Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit
TACKLING VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Resource 1: *Nate's story*

A group of teenagers are deliberating over whether they want to buy some Class B drugs.

What does 'Class B' drug mean?

What consequences might there be for buying or using a Class B drug?

Has a crime been committed?

Nate receives a message instructing him to deliver some drugs to a specific location. He is visibly unhappy, as it is the early hours of the morning, and he hasn't been able to sleep all night. He gets ready to leave, as he doesn't think has any other option. He is scared about what might happen if he doesn't go.

Why might Nate feel that he has to follow through with the instructions of the message?

Has a crime been committed?

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Resource 1: *Nate's story (continued)*

On his way to complete the sale, Nate thinks about the last four months. At first, he only agreed to do a couple of jobs for the older people in the area to earn some quick money. Then he was told that if he stuck with them, he'd be protected, as he'd be 'in' with the ones in charge. He had been running into trouble with some others who lived nearby, so he thought it made sense. But ever since, he feels like he's just been facing one problem after another. No matter how much money he brings in, he always seems to owe someone something. This is the third time he's been sent out of his city this month.

What pressures might Nate have been facing that made him want to join the group?

What signs are there that there is a power imbalance between Nate and the older people?

Nate arrives at the location and carries out the transaction. He realises that he is in an area that he is less familiar with, and feels very unsafe.

Why might Nate feel unsafe in the area he has had to go to?

Has a crime been committed?

What might the consequences of Nate's actions be?

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Resource 1: *Nate's story (continued)*

When Nate goes to deliver the money to the older leader of the group, all of the money is taken from him. He is told that he isn't allowed to keep any of it, as the money that was used to buy him a brand-new smartphone last month as a 'gift' has to be made back.

How might this make Nate feel? How might it impact his future actions?

Has a crime been committed?

At home, Nate's parents are worried that he has been home less and less, and when he is home, he is very secretive about what he has been doing and where he has been. They ask some of his old friends if he has been with them, but they say that Nate stopped talking to them or seeing them months ago. He told them he didn't need them as friends, as he'd made some new older, more powerful, friends who have offered him a better life.

What is a sign that Nate has been manipulated?

Nate's parents go into his room to see if they can find anything that might help them find out about his whereabouts. They find a tightly bound parcel and weapon, and decide to wait until Nate is home to ask what is in the parcel.

What legal consequences might there be for Nate?

What can Nate's parents do to support Nate to find a positive and safe way out of his situation?

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Resource 1a: *Nate's story – facilitator notes*

Scenario 1: A group of teenagers are deliberating over whether they want to buy some Class B drugs.

- What does 'Class B' drug mean?
  - *Illegal drugs are classified into three categories: Class A, B and C. All classes of drugs carry a range of risks to health and wellbeing, as well as legal consequences for their possession and distribution, with Class A drugs carrying the highest legal consequences. Class B drugs include cannabis, ketamine, illegally supplied codeine, and amphetamines (speed).*
- What consequences might there be for buying or using a Class B drug?
  - *Class B drugs carry a legal consequence of up to 5 years in prison for possession, and a life sentence for supplying, or possessing with the intent to supply. Someone in possession of a Class B drug may also face an unlimited fine.*
- Has a crime been committed?
  - *It is unclear how old the teenagers are, or what other drugs may be present. If they are in possession of any other restricted drug, they are committing a crime. If they are below the age of 18 and have bought alcohol, outside of specific circumstances, this would also be against the law.*

Scenario 2: Nate receives a message instructing him to deliver some drugs to a specific location. He is visibly unhappy, as it is the early hours of the morning, and he hasn't been able to sleep all night. He gets ready to leave, as he doesn't think has any other option. He is scared about what might happen if he doesn't go.

- Why might Nate feel that he has to follow through with the instructions of the message?
  - *Nate might feel that he has little choice if he has been threatened by whoever has sent him the message. He might feel that he will be in danger if he doesn't go, and that he can't walk away. Emphasise that however entrapped Nate may feel, he always has an option to seek help and receive support.*
- Has a crime been committed?
  - *As a young person, Nate is experiencing child criminal exploitation. The adults instructing him are committing a serious crime in coercing Nate and forcing him to him to carry out criminal behaviour.*

Scenario 3: On his way to complete the sale, Nate thinks about the last four months. At first, he only agreed to do a couple of jobs for the older people in the area to earn some quick money. Then he was told that if he stuck with them, he'd be protected, as he'd be 'in' with the ones in charge. He had been running into trouble with some others who

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lived nearby, so he thought it made sense. But ever since, he feels like he's just been facing one problem after another. No matter how much money he brings in, he always seems to owe someone something. This is the third time he's been sent out of his city this month.

- What pressures might Nate have been facing that made him want to join the group?
  - *Nate might have faced external pressures such as: living in an area where people have fewer resources; needing some extra money to help financially provide for himself; being in confrontations or fights with other boys and wanting protection. He might also have faced internal pressures such as: wanting to have the financial rewards he has seen other members of the group with; wanting to have status and power; looking up to the older boys.*
- What signs are there that there is a power imbalance between Nate and the older people?
  - *Nate doesn't feel he has any choice over his actions, instead he is being coerced by the people in charge of the group; Nate is 16 years old and younger than the older people in his group, which likely includes adults, who are manipulating his actions; Nate is being placed into a position of debt to the group, who are financially exploiting him.*

Scenario 4: Nate arrives at the location and carries out the transaction. He realises that he is in an area that he is less familiar with, and feels very unsafe.

