SESSION PLAN

Youth Group: Ages 10 to 16

Topic: Blades Down, Futures Up: The Real Cost of Carrying

Learning objective:

- Explore why some young people might carry weapons
- Break down myths about carrying “for protection”
- Highlight the real-life consequences (legal, physical, emotional, social)
- Empower young people to make safe and brave choices

Materials Needed:

- Sticky notes or poster board
- Pens/markers
- Scenario cards
- Optional: local stats, anonymised case studies

Starter – “What Would You Do?” (3 minutes)

Instructions: Present quick dilemma scenarios and ask participants to vote or stand for their answer.

Examples:

- You’re offered a knife ‘just in case’ - what do you do?
- Your friend shows you they’re carrying - do you tell someone?
- Someone threatens you on social media - do you carry something for protection?

Facilitator Notes: Open up a brief, non-judgemental chat - many people carry out of fear. But fear doesn’t keep you safe. Smart choices do.

The Myth of Protection (4 minutes)

Explain:

Many young people carry because they think it will protect them. But the truth is:

- You're more likely to be injured with your own weapon
- Police can arrest you even if you don’t use it
- Your future can be seriously affected - no college, jobs, travel
- One bad moment can change your whole life

Quick stat or story (if local and appropriate):

Use a real headline or case example (change names if needed) where carrying led to tragedy.

“It doesn’t make you hard. It makes things harder.”

Real Talk – Why Do People Carry? (4 minutes)

Discussion: Ask:

- "Why do you think people carry knives?"
- "Is it pressure? Fear? Wanting respect?"

List their answers. Then challenge them:
"What if bravery looks like walking away or telling someone, instead of joining in?"

Myth-busting points:

- You don't need to be in a gang to get caught
- Even holding a weapon for a mate is illegal
- You're not weak for choosing peace

Consequences Wall (5 minutes)

Activity: On sticky notes or a large poster, ask:
"What could happen if you carry a weapon?"

Sort answers into 4 areas:

1. Legal - arrest, criminal record
2. Physical - getting hurt, dying
3. Emotional - guilt, fear, PTSD, trauma
4. Social - losing friends, family trust, future plans

Facilitator expands briefly on each one.
If relevant, mention your community's efforts (e.g. bleed kits, Blades Down campaign, local victims' stories).

Make a Choice – "What Would You Say?" (3 minutes)

Scenario:
Your friend says, "I'm bringing a blade - just for protection."

Ask students to write or say:

- What would you say to them?
- What other choice could they make instead?

Let them share responses. Praise courage, not silence.

Optional Follow-Up:

- Invite a police officer, paramedic, or local youth worker to speak
- Host a "Safe Choices" week or youth panel
- Run a creative project: posters, spoken word, short videos on anti-knife messages