

ACTIVITIES



Resource on Running Away

A collection of activities that can be used with children and young people who are at risk of running away or going missing.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



free • 24/7 • confidential
**runaway
helpline**



**Believe in
children**
Barnardo's



**Education
Scotland**
Foghlam Alba

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Acknowledgments and Thanks

This resource has been developed by Missing People and the Runaway Helpline in collaboration with Scottish Government, Barnardo's Scotland and Education Scotland. We would like to thank to all of those who have provided generous support and expertise throughout the development of the resource.

A Young People's Advisory Group, comprised of children and young people in Scotland who have previously run away or been reported missing, also guided the resource and we would like to extend special thanks to them. Their insight and understanding of the issue supported us to create activities that aim to be inclusive and sensitive to the varying needs of young people.

Finally, a Professional Advisory Group made up of individuals from education, social care, charitable organisations, youth education and youth work organisations in Scotland also supported and guided the resource development. We would like to extend our thanks again to all of those involved for their expertise and valuable contributions made throughout the project.

About this resource



Every year over 12,000 people are reported missing to Police Scotland, with many more running away or leaving their home without being reported. Children and young people who go missing are likely to be vulnerable and are at increased risk of harm before, during and after the time that they are away. However, very few seek any kind of professional support as they do not know what is available or what will happen if they decide to reach out.

In line with the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland, this resource has been developed to improve awareness among children and young people about what may happen if they run away or go missing, and increase their understanding of options, services and organisations that they can turn to for support if they need to.

Health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes from the Curriculum for Excellence have also been considered, and the resource intends to promote an environment where children and young people can learn and progress across the following areas:

→ I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them

→ I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

→ I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss.

During development of the resource, it became clear that children and young people also wanted the opportunity to seek information independently when they were in need. As a result, Runaway Helpline Scotland has been created as a place for children and young people to gain a greater understanding of what they can do, where they can go and what might happen when they are thinking of leaving, have already left, or have been away and come back again. The site also holds a dedicated chat service where children and young people can discuss their circumstances in a safe and confidential space.

Using this resource

The resource has been designed to be versatile and adaptable, and can be used in different ways depending on the needs of children and young people you are working with. The activities can be led by a variety of professionals and can be completed in a classroom, with youth groups or in smaller, more intensive support settings. The activities can also be used across a range of ages and academic levels. Please see page 5 for examples of how the activities can be used in different ways.



The activities focus on what may happen if someone runs away or goes missing, and where they can get support if they need to. The learning objectives for activities are:

- Participants will have improved awareness of the reasons why people run away or go missing and what can happen when you're away
- Participants will have improved awareness of how and where to access help if they are considering running away or going missing

The activities are suitable for those aged 13+ and have been designed to be interactive and encourage discussion.

Many of the scenarios and situations reflect serious but common experiences and we recommend that professionals read through each activity and select appropriate scenarios and situations to use with the group they are working with before completing them.

The activities have been designed so that only small amounts of preparation and materials are required. We recommend you read through the summary, preparation and instructions for running each activity before undertaking them so you can prepare any printed documents, pens, paper or scissors before beginning a session.

The activities may prompt questions from young people around where they can go for help and support when they need it. A selection of organisations that provide support across a range of issues has been collated at the end of the resource and can be shared with young people during the session or afterwards. Young people can also go to Runaway Helpline Scotland for more information focussed on running away: www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/scotland

PLEASE REMEMBER:

If you have any serious concerns about a participant while you are completing these activities, follow your usual safeguarding procedures or speak to your safeguarding lead. Let the participant know that you'll have to speak to someone about your concerns unless it places them at any further risk.

Examples of using the resource:

EXAMPLE 1: using the resource in a 1-hour session with a S3 class in a secondary school.

Time	Activity
5 minutes	Welcome and Introduction
10 minutes	Warm-Up Activity
10 minutes	Myth Busting Activity
30 minutes	Mix and Match Advice Activity
5 minutes	Wrap up

EXAMPLE 2: using the resource across two 40-minute sessions with a youth group.

Session 1	
Time	Activity
5 minutes	Welcome and Introduction
10 minutes	Warm-Up Activity
20 minutes	Scenarios Activity
5 minutes	Wrap up
Session 2	
Time	Activity
5 minutes	Recap of Session 1
10 minutes	Myth Busting Activity
20 minutes	Mix and Match Advice Activity
5 minutes	Wrap up

EXAMPLE 3: using the resource in a 1.5-hour session with a group of young people who have previously been missing, or have been identified as at risk of exploitation.

