



STAY TRUE
TO YOU

Helping young people stay out of harm's way

PRACTITIONER TOOLKIT
MAY 2024

What is Stay True to You about?

Conversations between young people and adults can be challenging, especially when it comes to talking about safety.

As someone working with young people, in whatever capacity – you play a vital role in empowering them. Building their confidence and emotional resilience. Ensuring they feel heard and respected.

With your support and a safe environment, young people can develop their social skills and be confident and capable of making the right decisions for themselves to keep out of harm's way. And as a trusted adult, you can there for them if they need to share a concern.

Stay True to You is a new approach to starting conversations with the young people that look up to you. This guide provides an overview of the work that has informed this new approach, as well as outlining the free resources and dedicated training available to you and your colleagues.

So if you're trying to help young people make the best choices they can, then we're here to help you have the best conversations you can.





Loyalty. Respect. Trust.

**Before you give it to anyone else,
first and foremost – you owe it to yourself.
To put your best interests first.**

**Respect your beliefs, the values you hold,
about what's right (and what's wrong).**

**Trust what you feel, in your heart,
in your gut, follow your instincts.**

**STAY TRUE
TO YOU**



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How Stay True to You was developed

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We're grateful for the time and expertise of the more than 50 young people who've contributed to this process. From October 2022 to today, we've visited 8 youth services for group sessions and interviews with 50+ young people.

We listened to their stories, were moved by their experiences and observed how they interact with their friends, their surroundings and the youth workers who sat in with us. We asked them: what causes violence? How might it be prevented? What's the role of friends, family, police, councils, youth workers, brands and celebrity influencers? How can we communicate with you and help change behaviours? What really works?

We also ran workshops with 25 youth practitioners – the dedicated youth workers who spend their days at the heart of communities with the young people we're trying to reach. What patterns do they observe in their day-to-day work, that could help us understand young people's perceptions of violence and how to prevent it? Where is – and who holds – the influence? What works?

We also consulted with professionals outside the youth services sector: experts in violence reduction, behavioural psychology, communications strategists and campaigners. Again, we asked: what really works?

Our core approach rests on three key insights that has informed the launch of Stay True to You, and will form the guiding principles for its ongoing evolution.

By implementing the campaign you are responding directly to what young people from your local area told us would help them.

For more information about the insight, please see the full insight deck available on the campaign hub.

Insight 1:
I'LL WALK MY OWN WAY

Insight 2:
THE FEAR IS REAL. DON'T TELL ME IT'S ALL OK

Insight 3:
PREVENTION STARTS WITH STAYING CALM

The TRUE approach

Based on all our work with young people and practitioners, we believe the best way to support young people is to stay TRUE. These principles inform the whole approach and all our resources.

Main Programme Promise:

Helping young people stay out of harm's way



Talk (T)

Create open and honest dialogue with young people.

Help them build respectful relationships where they are treated as equals.



Recognise reality (R)

Acknowledge what's happening and recognise their feelings and fears, without adding more. Offer up the facts and share information about the consequences, in all their forms.



Understand (U)

Demonstrate you're trying to understand by truly listening to their experiences.

Give them space to talk freely with no judgement or instruction.



Empower (E)

Help young people understand their own capabilities. Help them recognise the things they can positively do for themselves, and help them consider who they trust to ask for help.

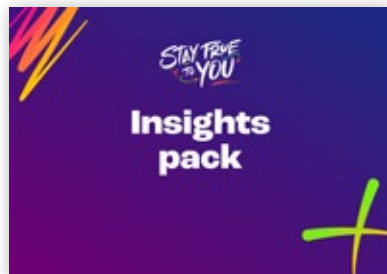
Resources Available

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We know you know your job inside out. We've created a series of free resources and materials to help support you in starting conversations with young people. We hope these can be fitted in to your day-to-day role and can be shared with other colleagues across the Thames Valley.



