



TOPIC 5

Keeping safe

Topic introduction

Background

Fear of crime is something that may affect people from all walks of life at any stage of their lives. This makes it different from actual crime, which tends to be concentrated on particular areas and victims and is committed by a small number of offenders. Examples of fear of crime include an older woman who feels nervous about walking home, parents who feel anxious about sending their child to buy sweets or a shopkeeper who goes tense every time a customer enters his shop. If we let it, the fear of crime can have a devastating effect on our quality of life.

In British Crime Survey interviews conducted in the 2001/02 financial year, 31% of respondents said that fear of crime had a moderate impact on their quality of life, with a further 6% saying that their quality of life was greatly affected by it. Yet the same survey put the statistical probability of becoming a victim of violent crime at just 4%.¹

There is a growing body of evidence about the links between crime and health. Crime can, and often does, damage health. Most obviously this is in the form of physical injuries such as those arising from violent attack. A wide variety of crimes can also affect the mental health of victims, in both the short and long term. Crime can have further long-term health impacts on victims and those close to them, for example through increasing stress, smoking, drinking or drug use. Fear of crime can also limit people's lifestyles in a way that is detrimental to their health. In addition, there is a clearly established relationship between mental illness and violence, whether against the self or other people. A significant proportion of young offenders, sentenced or remanded in custody, have been found to have some degree of mental health disorder.²

National targets / policies

www.crimereduction.gov.uk gives a comprehensive overview of initiatives and materials relating to crime reduction.

1. www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/fc01.htm

2. Crime Concern *Working with health services to reduce crime and disorder*, 2002
www.renewal.net/Documents/RNET/Research/Workinghealthservices.pdf
www.crimeconcern.org.uk

This topic

This topic was developed to support vulnerable people to live independently. Feeling safe in one's own home and building assertiveness skills may lessen fear of crime. The themes in this topic are:

- Fire
- Home safety
- Home security
- Not being a victim

Further information and suggestions

Teachers and learners may wish to contact local crime reduction initiatives. Areas that have funding to regenerate deprived neighbourhoods may have 'New Deal for Communities' (NDC) status. Many NDCs have reduction of fear of crime as a target for the NDC neighbourhood area.

www.renewal.net/Nav.asp?Category=:neighbourhood%20renewal:delivering%20neighbourhood%20renewal

Mapping to the core curriculum

Topic 5 Keeping safe				
Theme	Literacy	Language	Numeracy	Page references
Fire	SLd/E3.1, SLd/E3.2, Rs/E3.1, Rt/E3.2, Rt/E3.9, Rt/L1.3			282–294
Home safety	Rt/L1.3, SLd/E3.2, Wt/E3.1			295–300
Home security	Rt/L1.3, SLc/L1.2, SLc/L2.1, SLd/L1.1			301–308
Not being a victim	Rt/L1.3, SLc/L1.1, SLlr/L1.3			309–320

Highlighted curriculum items [] = included in National Tests