

Use Your Brain Not Your Fists

Promoting Positive Social
Behaviour Workbook

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma, Youth Work Ireland North Connaught and Leitrim County Council want to thank the Dolan and the Grogan families. They have opened their hearts and homes to us which has allowed us to produce our video and which has led to the production of this workbook. Without both families, this piece of work would not be possible.

The publication of this workbook was supported through funding from Healthy Ireland – Healthy Leitrim in partnership with Leitrim Community Development Committee.

Also, a sincere thanks to members of An Garda Síochána for all their support, advice and sharing of resources in compiling this workbook.

The piloting of this workbook was a collaborative process with Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma Members, Fiona Taylor - Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma Project Co-ordinator, students from Mohill Community College, Drumshanbo Vocational School and young people attending Youth Work Ireland North Connaught, Garda Youth Diversion Projects in Sligo and Mayo.

**This educational workbook is dedicated to Shane Grogan
and the memory of Andrew Dolan.**

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Foreword

In recent years the issue of random acts of violence has become more commonplace in rural and urban areas in Ireland. At the 2017 Annual General Meeting of Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma, over one hundred young people from Leitrim attended and identified issues that were impacting young people from their community. At this event young people in Leitrim discussed the all too prevalent instances of random acts of violence. Young people felt that there was not enough education and awareness about the devastating effects that a random act of violence can have on the victim, the perpetrator and the community.

The young people identified that an educational video to support An Garda Síochána's national campaign entitled "Use Your Brain Not Your Fists" should be produced to highlight the effects a random act of violence can have on a young person's life. Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma members met with Rosie Dolan, whose son Andrew was killed in an unprovoked attack on a night out. The Grogan family also became involved as their son Shane was injured in an unprovoked assault in 2012. The Dolan and Grogan families in conjunction with Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma worked with Loch Bo Film Production to make our thought-provoking video. This video received national coverage and won a national Pride of Place Award in the Community and Well Being Category.

Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma has been campaigning to highlight the devastating effects that a random act of violence can have on both the victim and the perpetrator. To enhance the use of this video while continuing to raise awareness of the important messages throughout, Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma members agreed that an educational workbook should be produced.

This workbook is an initiative by young people for young people, reflecting the life shattering consequences that a senseless random act of violence can have on people's lives. Our video and workbook are a movement for change in behaviour and we should never doubt that a small number of thoughtful and committed people can help change our society.

Fiona Taylor

Comhairle na nÓg Liatroma Co-ordinator

INTRODUCTION

In our everyday life, we deal with minor conflicts. These can be frustrating and can cause us emotional distress. However, most of the time we can resolve these conflicts in an appropriate way. In other situations, conflicts can become more serious and how we and others respond can be very different. Throughout this workbook we will explore some of the consequences of assault for victims and their families and possible consequences for perpetrators of an offence. We explore real life stories and scenarios and our responses to them. Lastly, we look at how we can make a personal safety plan and identify support services that can be accessed by individuals.

Aim of the workbook:

To provide young people and those who work with them, a youth-friendly, interactive and engaging resource to build awareness of positive social behaviour and to avoid engaging in random acts of violence, in conjunction with the **“Use Your Brain Not Your Fists”** video.

This educational workbook has been designed to accompany the “Use Your Brain Not Your Fists” video. This can be viewed from the following link:
<https://youtu.be/lmtWJbgoVBE>

Objectives:

Educate young people on the consequences of a random act of violence.

Reduce the level of random acts of violence through awareness and education.

Empower young people to become peer educators.

FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

This workbook has been designed to be used with young people in schools and youth organisations.