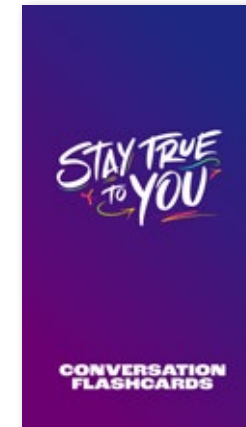
An animation that sets out the problem and our response to it



Insights pack – a deeper dive into what young people told us would work for them



A structured workshop guide and supporting slides, to help structure sessions (lasting 45 – 60 mins) for a group / class of young people



TRUE flashcards – prompts to help with short small group or 1-2-1 conversations with young people



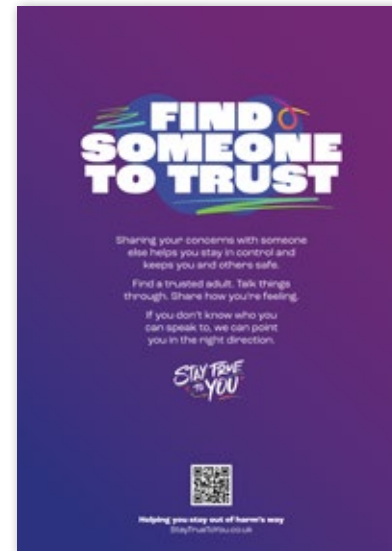
TRUE approach posters – an overview of the TRUE approach to share with colleagues

Resources Available

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To help reinforce the messages for young people and to provide a QR code to take them to the website, we have produced a set of posters for you to display in areas where you feel they may see them. We know that on their own, these posters are unlikely to really interest a young person – but, you can use them to complement other activity such as running the workshop with groups or when your staff have been using the flash-cards to hold conversations.

We've also produced free giveaway cards as a simple engagement tool for practitioners to give to a young person. They contain a simple message and QR code to direct them to the website. You may want to give them out after running a group session too. You can order free cards and posters by emailing info@staytruetoyou.co.uk



The new Stay True to You website hub: www.StayTrueToYou.co.uk

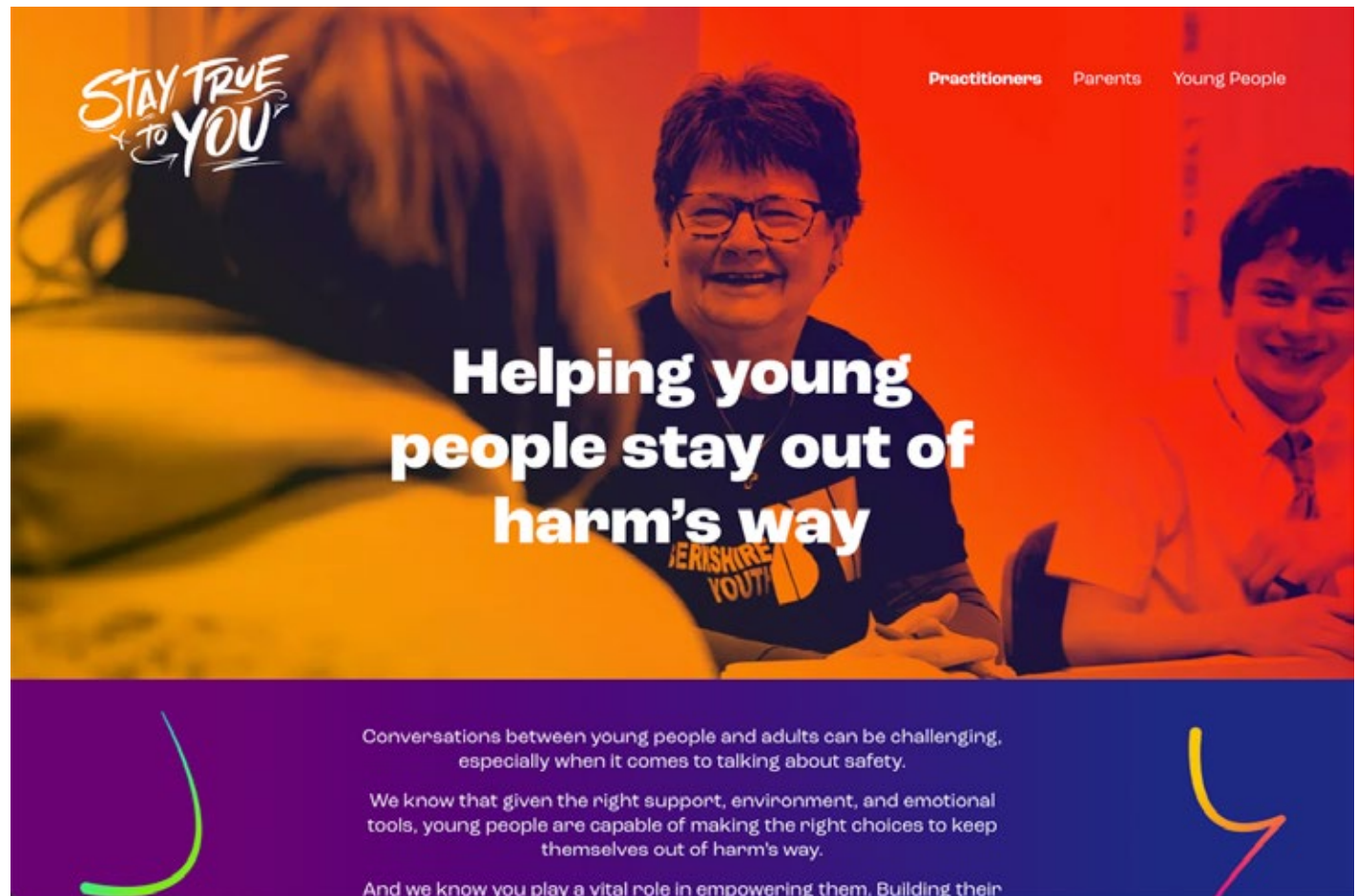
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All of these resources can be found on the website, as well as other information and support covering the whole Thames Valley region.