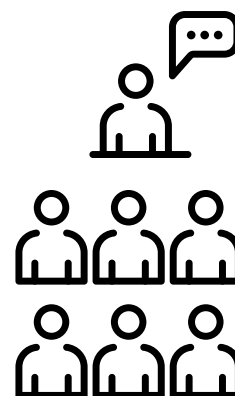
Time	Activity
5 minutes	Welcome and Introduction
10 minutes	Warm-Up Activity
30 minutes	Mix and Match Advice Activity
10 minutes	Comfort Break
30 minutes	Circles of Support Activity
5 minutes	Wrap up



Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)

Welcome the participants and let them know what you're going to be looking at today:

- The issue of 'missing', running away, or being away from where you live
- The different reasons why people run away or go missing, and what can happen when they're away from where they live
- Different ways to access support and get help if you're thinking of running away, going missing, or leaving where you live



Introduce the 'Ground Rules':

This is a **safe space** for everyone:

- Please respect the views of everyone in the room and allow each other to talk.
- Be aware that you don't have to share your own experiences, and you can pass on any questions you don't want to answer.
- The things we talk about today can be sensitive and some of the things covered in the session may be difficult or upsetting. If you need a break or don't want to take part in a particular discussion, please step out to take a breather, or let whoever's in charge know.

What does 'missing' mean?

Acknowledge that the term '**missing**' is vague and can mean lots of different things to different people. To begin the session, ask participants to share:

- **What do you think we mean when we say someone is a missing person?**

If they seem unsure, try asking:

- **What do you think of when you hear that someone has run away or gone missing?**

Once participants have shared some of their thoughts, clarify the definition by sharing wording used by Police Scotland below:

A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown and:

- Where the circumstances are out of character; or
- The context suggests the person may be subject to crime; or
- The person is at risk of harm to themselves or another

Warm Up Activity (10 minutes)

Summary:

The warm up activity will encourage participants to think of reasons someone may run away or go missing, and what might happen when someone who runs away or goes missing.



Preparation:

- Make sure participants have pen and paper.



Running the activity:

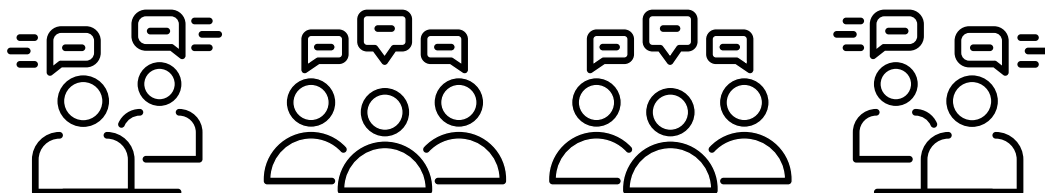
Ask participants to divide a piece of paper in half so they can write down two lists. Ask them to use the following headings:

1. **REASONS SOMEONE MIGHT RUN AWAY OR GO MISSING**
2. **WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN WHEN SOMEONE GOES MISSING?**

Participants should spend 2-3 minutes adding their answers to the lists. Encourage discussion amongst small groups of 2-4 people.

Once the time is over, ask the participants to share their answers and ask the wider group if they have identified the same things, and whether they find any answers surprising. If there appears to be differences of opinion between participants, ask them to explain why they agree or disagree with an answer.

Once you have spoken about the participant's answers, use the table on page 8 to identify any other common reasons that people go missing or run away, and other things that may happen when someone goes missing.



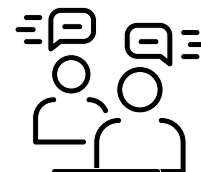
Resource on Running Away

REASONS SOMEONE MIGHT RUN AWAY OR GO MISSING:	WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN WHEN SOMEONE GOES MISSING?
<p>Reasons include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're experiencing conflict, arguments, abuse or neglect at home 	<p>Possibilities include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might be at risk of being assaulted or become a victim of crime
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're at serious risk of harm (injury or death) if they stay where they are and need to go somewhere safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might be at risk of serious harm (injury or death) from themselves or others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're experiencing problems at school (e.g. bullying or exam stress) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might need to call the police or emergency services to get help if they're in danger or injured
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're experiencing poor mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might contact an organisation like Runaway Helpline Scotland to talk about their options and being safe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They want to spend time with friends or boyfriends/girlfriends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might have to stay on the street
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They don't like where they're living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might get lost or not know where they are
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're experiencing discrimination and prejudice (e.g. homophobia, racism or similar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might do something against the law in order to survive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They've been kicked out of home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might do things they don't want to do in order to survive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone else wants them to go missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might stay with strangers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might be exploited by someone who wants to take advantage of them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're being groomed or exploited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might have to stay in dangerous places (e.g. a building site)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They want more independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might become ill from the cold or outside environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're living away from home and want to return to where they're from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might get in trouble with their parent or carer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are involved with (or associated with) a gang or organised crime group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might miss school and their education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're a young carer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might be reported missing to the police
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They've experienced a loss or bereavement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They want to use drugs or alcohol 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They've been kidnapped or abducted 	

Myth Busting (10 Minutes)

Summary:

During this activity, participants will discuss common myths that people believe about running away or going missing, and learn whether they are true or false.



Learning Objective:

Participants will be able to identify whether common beliefs related to being missing or running away are true or false.