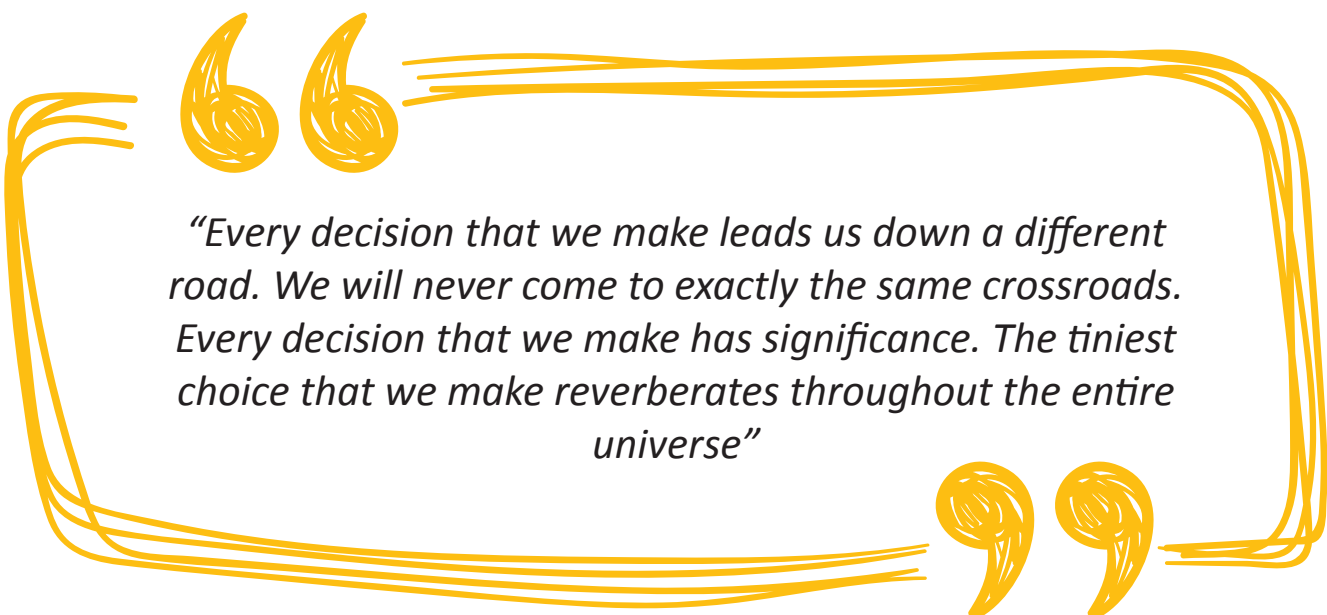
The resource provides information on legislation and statistics surrounding assault offences in Ireland.

We look at real life stories of victims and their families who have been impacted by a random act of violence.

We have compiled some key safety information, if a person is involved or is witness to a random act of violence.

There is also an opportunity for young people to explore their thoughts and feelings in real life scenarios.

These scenario/role play activities can be used by young people to create discussion but also to explore what would be the most appropriate and safe response to that situation.



“Every decision that we make leads us down a different road. We will never come to exactly the same crossroads. Every decision that we make has significance. The tiniest choice that we make reverberates throughout the entire universe”

How to use the workbook?

The person using this resource should familiarise themselves with the workbook and the video resource before starting the programme with a group. Any further information on legislation and statistics or indeed the “**Use Your Brain Not Your Fists**” national campaign can be found at www.garda.ie.



Time: 40 minutes - Depending on the number of participants and level of discussion, the exercises in this workbook can be delivered over several sessions to allow time to reflect on the scenarios and responses.



Materials Needed: Sticky notes, paper, pens, flip chart paper, old newspapers and a photocopy of worksheets.



Facilitator Note: When you see this symbol, this indicates an exercise you can deliver as facilitator, which promotes discussion of the topic.



Please be mindful that this is a sensitive topic which may cause distress, or that a young person may know someone who has been a victim of a random act of violence. There is a list of supportive services at the end of this workbook if any participant requires further support.

“Use Your Brain Not Your Fists” Video Resource

After watching the video, use the following questions to promote discussion with the group:

- What are your immediate thoughts and feelings after watching this video?
- What do you think of Andrew’s story?
- What do you think of Shane’s story?
- After watching the video, what do you think are the consequences of random acts of violence?
- In your opinion, who are the victims of random acts of violence in this video?
- In your opinion, does alcohol/drugs play a part in these offences?
- In the video, many people talk about making the safe choice when confronted by aggression. Can you think of ways you would safely respond in such a situation?



