

THE BAG
- A FILM
NOT TO BE
AFRAID
OF

*Instructional material and a silent film
by elderly people about elderly people
- for diversity and security*

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL



The film “The bag – a film not to be afraid of” is addressed to elderly people, to all Sweden’s pensioners, native or immigrant. At the same time it is also intended for all of you who meet elderly people regularly in your work or in societies and associations outside work and contribute to communication and cordial relationships.

The film provides a basis for discussion of questions relating to feelings of security and is not a conventional information film.

That is the reason for producing this instructional material, containing advice and hints, questions and case descriptions of real events to stimulate discussion of important and difficult questions such as security, vulnerability to crime, solidarity and democracy.

We hope that the film will arouse a wish for exchange of experience and knowledge to increase understanding of the fact that perceptions may vary according to age, gender and background.

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SECURITY - WHAT IS IT REALLY?



Trust and sincerity are the basis of security. Where we live should be a warm and friendly place where people feel secure, trust each other and listen to each other.

Security is a matter of having good relations with one's fellow-beings of different ages, backgrounds and life experience. Differences between individuals are an asset. Our cities, towns and villages should be places where people go and where we give each other good help and support.

Safety, a warm atmosphere and insecurity are questions frequently raised by elderly people. It is possible to feel secure by being prepared for different situations and by feeling that you have good friends. When we work together to dispel loneliness, we remove a social problem. Security may also mean avoiding fear of crime. And security is knowing where to turn with views or questions and where to obtain help if you have an accident.

If this film can contribute to discussion, a spirit of community and perhaps even greater security for some people, it will have done a great deal.

DIVERSITY - LIVING TOGETHER



It is important to contribute to dialogue in order to increase understanding between people from different lands and cultures.

In recent decades a lot of people have come to Sweden from different countries. Many of them are now pensioners or approaching retirement age. The proportion of elderly people in the population as a whole is steadily growing. There is a great need for information on matters of security.

It is also known that as you get older you often revert to your native language. Suddenly you can no longer make yourself understood. Although you have lived and worked for a long time in Sweden. Discussing elderly people and their security is important in helping to spread knowledge of crime prevention, how to avoid accidents and where to obtain important information, and in creating involvement and combating isolation and loneliness.

It is always wise to learn from the experience of others. What feels secure may differ between women and men. It is never too late to create and cultivate new networks, even across generational boundaries. Sharing this experience itself creates a feeling of security!

THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE THIS FILM - A BRIEF BACKGROUND



The team *Äldre och trygghet* [Elderly People and Security] was formed in the autumn of 2003 as an initiative by the Gothenburg City Pensioners' Council and Gothenburg City Crime Prevention Council – *Tryggare och Mänskligare Göteborg* [A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg].

The breadth of the co-operation is striking. So many people have put in so much over such a long time to enable elderly people to feel more secure. It shows that security is a concern for many people.

THE TEAM INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF

Pensionärernas Riksorganisation (PRO) [National Pensioners' Organization], Polismyndigheten i Västra Götaland [Västra Götaland Police Authority], Regional SIOS Göteborg i Västra Götalandsregionen – samarbetsorgan för etniska organisationer [Co-ordinating Body for Ethnic Organizations in Västra Götaland], Riksförbundet PensionärsGemenskap (RPG) [National Pensioners' Community Association], Senior Göteborg (utvecklingsenhet på stadskansliet) [Senior Gothenburg – administrative services development unit], stadsbyggnadskontoret [city planning department], Svenska Kommunalpensionärernas förbund (SKPF) [Swedish Municipal Pensioners' Association], Sveriges Pensionärsförbund (SPF) [Swedish Pensioners' Association], Sveriges Pensionärers Riksförbund (SPRF) [Swedish Association of Retired Persons], Tryggare och Mänskligare Göteborg [A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg]

Over the years the work of the team has included examination of the concept of “security” as an aspect of ageing and of quality of life. The information folder »Trygga tillsammans« [Secure Together], with

factual material, advice and hints on security for elderly people, has been produced. The team has lectured and taken part in many events and the folder has been widely distributed.