Preparation:

- If you are using a big enough space, ask participants to stand up in the middle of the room, and then identify different areas of the room as **'true'** or **'false'** so participants move around as myths are read out. Participants can stand in the middle of the room if they are unsure.
- If it is not possible to have the participants moving around, ask participants to tear a piece of paper in half, and to label each piece 'true' and 'false' to make answer cards.

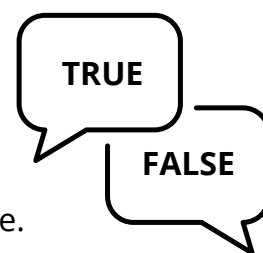
Running the Activity:

Once you are prepared, read out the first myth and ask participants to identify whether they believe that myth is true or false by moving to different areas of the room, or using their answer cards.

Ask participants to explain why they think the myth is true or false.

Following the discussion, confirm whether the myth is true or false and read out the additional information for each myth using the Myth Busting Guide on the pages 10-11.

Repeat this process for the rest of the myths below.



Myths:

- 1 YOU HAVE TO WAIT 24 HOURS BEFORE REPORTING SOMEONE MISSING.
- 2 YOU WILL BE IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE IF YOU GO MISSING.
- 3 MOST PEOPLE WHO ARE REPORTED MISSING ARE FOUND SAFE AND WELL WITHIN 48 HOURS.
- 4 PEOPLE ONLY RUN AWAY BECAUSE THEY LIKE THE ATTENTION.
- 5 IT'S ALWAYS SAFER TO STAY WHERE YOU LIVE RATHER THAN RUN AWAY



REMEMBER:

Participants will be able to identify whether common beliefs related to being missing or running away are **true** or **false**.

Ask participants to explain why they think the myth is true or false.

Myth Busting Guide

1 YOU HAVE TO WAIT 24 HOURS BEFORE REPORTING SOMEONE MISSING.

- **FALSE** – you do not need to wait 24 hours to report someone missing.
- If someone isn't where they are supposed to be, and you're concerned about them or are worried because this is out of character, you should report them missing to the police.

2 YOU WILL BE IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE IF YOU GO MISSING.

- **FALSE** – you shouldn't be in trouble if you go missing.
- It is not a crime to go missing. If you are reported missing, the police are there to help you be safe and will want to make sure you are 'safe and well' (regardless of how old you are).
- If you're **under 16**, police will want to ensure you are returned to somewhere safe (usually your home if it is safe for you to be there).
- If you are **aged 16-17** you can leave home without permission but the response from the police may vary – they may want to take you to somewhere safe, or they may allow you to stay where you are if they deem it safe.
- If you are **over 18, and not 'detained' under the Mental Health Act (sectioned)**, you have the right to be missing as an adult and can resolve your 'missing status' once you have been assessed as 'safe and well' by the police.

3 MOST PEOPLE WHO ARE REPORTED MISSING ARE FOUND SAFE AND WELL WITHIN 48 HOURS.

- **TRUE** – thankfully most people who are reported missing are found safe and well within 48 hours.

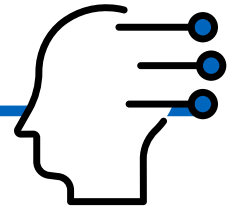
4 PEOPLE ONLY RUN AWAY BECAUSE THEY LIKE THE ATTENTION.

- **FALSE** – people of all ages run away or go missing for all kinds of reasons, and it is very rarely because they like the attention. Most of the time, someone running away or being missing is a sign that something isn't as it should be. They may have a reason to be missing, or they feel like they have no other choice.

5 IT'S ALWAYS SAFER TO STAY WHERE YOU LIVE RATHER THAN RUN AWAY

- **FALSE** – while staying where you're supposed to be living can be the safest place for a lot of people, for some it may not be. If you, or someone you know, feel unsafe where you live there are places like Runaway Helpline Scotland that can help you talk through and consider your options, and people like the police and social services who can offer support and help make you safer.

Scenarios (20-30 minutes)



Summary:

During this activity, participants will consider different scenarios where their friend may be reported missing. They will think about what may happen to their friend, how they can stay safe and where they can access support.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to identify the different things that may happen to someone when they run away or are missing.
- Participants will be able to identify ways to stay safer and different ways to access support if someone is thinking of running away or going missing.

Preparation:

- Divide the participants into 4 smaller groups and ask each group to look at a different scenario. If you are working with a smaller group, divide the group in two and complete 2 of the 4 scenarios.
- Print the scenarios and prompt questions (page 13) for each individual or group.
- Make sure participants have pen and paper to make notes.



Running the Activity:

Ask the groups to read through their scenario and consider:

- **What might happen to their friend while they're in the scenario that's described? What are the risks to them?**
- **What are the different things their friend can do to stay safe?**
- **Where can their friend go to get help and support?**



Give the groups 10 minutes to discuss their scenario and make notes on each question before asking them to feed back their thoughts and ideas to the larger group.

Once a group has shared their thoughts on a scenario – ask other participants whether there's anything additional they can think of before going through the Scenario's Guide on pages 14-17 which outlines what may happen to the friend, how they can stay safe and where they can access support in each scenario.

