4. If it was not resolved, why wasn't it? *Prompt: What happened? What was missing to resolve this?*

[Online/Remote – This discussion will be facilitated and recorded over Teams]

Exercise 3. Feeling Safer in school (group discussion)

For each of the above issues, talk about:

*What would make you feel **safer** in school around;
weapons,
bullying,
discrimination,
verbal and/or physical violence? Discuss.*

End of Focus Group; Stop recording.

Any questions?

Thank for time, mention the 'prize draw'

Explain that they will be given a brief report of our findings at the end of the project.