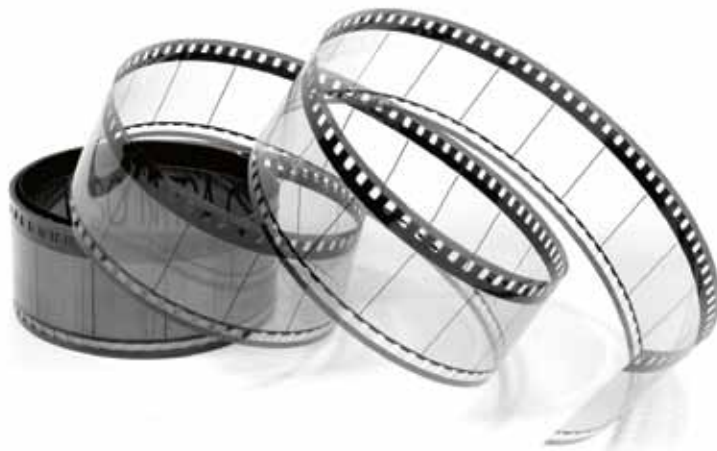
While engaged in this work the team *Äldre och trygghet* took part in the project “Att åldras tillsammans” [Ageing Together], run by SIOS in Västra Götaland, ABF Göteborg [Workers’ Educational Association, Gothenburg], PRO, SPF and Idrotts och föreningsförvaltningen i Göteborgs Stad [Gothenburg City Sports and Associations Committee]. The aim was to create dialogue and joint activities to increase understanding between different cultures. This co-operation has continued since 2005. All this led us to decide to make a film.

Regional SIOS, Gothenburg in Västra Götaland is the owner of the project concerning the film “The Bag – A Film Not To Be Afraid Of”. The organization is a politically and religiously independent and multi-ethnic body for collaboration between different associations. It has 16 ethnic groups with more than 70 associations and 16,000 members. Regional SIOS works for a multicultural, democratic, equal and just society for everybody living in Sweden. The organization works in a number of different areas to facilitate better integration and create opportunities for people to meet, socialize and get to know each other and prevent conflict and prejudice.

The idea underlying the script for the film is a result of broad-based collaboration. There have been many discussions with pensioners in immigrant organizations. The filmmaker Nasrin Pakkho was engaged. She has taken part in many meetings, adapted the ideas and written the script and been responsible for direction and shooting. The actors are amateurs.



WHY A FILM?



We decided to make a film about and with elderly people, both native Swedes and people of immigrant background, who would look together at questions of security in daily life. Together we have identified a need for material that can be used in group discussions.

We decided to make a film because many people in the target group do not have a great command of the Swedish language. Here the silent film is particularly suitable with its clear visual language and short sub-titles for the various scenes.

Naturally we have made the film for all Sweden's pensioners.

We hope that the film can also be of help to those working in care of elderly people. Increasing numbers of those giving and receiving care come from countries other than Sweden and the film seeks to contribute to better communication and understanding between people.

The idea is also that together we can arouse opinion with regard to matters concerning elderly people with a focus on multiculturalism and work on shared problems that are important to both society and the individual.

The film is a basis for exchange of experience and increased understanding of the fact that perceptions may vary with gender and background. The film has a function in both enhancing security and promoting health.

There is also a special gender perspective on matters of security. Security may be felt differently by men and by women. Women generally spend less time out in public places than men. One reason for this may be that women feel less secure. However this does not mean that men feel secure in every setting. Women often find it easier to talk about their feelings and have more people to share them with.

We believe that the film shows that commitment and solidarity create security. Refusal to be afraid of differences also contributes to security.

BEFORE THE FILM

We recommend showing the film to the same group on two separate occasions with a discussion after each showing. This gives everybody more chance to reflect and to find new approaches and ideas. Time for reflection is important. It is desirable to give ample opportunity for discussion in the group and not to rush things.