Repeat this process for each scenario you have looked at.

Scenarios

SCENARIO 1:

Your friend tells you that they often stay out overnight at their mate's house. Their foster carer doesn't know where they go and keeps reporting them missing. They don't mind their foster carer, but don't like living with them. They want to be moved back to their family home.

SCENARIO 2:

Your friend tells you they're struggling with their mental health and they find it really difficult to talk about it. They think that 'everyone would be better off' without them. They don't want to go home tonight as their dad's been drinking a lot recently. They're planning on staying at a local building site instead.

SCENARIO 3:

Your friend tells you that they've been having a really bad time at home and their social worker has done nothing to help. They've been speaking to someone online who they now consider their boyfriend. They've offered them a place to stay so they are planning to go there and not tell anyone where they are.

SCENARIO 4:

Your friend tells you that they've been kicked out of home after arguing with their mum. They haven't been attending school and say that they're going away this weekend but won't tell you where they're going. They tell you that you don't need to worry about them as they've got people taking care of them.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT...

- **What might happen to your friend while they're in the scenario that's described? What are the risks to them?**
- **What are the different things your friend can do to stay safe?**
- **Where can your friend go to get help and support?**

Scenario's Guide

SCENARIO 1:

Your friend tells you that they often stay out overnight at their mate's house. Their foster carer doesn't know where they go and keeps reporting them missing. They don't mind their foster carer, but don't like living with them. They want to be moved back to their family home.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN	STAYING SAFE	HELP AND SUPPORT
<p>Adults who have a duty to keep your friend safe (foster carers, social workers or similar) don't know where they are or who they're staying with, and may have to report them missing.</p> <p>If they're reported missing or considered missing again there may be an on impact on future decisions around their care arrangements or them being able to return to their family home.</p> <p>Where they're staying may not be safe. The environment may not be suitable for children and young people, or could be dirty or dangerous.</p> <p>Who they're staying with may not be safe. Friends often have good intentions, but helping someone to stay away from home without permission can put them at greater risk, or may mean someone is taking advantage of a situation.</p>	<p>Speak with their foster carer, or another trusted adult about how they're feeling and how they may be able to stay at their friend's house without being reported missing.</p> <p>Speak with their social worker about the process for getting permission to stay away from their foster home (NB this may depend on an individual young person's legal status or supervision requirement).</p> <p>If your friend gets permission to stay away in future, they should share the location they're staying at and contact details for a responsible adult with their foster carer and social worker.</p> <p>Speak with their social worker about how they're feeling, their current care arrangements, and wanting to move back to their family home.</p>	<p>Speak with the Runaway Helpline about being reported missing. Find out what their options may be and how to stay safe if they're away from home. Get support to speak with their foster carer or social worker and explain their situation.</p> <p>Speak with Who Cares? Scotland about their care arrangements, getting their voice heard, and having independent support to have a say in their care arrangements or where they live.</p> <p>Speak with a support organisation like ChildLine or the Samaritans to discuss different issues they're experiencing and how they're feeling.</p>

SCENARIO 2:

Your friend tells you they're struggling with their mental health and they find it really difficult to talk about it. They think that 'everyone would be better off' without them. They don't want to go home tonight as their dad's been drinking a lot recently. They're planning on staying at a local building site instead.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN	STAYING SAFE	HELP AND SUPPORT
<p>They may want to harm themselves because of how they're feeling. Saying 'everyone would be better off' without them might mean they're thinking about suicide.</p> <p>Their mental health may get worse if they stay out overnight in an unsafe environment.</p> <p>Going home, or staying at home, may not be safe if their dad has been drinking heavily.</p> <p>Staying at a building site is not safe. There may be hazardous materials or strangers there that could harm them. They may also be at risk of environmental factors such as the cold, wind and rain.</p> <p>Adults who have a duty to keep your friend safe don't know where they are or who they're staying with, and may have to report them missing.</p>	<p>Speak with a trusted adult (for example a teacher, youth worker, another family member or family friend) about things at home and how they're feeling.</p> <p>Stay with a trusted friend or family member so they have a somewhere safe to be overnight.</p> <p>If they decide to go home, call the police on 999 if they feel in immediate danger.</p> <p>Speak with their local social services if they don't have anywhere safe to stay or don't feel able to return home and need somewhere safe to go.</p> <p>Go to a hospital or call emergency services if they're feeling unwell or overwhelmed by their mental health, particularly if they have feelings of wanting to harm themselves.</p> <p>In a worst case scenario where they're unable to find anywhere safe to stay, they should go to a public, well lit, warm space that has trustworthy adults around. For example, a hospital, police station or public library.</p>	<p>Speak with the Runaway Helpline about running away and staying safe if they feel they have to leave home. Get help speaking to social services and explore what their other options may be.</p> <p>Speak with Breathing Space for support around low mood and depression.</p> <p>Speak with a support organisation like ChildLine or the Samaritans about the different issues affecting them and how they're feeling.</p> <p>Speak with someone at school about mental health and counselling services that may be available to them.</p> <p>Download the See Me Scotland 'What's on your mind?' Card to help them explain to people how they're feeling.</p>

