



Worksheet 3.1:

Dear Bronagh

You are Bronagh's friend and are horrified at the abuse she has endured. You decide to drop a note in her locker to try to make her smile and to support her. In the message you should give her advice on who could offer help. Feel free to draw a picture if you think this would be more effective.

A NOTE FROM...





EXTRACT

ACTIVITY 2:

Extract from *Asking For It* by Louise O'Neill

When an 18-year-old girl is raped by members of the local football team, her community turns on her. Pictures of the boys violating the victim, Emma, are shared all over social media and yet the community justifies their footballing heroes' behaviour by blaming Emma for being drunk, for wearing provocative clothes, for "asking for it". This extract from the book is an opinion piece that appears in the local newspaper. After reading the extract, consider the questions that follow.

I thumb through the paper (a photo of Bernadette and Sheila at a charity event – where was Mam?), a drizzle of olive oil turning the paper transparent in the middle of the page, stopping when I find what I'm looking for. 'As many of my loyal readers will know,' Veronica Horan writes, 'I have been writing about the degradation of Ireland's ethical value system for some time now. Spoiled by indulgent parenting during the Celtic Tiger years, the youth of today show no sense of community spirit or civic duty. Nowhere is this more clear than in our young women. You can see them on a Saturday night, falling over in their high-heeled shoes, skirts worn so short that you can see their knickers. That is if they deign to wear underwear. You can spout all the nonsense you like about equal rights, but the truth is – women have to take responsibility for themselves and their own safety. If they are going to insist on wearing such revealing clothes, if they are going to insist on getting so drunk that they can barely stand, then they must be prepared to bear the consequences. The so-called "Ballinatoon Girl" should ask a few questions of herself. Did anyone force her to drink so much? Did anyone force her to take illegal drugs, as it has been alleged she did? No. And yet she is asking us to place the blame upon four young men. These youngsters have continued to protest their innocence. And I believe them. I've never experienced anything like it before. I have watched as their lives have fallen apart, I have watched the effects this heinous accusation has had on their families. The mother of one of the men, vulnerable after the death of a son many years ago, is reported to be suffering from a nervous breakdown. Has the Ballinatoon Girl given any thought to this poor woman and her emotional well-being? I think not. I doubt that she cares that as a result of her actions our community is being torn apart at its very foundations.'

Q. How might Emma feel, having read this article?

Q. Why do you think people blame victims for the crime that has been committed against them?

Q. Explain how the extract is an example of victim blaming.

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