Overseen by the Violence Prevention Partnership, the website serves as a hub for the Stay True to You campaign, and will grow and evolve over time.

It provides:

- A single hub covering the whole Thames Valley region
- Information for practitioners, young people and parents
- Signposting to further information, national and local services
- Information on training and more



Conversations between young people and adults can be challenging, especially when it comes to talking about safety.

We know that given the right support, environment, and emotional tools, young people are capable of making the right choices to keep themselves out of harm's way.

And we know you play a vital role in empowering them. Building their

A dedicated training offer

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We want to help all those working with young people to feel confident in using these resources. We've commissioned the leading knife crime charity, The Ben Kinsella Trust, to offer training on these approaches.

If your organisation – or you individually – is interested in participating in training on the Stay True to You approach, you can get in touch for more information on training dates for virtual and in-person sessions via info@staytruetoyou.co.uk



The Ben Kinsella Trust
Stop Knife Crime

The Ben Kinsella Trust

We educate young people on the dangers of knife crime and help them to make positive choices to stay safe. Our workshops change young people's attitudes to knife crime; debunking the myth that carrying a knife will protect you. They strengthen peer values; ensuring young people give better advice to each other and challenge peers who are carrying (or thinking of carrying) a knife.

We also campaign for action and justice for those affected by knife crime and our campaigns have won numerous awards in recognition of their success. We work with young people, the government and stakeholders on collective action on these issues, because we recognise we cannot do this alone.

Messages for young people

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Stay True to You is focused on encouraging young people to believe in themselves and keep themselves out of trouble. You are crucial in communicating some key messages to them, which you'll find on posters and other campaign assets on the website.

Main Programme Promise:

Helping you stay out of harm's way



The decisions you make now can stop a difficult situation escalating. These are your choices to make.

If things look like they could get out of hand, plan ahead. Consider how you can avoid conflict. Think about what you can control.



You know when something's gone too far. Trust yourself to do the right thing.

Walk the other way. Exit the chat. Avoid the confrontation..



Sharing your concerns with someone else helps you stay in control and keeps you and others safe.

Find a trusted adult. Talk things through. Share how you're feeling.

If you don't know who you can speak to, we can point you in the right direction.

Communicating with young people on social media

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If you're able to use your social channels to reach people, there are assets available on the website, and you can use the copy below as inspiration

When it comes to staying safe, you probably already know the right thing to do. But for the times you're not sure, find an adult you can speak to.

If you don't have one, we can help. Visit StayTrueToYou.co.uk

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Respect the values you have about what's right. Follow your own path.

If you're worried about keeping yourself safe, we can help you find a trusted adult to talk to.

Visit StayTrueToYou.co.uk



And lastly...

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Thank you for your support

Everything we heard from the months of working with young people underlined the fact that you are crucially important in keeping young people safe, that they listen, trust and look up to you.

We are so grateful for everything you do to start conversations across the Thames Valley.

For any more information or support, please contact
info@staytruetoyou.co.uk



Produced by the Thames Valley Violence
Prevention Partnership, supported by
Claremont Communications

Version 1.0

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