SCENARIO 3:

Your friend tells you that they've been having a really bad time at home and their social worker has done nothing to help. They've been speaking to someone online who they now consider their boyfriend. They've offered them a place to stay so they are planning to go there and not tell anyone where they are.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN	STAYING SAFE	HELP AND SUPPORT
<p>They might come to harm if they meet someone from the internet who they don't know, in a place they don't know, without telling anyone where they're going.</p> <p>Who they're going to stay with may not be safe. Meeting someone online can be very dangerous, and people may not be who they say they are. It's rarely a good idea to meet someone from the internet, especially without letting someone know where you're going first.</p> <p>Where they're planning to stay may not be safe. The environment may not be suitable for children and young people, or could be dirty or dangerous.</p> <p>Adults who have a duty to keep your friend safe (parents, social workers or similar) don't know where they are or who they're staying with, and may have to report them missing.</p> <p>If they're considered missing, or reported missing, there may be an on impact on future decisions around their care and living arrangements.</p>	<p>Speak with a trusted adult (for example a teacher, youth worker, another family member or family friend) about things at home and how they're feeling.</p> <p>Stay with a trusted friend or family member so they have a somewhere safe to be overnight.</p> <p>Don't meet the person who's offered them a place to stay. They may not be who they say they are, and may be dangerous or want to harm your friend.</p> <p>Stay at home if it feels safe and speak with their social worker to emphasise how unhappy they are at home.</p> <p>Speak with their social worker or social services team if they feel unable to stay at home and need somewhere safe to go.</p> <p>In a worst case scenario where they're unable to find anywhere safe to stay, they should go to a public, well lit, warm space that has trustworthy adults around. For example, a hospital, police station or public library.</p>	<p>Speak with the Runaway Helpline about wanting to go missing, staying safe and what their options may be. Get support to speak with their social worker and explain their situation.</p> <p>Speak with Who Cares? Scotland about their situation at home, getting their voice heard, and having independent support to have a say in their care arrangements or where they live.</p> <p>Visit CSETheSigns online to learn more about healthy relationships and sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Speak with a support organisation like ChildLine or the Samaritans about the different issues affecting them and how they're feeling.</p>

SCENARIO 4:

Your friend tells you that they've been kicked out of home after arguing with their mum. They haven't been attending school and say that they're going away this weekend but won't tell you where they're going. They tell you that you don't need to worry about them as they've got people taking care of them.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN	STAYING SAFE	HELP AND SUPPORT
<p>Who they're staying with may not be safe. If your friend doesn't feel able to share who they're staying with, they may not be safe people to stay with. When someone wants a relationship to be kept a secret it may mean it's unhealthy or inappropriate.</p> <p>If no one knows where they're going they could end up in a dangerous environment or find it hard to get help. Your friend may be travelling and if no one knows where they're going</p> <p>Where they're staying may not be safe. For example; the environment may be dirty or dangerous.</p> <p>Missing school may mean they fall behind on their education.</p> <p>Adults who have a duty to keep your friend safe don't know where they are or who they're staying with, and may have to report them missing.</p>	<p>Speak with a trusted adult (for example a teacher, youth worker, another family member, family friend) about being kicked out and being away from home.</p> <p>Stay with a trusted friend or family member so they have a somewhere safe to go instead of going away at the weekend.</p> <p>Speak with their local social services if they don't have anywhere safe to stay or don't feel able to return home and need somewhere safe to go.</p> <p>In a worst case scenario where they're unable to find anywhere safe to stay, they should go to a public, well lit, warm space that has trustworthy adults around. For example, a hospital, police station or public library.</p> <p>If they insist on going away with these people, they should let someone know where they're going so someone can get them help in an emergency.</p>	<p>Speak with the Runaway Helpline about being kicked out and away from home. Find out what their options may be and how to stay safe. Get support to speak with someone and explain their situation.</p> <p>Speak with a support organisation like ChildLine or the Samaritans about the different issues affecting them and how they're feeling.</p>

Mix and Match Advice (20-30 minutes)



Summary:

During this activity, participants will consider different situations that may mean their friend runs away or goes missing. They will identify the 'best' and 'worst' advice to support their friend, then discuss why they chose these options among the group.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to identify the **'best'** and **'worst'** advice that they can give to a friend when they are running away or missing.
- Participants will have increased understanding of actions someone can take to promote their safety if they're running away or missing.

Preparation:

- Read through the situations on page 19 and select 4-6 situations to go through with the group.
- Decide whether participants will work individually or in pairs and print out enough 'Best' and 'Worst' Advice sheets (page 20). Ask participants to cut out the advice options before starting.
- Read through the 'Advice Breakdown' (pages 21-22) and take into account the advice that can be the 'best' and the 'worst' depending on the situation.