Play the **“Use Your Brain Not Your Fists”** video to introduce this topic with the group. The video is approximately ten minutes in duration and can be viewed from the following link:
<https://youtube/ImtWJbgoVBE>



Access video, blank flip chart paper and markers (if you wish to use for discussion).

WHAT ARE RANDOM ACTS OF VIOLENCE?

“A punch can and does kill”

Rosie Dolan, Mother of Andrew Dolan

Random acts of violence occur when a person is subject to a violent attack at random and for no reason. It is quite often a reckless and thoughtless action, but the severity can have serious consequences for the victim and the perpetrator. You may be found guilty of assault if you intentionally or recklessly engage in behaviour which causes an impact to another person or threatens to do so.

Random acts of violence are now commonplace in our society. Each day through the media, we see another injury or death caused to a victim by a random act of violence. The effects are life changing as you have seen in our video, Andrew Dolan lost his life and Shane Grogan sustained life changing injuries.



Exercise 1) Using old newspapers, ask participants to go through the paper and cut out headlines relating to assault cases and/or random acts of violence (this activity can promote discussion between facilitator and participants about the prevalence of this issue).



Exercise 2) The fold out poster on page 23 can be used to discuss the reasons why a young person may engage in random acts of violence.

Discussion prompts: *alcohol, anger, drugs, previous conflict etc.*

Exercise 3) Using a blank flip chart sheet ask people to identify the emotions surrounding random acts of violence. Allow the young people time to discuss in small groups and write their ideas on sticky notes and stick onto the sheet.

Discussion prompts: *jealousy, fear, anger etc.*

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE VICTIM?

Death

An assault can lead to a fatality.

Mental Impact

Many victims of assault may be diagnosed with mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.

Brain Injuries

According to Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, ¹ 5% of brain injuries were the result of an unprovoked assault. Brain injuries can impact many functions of the brain including physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural functions.

Employment

Many victims of a life changing injury will not be able to return to their previous employment.

Long Term Injuries

Many victims of assault suffer life-changing injuries such as loss of functioning of limbs, communication difficulties and mental health issues.

Families

They are the hidden victims of assault. In many cases, the families are left behind to grieve the loss of their loved one or they become a full-time carer because of injuries sustained.

Hobbies

Many victims of a life changing injury may not wish to engage in activities that they previously enjoyed. Depending on the severity of the injury sustained, a victim may not be able to take part in previous hobbies.



Discuss this topic with young people and get their opinions. To expand on this discussion, you can ask the young people if they have ever known a victim of a random act of violence.



Be mindful that some young people may have been exposed to violence etc.

REAL-LIFE STORIES

These real-life stories are extracts from Victim Impact Statements provided to An Garda Síochána² by young male victims of assaults. They have been kept anonymous to protect the victims.

“Since the incident I think about the vulnerability of myself, my girlfriend and my family when out socialising or going about daily life. In the weeks that followed the incident I experienced disturbed sleep and anxiety.”

Male, aged 29

“Before the assault I was a happy go lucky guy, but since then I would describe my life as hell. Along with the terrible injuries that kept me in hospital for a long time, I have suffered from depression and paranoia and I still feel angry a lot of the time.”

Male, aged 26

“Towards my friends I seem more easily scared, more anxious and more irritable. That is getting obvious regarding sports: I almost never got booked or red carded before, and it happens to me more often now.”

Male, aged 25



Discuss the real-life stories from actual victim impact statements with participants using the following questions:

1. Discuss the person's feelings?
2. What impact has this random act of violence had on the person, their family and their friends?

SCENARIOS / ROLEPLAYS

Unfortunately, more and more people choose the path of violence to deal with conflict. Many people may not normally behave like this, but various factors may impact their decision making. Here are some of the factors that can make a person use their fists?