It may be a good idea to read this text to the group shortly before you watch the film together. It may help the group to put the film in context.

The film that we are about to watch together is entitled “The Bag – A Film Not To Be Afraid Of”. It is a silent film made by elderly people about elderly people. It is about the need for security that everybody feels and how we can help each other feel better.

This is a film that we are allowed to enjoy, perhaps even to find entertaining, despite the fact that it is basically about serious questions, because the film is only a basis for discussion of difficult subjects such as security, equality, exposure to crime, accidents, democracy and human rights.

Hopefully we may be inspired to go on to talk about matters both great and small, both complex social problems and practical issues that we encounter everyday that we can help each other with.

It is a film addressed to all Sweden’s pensioners, immigrant or native. At the same time it is made for all those who at work or in their recreational activities meet elderly people and contribute to togetherness and friendship.

And by all means pass on your questions to friends and acquaintances after this film viewing and discussion, so that more people can join in and suggest ideas.

AFTER THE FILM

TO THINK ABOUT

The film discussion needs to be a positive experience and not to create fear or add to feelings of insecurity among older people. For a discussion leader it is important to make sure that the discussion is constructive and does not reinforce prejudices.

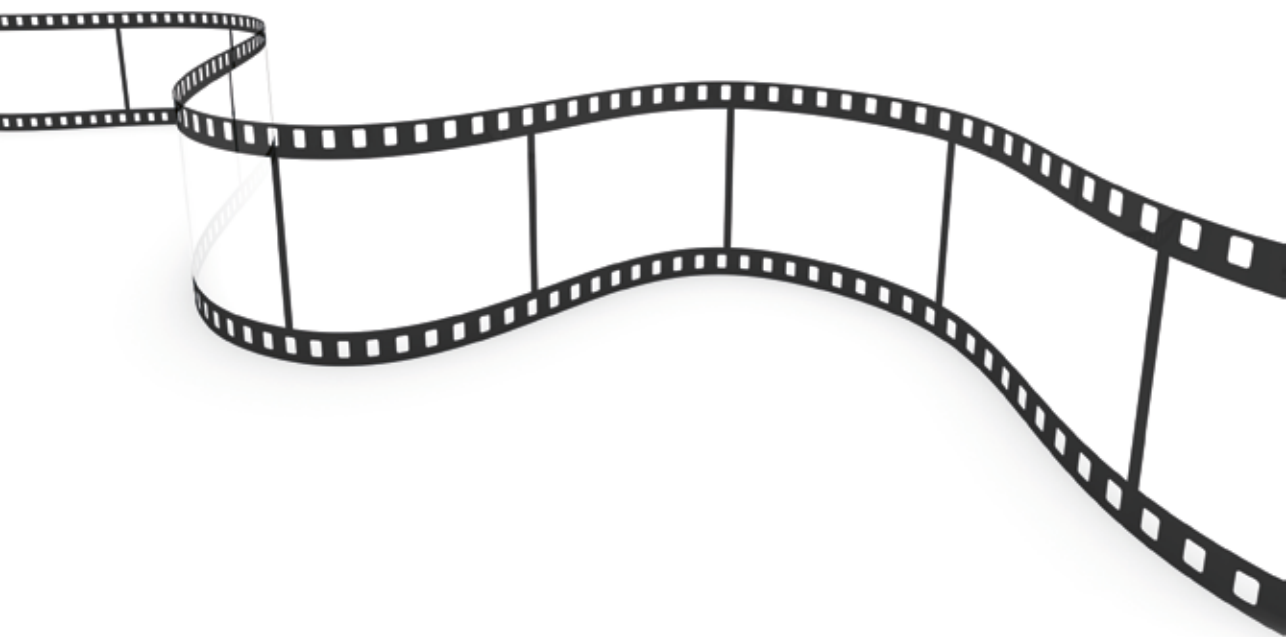


- Is the group that is going to see the film the right size for a discussion where everyone gets a chance to speak? One option may be to divide the participants into smaller groups. If the group is a large one it is important for you as the leader to try and pick up and remember questions that might arise. Note whether there are differences of opinion on significant aspects and if so discuss these differences. Remember that talking about these matters itself increases security.
- Remember that reports of crime and feelings of security and insecurity may be quite different things. It is important to talk about crime and security in a way that does not heighten the feeling of insecurity. Because that's just what security is – a feeling.
- It may be good to produce various statistics before the film meeting, if there is time. Statistics concerning population, residence, surveys of feelings of well-being and security, and accident and crime figures may be interesting in a discussion of security.
- By all means bring up the question of the picture conveyed in the media. What do we know about our immediate surroundings and the world around us from the media? Can it be alarming? Are we sometimes unnecessarily afraid because of prejudice and lack of knowledge? In that case how do things seem and is it possible to do anything about the problem?

- Remember to take a broad approach to the discussions and also to focus on human rights. Belonging to the accepted “norm” in society makes us feel more secure than if we find ourselves outside. We all have a responsibility to identify and be mindful of norms in our everyday life and in ourselves, being aware of who gains and who loses from the prevalence of current norms.