Running the Activity:

Read a situation you have chosen and ask the individuals or pairs to:

- Identify the 3 'best' pieces of advice they could give their friend: this advice should promote safety and encourage their friend to avoid unnecessary danger or risks.
- Identify the 3 'worst' pieces of advice they could give their friend: this advice may make them more likely to be harmed or put them in a worse position to get help if they need it.

Once participants have identified the best and worst advice, ask them to share the options they have chosen. Encourage discussion when there are differences in the advice chosen by participants and praise sensible answers that are given. Use the 'Advice Breakdown' (pages 21-22) to support your understanding of the 'best' and 'worst' advice and acknowledge that some of the 'best' advice may not work in all situations.

Repeat this process for each situation you have chosen.

Situations:

1	Your friend is 2 hours late for their curfew. They've got a lot of missed calls from different numbers and think they've been reported missing to the police.
2	Your friend has been talking about running away. They tell you they've got a bag with them and plan to leave after school to stay with someone they met online.
3	Your friend is out late at night and has badly injured themselves. Their parents don't know where they are or who they've been out with.
4	Your friend has been partying a lot recently. They're staying out all night and acting differently. They've stopped attending school.
5	Your friend has been kicked out of their home and its 11pm. No buses are running and they don't have any money.
6	Your friend had a huge argument with their mum who just hit them. They're locked in their room and are scared of staying where they are.
7	Your friend has been having lots of arguments with their foster carer. They've been travelling to see their family regularly but aren't allowed to have contact with them.
8	Your friend tells you that their family plan to take them abroad to get married. They don't want to go and are planning to run away.
9	Your friend left home earlier after a falling out with their brother. It's getting cold and they're getting worried text messages from their mum.
10	Your friend has been moved to a new home. They're really missing their friends and have asked to come back and stay with you, but they don't want you to tell anyone.

The 'Best' and 'Worst' Advice



Speak to a teacher or someone at school	Speak to a support organisation or helpline (e.g. Runaway Helpline or ChildLine)	Stay somewhere public and well lit
Stay at another family members house	Plan where to go if you leave	Call the police or emergency services for immediate help
Speak to a friend	Report a crime (e.g. the police on 101 or anonymously to Fearless)	Leave your house
Speak to someone you've met on the street	Speak to an adult you trust (e.g. a friends parent/carer or a youth worker)	Stay at your friend's house
Make sure you have your phone on and charged	Stay with someone you've spoken with online	Don't tell anyone where you're going
Go to a hospital	Contact someone and let them know where you are	Speak to a social worker
Speak to a family member (e.g. an aunt or grandparent)	Go back to your house	Make sure you've got warm clothes, food, water and medications
Stay somewhere quiet and out of the way	Tell someone where you're going	Speak to your parent or carer
Speak to social services about your options	Stay with someone who's offered you a bed for the night	Turn off your phone

Advice Breakdown

'BEST' ADVICE

Advice that promotes safety

- Speak to a teacher or someone at school
- Speak to an adult you trust (e.g. a friend's parent/carer or a youth worker)
- Speak to a social worker
- Speak to social services about your options
- Speak to a support organisation or helpline (e.g. Runaway Helpline or ChildLine)
- Plan where to go if you leave
- Contact someone and let them know where you are
- Tell someone where you're going
- Make sure you have your phone on and charged
- Make sure you've got warm clothes, food, water and medications
- Speak to a friend
- Stay at your friend's house
- Stay at another family member's house
- Call the emergency services
- Go to a hospital



'WORST' ADVICE

Advice that may increase risk

- Stay with someone you've spoken with online
- Speak to someone you've met on the street
- Stay with someone who's offered you a bed for the night
- Stay somewhere quiet and out of the way
- Don't tell anyone where you're going
- Turn off your phone





Advice that can be the 'best' and the 'worst' depending on the situation

- Speak to your parent or carer – when a young person has a positive relationship with their parent or carer, this can be a great place to start. However, if a young person is experiencing trouble in their home life, or has a difficult relationship with this person, they may find it difficult to have a safe or supportive conversation.
- Speak to a family member (e.g. an aunt or grandparent) – similar to the advice above – a young person seeking advice from a family member they

have a positive relationship with may find great support, however, if this relationship has challenges it may be unhelpful in making them safer.

- Go back to your house/Leave your house – often a young person's home is a safe place for them to be and returning can be considered 'safe' advice. However, this is not case for all young people. If a young person feels unsafe or at risk in their home it may be best for them to leave so they do not come to harm.



REMEMBER:

Participants will identify the 'best' and 'worst' advice to support their friend, then discuss why they chose these options among the group.



Circles of Support (20-30 minutes)

Summary:

This activity can be used to help participants identify safe people within their network/circle who may then be able to support them if they're considering running away or going missing, or if they're experiencing any other difficulties in their life. The people who they identify, and who are safe people to be associated with, may also be able to support them if they feel they have to run away or go missing.



This activity is particularly suitable for participants who are at high risk of running away or being missing, or groups that are specifically being supported around running away or being missing. While it can be used in a large group, or class setting, where possible **it is best to conduct in a small group, or on a one to one basis** so you can thoroughly and sensitively explore a participant's circumstances.