They want to show others that they are strong

They think that is the best response to conflict

They are feeling scared

They are under the influence of drugs and/ or alcohol

They are afraid to walk away

Sometimes, we react to a situation without thinking of the consequences. Unfortunately, this reaction may not be the most appropriate or safest choice. If we role play scenarios, it can help us make the safest choice if we were to become a victim or witness a random act of violence. The following role plays are based on real life situations. If you are using this workbook on a one to one basis or as a group activity you can decide how you will use this section. However, in groups you will have the opportunity to role-play each scenario and respond to the questions after this.

By working through each scenario think about the following questions:

My immediate **thoughts**?

How do I **feel**?

How would I **respond** in this situation?

What would be the **safest response** in this situation?

What do you think are the **consequences** for the perpetrator?



The scenarios provided (pages 11 & 12) can be used for discussion **ONLY**. However, if space allows and no harm will occur to any individual, the scenarios can be used to roleplay as a group. Once the scenario is considered (either in groups or individually), the answer sheets (page 10) can be completed by participants.

Question and Answer Sheet

My immediate **thoughts**?

How do I **feel**?

How would I **respond** in this situation?

What would be the **safest response** in this situation?

What do you think are the **consequences** for the perpetrator?

Scenarios



You have just spent the evening in your friend's house playing video games. On your way home you can hear lots of shouting and screaming. You notice two girls are fighting. As you get closer to them you can see blood on one of the girl's head. She falls to the ground, while the other girl continues to punch her.



It's Saturday night. You are hungry and go to your local chipper with your friends. The town is booming. You eat your chips outside the chipper as it's packed. A group of drunken friends think that you are laughing at them, and walk towards you to confront you.



You and your friends go to a teenage disco. Two of your friends have been drinking; they have become aggressive and are trying to start a fight with anyone and everyone.

Scenarios



Your favourite football team is playing away from home. You and your friends travel to the match on the supporters bus. During the match a fight breaks out on the pitch. Players are sent off. The crowd gets involved by chanting nasty comments at the players. On route back to the bus, the rival football supporters try to start a fight with you and your friends.



You are walking home from school alone. While looking at your phone, a group of classmates from the year above take your phone. They start taunting you and calling you names and using your snapchat account. You try to get your phone back, which results in them hitting you and you fall to the ground.



Take time to write your own role play which is relevant to your own life experience and act out or discuss with your classmates.

SAFETY PLAN INFORMATION

Preparation and planning are a key part of staying safe when you are travelling on your own and on nights out.

Transport: If you are going to be travelling on your own, plan your journey.

Timing: Most assaults occur between the hours of 8 pm and 5 am so stay alert when travelling at these times. It is important to let someone else know what time you expect to go out and return home.

Substances: Everyone reacts differently if using alcohol and illicit drugs. You may react differently if you are under the influence of a mood-altering substance. People can have different reactions depending on the substance used so An Garda Síochána advise not to engage with people who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Route: Be mindful of taking short cuts on your journey, particularly through a location you have never been before. So, if you and your friends are arranging a night out, plan your route, avoid travelling on your own and know who to call if you need help.



Discuss the elements of the safety plan and brainstorm if anyone has some other ideas on keeping safe. Using a photocopy of the “Your Safety Plan” (page 15), ask each person in the group to complete their individual plan. An Garda Síochána³ advise that individuals create their own safety plan and keep it in their wallets or handbag for nights out or while travelling away from home.

Caution: Try to avoid walking in dark places, always be cautious of your environments and protect your belongings.

Protecting yourself: Do not engage with people who appear drunk/aggressive, avoiding fights and attacks other people. If you are a victim of an unprovoked/random attack, try to remove yourself from the area as fast as possible or if this is not possible try and protect your head from impact.

Help: An Garda Síochána advise that you try to get you and your friends out of that situation as quickly and painlessly as possible and call for help.