- Why might Nate feel unsafe in the area he has had to go to?
  - *Nate might feel unsafe as he has been ordered to go out in the night time on his own. He might be worried if there are members of other groups who are also involved in supplying drugs in the area, or that he doesn't know his way around the area very well.*
- Has a crime been committed?
  - *Nate has now both been in the possession of, and supplied, illegal Class B drugs and has therefore carried out a criminal offence.*
- What might the consequences of Nate's actions be?
  - *Nate may face a heavy fine and be at risk of imprisonment for 5 years, if he does not seek help from the police.*

Scenario 5: When Nate goes to deliver the money to the older leader of the group, all of the money is taken from him. He is told that he isn't allowed to keep any of it, as the money that was used to buy him a brand-new smartphone last month as a 'gift' has to be made back.

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- How might this make Nate feel? How might it impact his future actions?
  - *Nate might feel angry, betrayed, disappointed, or frustrated. The money being taken might cause him to look for further chances to make back the money, drawing him into more situations which present a greater amount of risk.*
- Has a crime been committed?
  - *The leader of the group may face prosecution under the Modern Slavery Act 2015*[1] *in forcing Nate to traffic drugs.*

Scenario 6: At home, Nate's parents are worried that he has been home less and less, and when he is home, he is very secretive about what he has been doing and where he has been. They ask some of his old friends if he has been with them, but they say that Nate stopped talking to them or seeing them months ago. He told them he didn't need them as friends, as he'd made some new older, more powerful friends who have offered him a better life.

- What is a sign that Nate has been manipulated?
  - *Nate has been isolated from his friends with the promise of excessive amounts of money and power. He has become secretive about his behaviour, hiding his whereabouts and activities.*

Scenario 7: Nate's parents go into his room to see if they can find anything that might help them find out about his whereabouts. They find a tightly bound parcel and weapon, and decide to wait until Nate is home to ask what is in the parcel.

- What legal consequences might there be for Nate?
  - *If Nate is in the possession of an illegal weapon, he may face a fine or imprisonment of up to 5 years.*
- What can Nate's parents do to support Nate to find a positive and safe way out of his situation?
  - *Nate's parents can ask Nate to explain what has happened, listening to him about anything he is worried about. If they are unsure of what they can do to help Nate, they can turn to a support service such as their local council's Children's Services, or a national helpline such as the NSPCC. They can also encourage Nate to access support from other adults who can help, such as a local youth support service, and help him to talk to the police so that he can safely hand in the weapon and the parcel.*

1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863323/HOCountyLinesGuidance_-_Sept2018.pdf

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Resource 2: *Wider consequences*

What might the effects of the drug trade be on the friends of a young person who has become involved?

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Resource 2: *Wider consequences*

What might the effects of the drug trade be on the family of a young person who has become involved?

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Resource 2: *Wider consequences*

What might the effects of the drug trade be on the wider community where drugs are made or sold?

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Resource 3: *Talking heads*

A couple of years ago, I got involved with some people who got me into a lot of trouble. Things were hard at home and at first it felt like they were looking after me, but I realise now they were just taking advantage of me. I thought I was trapped. I didn't think I could get out because by then I'd already done some things that I'm not proud of. Anyway, one day I did get caught, and everything I'd been holding in just came spilling out. Turns out, the police knew what the group were doing, and they wanted to help me. I had to face the consequences of my actions, and say sorry to the people who were affected, but I got help to do it. Now I have a youth worker who I can turn to – they help me feel better about myself. I'm starting to plan my future too – I'm going to college next year! I wish the younger me knew I wasn't alone – there are adults who work every day to help young people like me.

I knew the risks, but I thought I'd be able to handle it if anything got too serious. But this time, I didn't realise just how serious it was. I heard about one of the group getting really badly hurt, and the police were looking for information. At first I was worried about what would happen if I spoke to them, but then thought they might be able to protect me more than I could protect myself. I asked if I could talk to the community support officer at my school, and they made sure I had a space where I could talk to them without anyone else at school finding out. They said they'd have to pass the information on to their higher ups, but the only people who would know it came from me were any adults who needed to know to make sure I was safe.

We have supported young people in a range of situations – sometimes they see that they may be in danger and come to us, and other times they have already become involved in illegal behaviours, but have been able to tell us more about the situation. We always want to make sure that young people are safe. Where young people have been coerced into carrying out criminal activities, our priority is to make sure that these activities are stopped, and that there are no lives in danger. We've been able to work with the young people to keep them safe, and prevent others from being put in dangerous situations too.

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Resource 4: *Advice to Nate*

To Nate,

It's important that the police know about what has happened because...
(what risks are there in Nate's story?)

If the police are told what is happening, this can help you because...
(what might the police do to be able to help Nate? What can the police do to protect him from people who might be dangerous?)

Letting the police know what has happened can help you stay safe in the future too, by... (who else can the police ask to help support Nate in the future?

When the police help you, they are also keeping other people safe, including... (who else can be positively impacted if the police become involved?)

To Nate,

It's important that the police know about what has happened because...
(what risks are there in Nate's story?)

If the police are told what is happening, this can help you because...
(what might the police do to be able to help Nate? What can the police do to protect him from people who might be dangerous?)

Letting the police know what has happened can help you stay safe in the future too, by... (who else can the police ask to help support Nate in the future?

When the police help you, they are also keeping other people safe, including... (who else can be positively impacted if the police become involved?)

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