Professionals should gain greater understanding of a participant's support network and who else may be able to support them. You will also hopefully be able to identify positive people in their life and any additional risks that may be present the support network (e.g. unhealthy or inappropriate relationships).

Tips for professionals:

- Working with participants to identify their support circles should be handled sensitively. Different experiences may mean participants have different kinds of people in their support circles. For example, some may have social workers who support them or arrangements in place that mean they do not have contact with their birth parents.
- Where possible, have an understanding of a participant's circumstances before completing the activity so you can accurately identify their support circles. Explore a participant's support circle gently by asking open questions.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will identify their support network and identify others who may be able to support them in future.
- Participants will feel better able to widen and access their circles of support.

Preparation:

- Make sure participants have pen and paper.



Running the Activity:

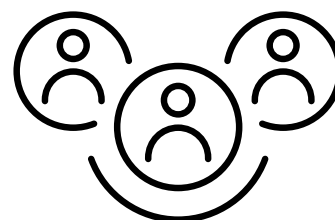
Ask each participant to **write their name in the centre of a page and to circle it.**

Around their name, ask them to **identify and add the names of their 'inner circle'** close to their circled name.

A participant's inner circle consists of people who already know a lot about them and have a good understanding of their life and experiences. Examples may include: close friends, parents, extended family members, social workers, youth workers, boyfriends/girlfriends etc. Once the participants have identified these people, ask them to circle around the names they have added.

Next, ask participants to **identify and add the names of their 'outer circle'** – these are likely to be people who they consider friends, or those who know some things about them, but not everything. Examples may include: friends, parents, teachers, extended family members, grandparents, youth workers, a friend's parent etc. Once the participants have identified these people, ask them to circle around the names they have added.

Finally, ask the participants to **identify and add the names or identities of people on the 'periphery'** – these are people who do not know much about them, but often see them. Examples may include: a friend's parent, lunch time school staff, peers at school or clubs they attend, teaching assistants, bus drivers etc.



Once you have identified all the people within a participant's network, look at the circles with them and where appropriate discuss the people in the different groups.

Explore the different kinds of relationships the participants already have and be positive about safe and healthy relationships in their life*¹. See how they would like to extend their circles of support. For example, would they benefit with having more adults aware of their experiences, or would strengthening existing relationships with friends be helpful to them?

Once you have established safe and supportive people, discuss who they feel could be brought into the inner circle in order to increase their support network, and how they may be able to do this. For example, could they arrange a time to speak with an extended family member to catch up and have a conversation with them?

* Please see next page for tips and a safeguarding reminder

Top tips:

Just because a participant identifies someone within their circles, it does not mean they have to share more with them or think about bringing them into their inner circle. Gently explore what the participant would like to do.

If a participant is struggling to identify people within their support network, continue populating the different circles - it's likely that they'll remember more people as they go and they can always be added later.



Safeguarding reminder:



If you have any serious concerns about a person that a participant has identified in their circles, follow your usual safeguarding procedures or speak to your safeguarding lead. Let the participant know that you'll have to speak to someone about your concerns unless it places them at any further risk

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Thank the participants for taking part in the activities and let them know who they can speak to if they have further questions.

A selection of organisations that can support young people with different issues has been compiled at the end of this document (pages 27-30) and you can share these with participants if they'd like additional information.

Support for those running away or going missing:

If a participant has questions specifically related to running away or going missing, they can contact the Runaway Helpline or visit Runaway Helpline Scotland at:

www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/scotland



FREE TO CALL OR TEXT FROM ANY PHONE

 **116 000**

The Runaway Helpline offer free and confidential support for anyone who is thinking about running away, has already run away or if they have been away and come back.

To contact the Runaway Helpline, you can:

- Call or text for free, 24 hours a day on **116000**
- Email **116000@runawayhelpline.org.uk**
- Chat online everyday on Runaway Helpline Scotland between 2.30-9.30pm

To support you, the Runaway Helpline can:

- Listen and talk with you about your situation in a safe and confidential space.
- Help you to consider your options and ways you can stay safe when you're thinking of running away, are away from home, or have been away and come back.
- Support you to talk to someone else who can help you to be safe, by passing a message home to your parent or carer, or helping you speak to someone like a social worker or a police officer.