- It is a human right not to suffer discrimination on grounds of age, origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical handicap or anything else. How can we all work to broaden our outlook, fight against prejudice, combat loneliness and ensure that many more people become active participants in society?
- Remember to bring the gender perspective into the discussion. We know that women spend less time in public areas than men. One of the reasons for this may be that women feel more insecure. Men take it more as a matter of course to be active in public areas and feel more secure than women. At the same time men generally lose more of the closeness and the quality of life that personal relationships supply and that develop more readily among women. There is no collected documentation of feelings of security among elderly people, whether women or men. What do we have in common and what divides us?
- How secure, for example, do homosexual or transsexual people feel in a country like Sweden if the norm is that everyone is heterosexual?

- How secure do you feel if you originally come from another country and live and grow old in Sweden?
- What is it like to get older in a society that worships youth and productivity in the labour market. Does it affect how you feel and whether you feel secure?
- The City of Gothenburg and Gothenburg University have together produced a unique study of how those living in fear of crime are treated in the city and what support they receive if they become victims. (*“Evaluation of support to victims of crime in Gothenburg, autumn 2010”*. Available on www.goteborg.se/tryggaremanskligare). The report is a basis for more detailed analysis of how Gothenburg can become better at helping victims of crime. One of the findings of the study is that men and also elderly people of both genders may have difficulty in obtaining the support they need. Think about how support and help for victims of crime, especially older people, can be improved.
- A feeling of belonging has a clear connection with better health, security, trust and quality of life. Discuss how you as a group can continue working to improve feelings of security. Do you want to carry on meeting and doing things together, inviting other people, meeting school pupils, influencing authorities, making outdoor furniture, taking part in night patrols, going to the pictures or taking walks? You can also contact a study association if you want to go on to study a particular area in greater depth.

THE FILM FRAME BY FRAME



ACCIDENTAL FALLS

The home is where most elderly people hurt themselves. This is preventable.

- Falls suffered by elderly people often result from a combination of factors – food, exercise, medication, bodily changes and physical obstacles in the home.
- The body is built for movement. Balance, strength, mobility and coordination can, regardless of age, be improved considerably. Walking every day for 30 minutes is a good start.
- Ordinary medication may increase the risk of falls. Dizziness, drops in blood pressure, fatigue, difficulties with balance – ask your doctor about side-effects.
- Have you ever fallen down at home? What did you do to avoid it happening again?
- Is there a good way of preventing accidents in the home? What do you think?

SAFETY

Be alert when someone you don't know rings at the door.

- Has anyone experienced anything like what happened in the film, with strangers ringing the door bell and you being uncertain whether everything was all right?
- The papers write about the unusual and perhaps the unexpected, things that break the expectations of everyday life. Do you think about that when you read about crime and other awful things that happen – that the things that the media report are rare?
- Have you thought about the fact that papers, radio and TV report the same event many times over, sometimes for several days in a row? In other words there haven't been awful new things happening, but the media just follow up the first event. Can it feel frightening that an unpleasant event is reported over and over again?
- How frightened of letting strangers in do we really need to be? What do you think?

FIRE

Put it out the right way.

- Do you have tips on how to avoid accidentally forgetting to turn the cooker off or put a candle out, or doing anything else that might cause a fire?
- Do you know how to obtain information about what to do if an accident occurs and a fire starts in the home?
- What do you know about what to do in the event of a big fire?
- What fire-preventing equipment is it advisable to have in the home?

FIX-IT SERVICE

Some local authorities help elderly people with a “Fix-It Service”. This can prevent accidents.

- Do you have a “Fix-It Service” in your municipality and what do you think of it? How could the service be further improved?
- If there is no “Fix-It Service” in your municipality, do you wish there was?
- How can you try to persuade the decision-makers to introduce a Fix-It Service?

INFORMATION

*Learn more about how to feel more secure.
Study the information that the community offers.*

- How can voluntary organizations be even better at reaching out to the public?
- What should the municipality do to reach more people with its social information?

EMERGENCY
ILLNESS/ALARM
– PHONE 112

Men and women may show different symptoms when we suddenly become ill and need quick and effective help.

- How can we improve the information and knowledge we spread to the public about what to do in case of sudden illness? Particularly bearing in mind differences between men and women.

FRIENDSHIP

It's never too late to join a club or an association and make new friends.

- What do you do to make contact and perhaps get to know your neighbours?
- It isn't always easy to make contact with Swedes and make new friends. Do you have good examples of how you made new friends in the country you come from?
- How can native Swedes be better at making new Swedes feel welcome?

THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE

Get to know the place where you live.

- Where generally can you meet people if you move to a new area?
- What can be improved?
- What can, for example, the municipality, organizations, industry and commerce do?

NEIGHBOURS

Contact with neighbours increases your security.

- How can neighbours work together to improve the feeling of security?
- Are there enough pleasant places for people to meet where you live?
- Everybody should be able to feel secure, both outdoors and in the home. Be alert and learn how to avoid accidents and becoming a victim of crime.
- Do you know that you can get help from crime victim support?

EXAMPLES

Sometimes it may be easier to discuss an actual event than to talk in generalities.

We think it is easy to start the discussion. But if the audience is still quiet here are some examples to use. The Police Authority and the Association for Victim Support have supplied these events from real life.



Sofia has just drawn her whole pension. She has all the money in her handbag. She wants to have control of her money and doesn't use a credit card. When Sofia took the money out, a man saw her do it. When she has got a little way from the bank he rushes up, grabs Sofia's bag and pushes her over so she falls down.

Sofia is extremely upset. When the police come they tell her that there is an Association for Victim Support. Sofia gets in touch with the Association and makes an appointment. When she gets there she tells them what happened, cries a lot and does not know how she is going to manage.

They ask Sofia if she has told her children about it, but she hasn't, because she doesn't want to burden them with it. At the same time it emerges that Sofia feels ashamed and guilty about having gone around carrying all her money and that she hasn't dared tell her children.

After the interview Sofia feels that it would still feel good to be able to tell her children what has happened. They support their mother and she is able to go and stay with them for a little while after the incident. Contact with the Association for Victim Support continues and Sofia says that she doesn't feel her real self. She has started to forget things and can start crying about nothing. All sorts of old memories come up again and she is given the opportunity to talk through them at the Association. Slowly but surely Sofia becomes her old self and feels strong enough to cope with life for herself again.

Sofia contacted her insurance company and received SEK 2,500:- from them for the stolen money, which is the maximum amount you can get for lost/stolen cash. She also received SEK 5,000:- in damages for the offence committed against her in the form of the attack and the push.