Organisations for Support

Organisation	Support they can provide	Opening Hours and Information
Runaway Helpline	Free and confidential support if you are thinking about running away, if you've already run away or have been reported missing, or if you have been away and come back. Contact by phone, text, email or 1-2-1 chat and the Runaway Helpline can help you think about your options and staying safe, help you pass a message home, or support you on a 3-way call.	<p>Text or call: 116 000</p> <p>Email: runawayhelpline@116000.org.uk</p> <p>Website: www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/scotland</p> <p>24 hours a day, 365 days a year</p> <p>1-2-1 chat available on their website: www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/scotland</p> <p>2.30-9.30pm, 7 days a week</p>
ChildLine Scotland	Provides a counselling service for children and young people. You can contact ChildLine about anything, anytime, in lots of different ways: phone, send an email, have a 1-2-1 chat, send a message to Ask Sam or post messages to the ChildLine message boards.	<p>Call: 0800 1111</p> <p>Create a 'locker' on their website to 1-2-1 chat, email or use their message boards</p> <p>Website: www.childline.org.uk</p> <p>24 hours a day, 365 days a year</p>
Samaritans	Free and confidential safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. This might include how you look, problems at school or college, how people are treating you, and worries about exams or money.	<p>Call: 116 123</p> <p>Email: jo@samaritans.org</p> <p>Website: www.samaritans.org/</p> <p>24 hours a day, 365 days a year</p> <p>Get support in person at a Samaritans Branch.</p> <p>Find your local branch here: www.samaritans.org/branches/</p>

<p>Barnardo's Scotland</p>	<p>Supports children, young people and their families across Scotland, working with and alongside them to help them thrive and build a better future. They provide the Safer Choices Missing Service for young people to help them identify risk and devise strategies to minimise harm.</p>	<p>Call: 0131 446 7000 Website: https://www.barnardos.org.uk/scotland</p>
<p>SafeCall</p>	<p>Provides a free, confidential telephone service for young people who are affected by gangs and county lines, offering a safe space to talk about experiences and explore options.</p>	<p>Call: 020 8392 5710 Email: safecall@missingpeople.org.uk Website: www.missingpeople.org.uk/safecall Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm</p>
<p>Who Cares? Scotland</p>	<p>Provides support for care experienced people to have their voice heard. Who Cares? Scotland strive to provide advocacy that helps young people feel respected, included, listened to and understood. Offers professional, independent advocacy for care experienced people across most of Scotland's local authorities.</p>	<p>Get advocacy through the online form: www.whocaresscotland.org/get-involved/get-advocacy/</p> <p>Call: 0141 226 4441 Email: hello@whocaresscotland.org Website: www.whocaresscotland.org/ Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm</p>
<p>Breathing Space Scotland</p>	<p>Provides a free, confidential telephone service for anyone aged over 16 who is experiencing low mood and depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to.</p>	<p>Call: 0800 83 85 87 Website: www.breathingspace.scot Monday to Thursday, 6pm to 2am Friday to Monday AM, 6pm to 6am</p>

<p>LGBT Youth Scotland</p>	<p>From questioning your sexual identity, coming out and relationship issues to bullying and sexual health – LGBT Youth Scotland offer support digitally, and provide advice and information about local LGBT services in Scotland on their website.</p>	<p>1-2-1 chat open on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6-8pm. Website: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/</p> <p>Text: 07786 202 370 Email: info@lgbtyouth.org.uk Monday to Friday</p>
<p>CSE The Signs</p>	<p>Get information about relationships, and learn what to look out for if you're worried about sexual exploitation. Find out how to protect yourself from harmful or unhealthy relationships and different ways to access support or report sexual abuse.</p>	<p>Website: www.csethesigns.scot/young-people/</p>
<p>See Me Scotland</p>	<p>Find information and guidance to support you to speak about your mental health. With videos, things to share, information on campaigns, the 'What's on your mind?' card and tips on getting help.</p>	<p>Website: www.seemescotland.org/young-people/information-for-young-people/</p> <p>What's on your mind? Card: www.seemescotland.org/media/8070/whats-on-your-mind-card.pdf</p>
<p>Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)</p>	<p>Whether you're living with a mental health problem or supporting someone who is, SAMH can provides details of local SAMH services, information about mental ill health and signpost you to other services.</p>	<p>Call: 0141 530 1000 Email: enquire@samh.org.uk Website: www.samh.org.uk Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm</p>

<p>Rape Crisis Scotland</p>	<p>Provides a rape crisis helpline and email support for anyone affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives. They can also help put you in touch with local rape crisis centres or other services for ongoing support.</p>	<p>Call: 08088 01 03 02 Email: support@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk 6pm to midnight, 7 days a week Website: https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk</p>
<p>Fearless</p>	<p>Provides non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality, as well as a safe place to give information to us about crime 100% anonymously. You don't have to provide any personal details and no one will know you have sent information.</p>	<p>Call: 080 055 5111 Website: https://www.fearless.org/en Contact form to provide information anonymously: https://www.fearless.org/en/give-info</p>
<p>Victim Support Scotland</p>	<p>Provides information and support for victims of crime. It doesn't matter whether the crime was reported to the police or if the crime took place a long time ago. You can also search for victim support in your area for local help and advice.</p>	<p>Call: 0800 160 1985 Website: www.victimsupport.scot/ Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm</p>
<p>Young Scot</p>	<p>Young Scot is the national information and citizenship organisation for young people aged 11-26 in Scotland. Provides an information line which is a free and confidential, and has information on a range of topics, such as relationships, health and wellbeing, school, work, etc.</p>	<p>Call: 0808 801 0338. Website: www.young.scot/get-informed Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm</p>

 runaway
helpline
call • txt

116 000

free • 24/7 • confidential