Samir is 85 years old and he has just taken out money from a cash machine at the shopping centre near where he lives. He hasn't even had time to put the money in his wallet when a youth comes rushing up and snatches it out of his hand.

Samir is in shock. He is helped to get home. The police manage to catch his assailant and there will be court proceedings. Samir phones the Association for Victim Support for help in calculating the claim for compensation. He finds out then that it is also possible to apply for compensation for insult to the person because of the nature of the offence.



Ritva is aged 73 and suffers from several illnesses, making it hard for her to get out alone. One night she hears someone trying to break into her flat. She phones the police, who don't manage to catch the culprit.

This experience affected Ritva so much that she didn't dare go to sleep at night. She phoned the Association for Victim Support and was given support in the form of a phone call every day for a while. With the aid of the Association her landlord was contacted and helped to fit a security door for her. As a result her anxiety gradually subsided and Ritva was able to start sleeping again. She had to pay for the door herself, but it was worth it, says Ritva.

Karl, who is 90 years old, says that he kept his wallet in his jacket hanging in the hall. The door to the house has not been locked during the evening and somebody has probably nipped into the hall and taken the wallet while Karl was sitting in another room in his terrace house watching TV. Karl hasn't heard or seen anything that can be connected with the crime, but on the other hand Karl is hard of hearing. Karl lost his wallet, which contained his driving licence, Visa card and another credit card, as well as SEK 2,500:- in cash.



COMMENTS AND ADVICE FROM THE POLICE

A classic type of theft that can happen to young and old alike. It isn't classed as burglary because the outer door was unlocked; normal necessary precautions haven't been taken, which may make it difficult to obtain compensation from an insurance company.

- Always lock the outside door, especially if you are in a room further inside, or upstairs, in the cellar, in the back garden of the house or similar.
- Don't keep a wallet easily accessible in the hall.
- Don't keep so much cash and several cards in the wallet at the same time.

It is a good idea to have phone numbers handy of banks, petrol stations, or other credit institutions or blocking services where the cards can be blocked. If it is not obvious that the offence has been just been committed and that the perpetrator is still nearby, it is important to block the card as quickly as possible, even before reporting to the police. If the perpetrator is nearby phone 112 and describe the event and the suspected person.

Märta, 74, came home after buying food at the supermarket. At the outside door Märta met two women that she had seen in the shop. They were polite and held the door open for Märta when she went inside towards the stairs. After a while there was a ring at Märta's door and the two women who had helped her in earlier said that they were selling cloth to her neighbour, who wasn't at home just then. They asked to borrow a pen and paper to write to a note to the neighbour. They went into the kitchen with Märta and one sat down and started writing while the other disappeared. Märta uses a walking frame so it was hard for her to keep an eye on where the other woman went in the flat. When the note had been written the two women left. Soon afterwards Märta discovered that the jewellery that she kept in her bedroom was missing. Märta lost a gold necklace, a gold bracelet, three pairs of gold earrings and a pearl necklace.



COMMENTS AND ADVICE FROM THE POLICE

A kind of crime where the victim is usually an elderly and/or physically handicapped person. Taking advantage of Märta's age and physical infirmity they trick their way in and carry out the theft with one of them distracting Märta while the other searches the home. Märta was probably picked out as the victim while they were still in the shop. Once into the home it is common for the thieves to make sure the victim is in the kitchen or another room with their back to the outside door.

- Always lock the door and be extremely careful about whom you let in, even if they have been polite and helpful before.
- Another way of tricking their way into the home is by saying in an authoritative manner that they come from the landlord, the police, the home help service etc. They say that they have business in the home, for example checking that the water flows from the taps as it should or that the radiators are warm. These people should be able to identify themselves. If it is a tradesman sent by the landlord, prior notice should have been given.
- A third way is for the person trying to get into the home to say, quite insistently, that he or she wants to sell something. It may be cloth, pictures, roses or something like that.

Cont. on next page

- Those committing such crimes may be very inventive and the victims are not chosen at random.
- Be attentive about people around you. Don't be afraid to ask who they are if they want to come into your home. Ask for identification.
- If they want to borrow paper and a pen, shut and lock the door with the visitors outside before you fetch the paper and pen.

If you have had things stolen in this way, try to remember what the visitors looked like and how they talked and notify the police as soon as possible. Don't keep jewellery, money and other theft-prone items visible and easily accessible in your home.



Ángeles, 73, was shopping at the supermarket. Just inside the door of the shop she took her shopping list out of her wallet. She put the wallet back into her handbag, which she put in her trolley. *Ángeles* bought everything on the list but when she got to the checkout she couldn't find her wallet.

Ángeles felt very embarrassed and upset when all the goods had gone through the checkout and the queue behind her was getting longer while she searched for her wallet. *Ángeles* hadn't noticed whether anybody had been around her handbag during the relevant time. The shop has surveillance cameras. *Ángeles* lost her red leather wallet, her driving licence, her ICA card, her Statoil card, her Ikea card, bus and tram card and also SEK 3,000:- in cash.



COMMENTS AND ADVICE FROM THE POLICE

A classic pickpocket theft where victims can be of any age but are usually people who keep their wallet in a bag in their shopping trolley, a basket on a walking frame or similar.

- Use a credit card so you don't have to carry a lot of cash.
- Have your shopping list, glasses or similar ready so you don't need to reveal your wallet and where you keep it.
- Keep an eye on your wallet and your handbag. If you've put it in a customer's trolley it is easy to turn your back when picking items out of a freezer, for example, or from a high or low shelf. The thieves may also try to distract you in some way, with questions, by dropping something just in front of you or by taking your attention away from your bag by some other means.

Elin, 88, was out for a walk one day when she caught sight of a youth standing at a street corner, who seemed almost to be “hiding”. Something about his behaviour made Elin notice him. She carried on and went past him but a little later he ran and caught up with Elin and ran past her and stopped a little further along the street. The youth looked round a few times and looked tense, Elin thought. When she passed the youth the second time he snatched Elin’s bag, which she was carrying in her left hand. The violent jerk was painful and Elin screamed, but in vain. Elin lost her handbag, which contained ID card, credit card, the key to her home and SEK 200:- in cash.

A man that Elin met shortly afterwards reacted and chased the youth but couldn’t catch up with him. Instead the alarm was raised and the police were called to the scene and Elin was able to give a good description of the youth.



COMMENTS AND ADVICE FROM THE POLICE

Bags may be snatched from both elderly people and younger ones. More and more young people are becoming victims but what is usually stolen in those cases is expensive mobile phones and portable computers that are snatched when being used in a public place.

- Be aware of your surroundings, make a habit of noticing people’s appearances.
- Use a shoulder strap bag slung across the body and turn it away from the street and in towards the wall of the building where it is less easy to run or cycle past and snatch the bag while doing so.
- Don’t keep ID information and keys in the same bag. It is a good idea to carry keys in the jacket pocket instead. A wallet can also be kept in an inside pocket.
- Block cards and change locks before the culprit has time to use them.
- Ring the police.

Practise noticing people’s appearances. It makes it easier to describe people. The police can spread the description faster, which may accelerate an arrest. There are also people who won’t attack the victim if they feel that they have been seen. Nowadays both men’s and women’s clothes have inside pockets. The wallet can be kept there. If you are attacked it is better to let go of the bag to avoid yourself being injured.

FINALLY

We hope that this information will inspire discussion after showing the film. You can have the case descriptions ready to give food for conversation. But we believe that people at the meeting will have many reflections and viewpoints on complex questions of democracy and perceived security, as well as more everyday hints on how to reduce the risk of accidents and fractures. A balanced conversation always contributes to solidarity and creates security!

We wish you every success!

The instructional material is also available in English. The film is available in twelve languages on the same disc – Swedish, Finnish, Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Polish, Spanish, Somali, English, Greek, Italian and SCB (Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian).

With questions or to order, please contact:

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