Photocopy of safety plan and pens. You can also download further safety information from www.garda.ie

“The reaction is always your choice”

Joseph N’Do
(Football Coach and former professional player)



YOUR SAFETY PLAN

A. Do I know how to get there?

B. Will I need to travel through potential trouble spots and can I avoid them?

C. Do I need to go alone and do I need to go during the day or night?

D. How am I going to travel (bus/bicycle/train etc.) and how long should the journey take?

E. Do I know anything about the place I am visiting - is it safe and well managed?

IRISH LEGISLATION REGARDING ASSAULT IN IRELAND

Over the course of this workbook, we have watched the “**Use Your Brain Not Your Fists**” video where we have heard Andrew’s and Shane’s story. We have discussed the consequences of random acts of violence on victims and their families.

It is important to now discuss the consequences for the perpetrator of a random act of violence. In this workbook we explore the legislation surrounding the offence termed: Assault. In the Irish Statute Book, Under Non-Fatal Offences Against The Person Act 1997⁴, there are three different categories of assault:

- **Assault**
- **Assault Causing Harm**
- **Assault Causing Serious Harm**

ASSAULT

- A person shall be guilty of the offence of assault who, without lawful excuse, intentionally or recklessly —
 - a. Directly or indirectly applies force to or causes an impact on the body of another, or
 - b. Causes another to believe on reasonable grounds that he or she is likely immediately to be subjected to any such force or impact, without the consent of the other.
- A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding €1,500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.



As facilitator you may decide to use this information to inform your discussions with the group. It will allow a focused examination on the relevant legislation, each category and their consequences.

ASSAULT CAUSING HARM

- A person who assaults another causing him or her harm shall be guilty of an offence. A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable:
 - a) On summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to a fine not exceeding €1,500 or to both, or
 - b) On conviction on indictment to a fine or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years or to both.

ASSAULT CAUSING SERIOUS HARM

- A person who intentionally or recklessly causes serious harm to another shall be guilty of an offence.
- A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable on conviction on indictment to a fine or to imprisonment for life or to both.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PERPETRATOR OF AN OFFENCE?

"The assault wrecked my victim's life but it also wrecked my future."

Prison Sentence

Financial Cost

Social Isolation

Employment: If you are employed, you could lose your job. It can reduce, impede or prevent future employment prospects.

Travel: It may not be possible to visit countries where visas are required as they may not be offered to people with convictions (depending on the severity of the offence and other mitigating factors).

Volunteer opportunities may be limited.

Can have an impact in child custody cases.



As you will have seen in the video, Andrew's mother Rosie Dolan, has stressed the importance of education about the impact of assaults. In this section we are exploring some of the consequences of a conviction of an offence such as Assault. We have provided you with eight possible consequences of a conviction for an offence. Using a blank flip chart sheet, you can take feedback from your group. Allow some time to discuss these consequences and ask the group these questions:

- Can the group identify any other consequences?
- Do the group think these consequences are fair or appropriate?

FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

FACTS ABOUT ASSAULT IN IRELAND



On page 20 you will find some facts about Assault in Ireland which have been supplied by An Garda Síochána. As the facilitator, you can use these statistics to establish participants current knowledge of assault offences. You can photocopy this worksheet (page 20) and cut up each fact and put into a hat. Then ask participants to take one and decide whether it is fact or fiction. Note: They are all facts!

HELPLINES FOR SUPPORT SERVICES



On page 21, we have provided a list of some supports which anyone can access if they need help or advice. You can use this information with your group through discussion of support services and highlighting the importance of asking for help. Some people in the group might want to keep the contact numbers/ websites so it is a good idea to print a copy of this sheet (page 21) and individuals may choose to attach them to their individual safety plan from earlier in the workbook. In addition, if there are other support services in your locality you should explore these with the group and ask people to note the contact details for the service.

REFLECTIVE LEARNING



On page 22, we have provided a blank template that you may wish to photocopy and use to explore the key learning points from the workbook with participants. Encourage participants to complete an individual reflection on their thoughts surrounding the topics covered in the video and the workbook.

FACTS ABOUT ASSAULT IN IRELAND

2017 saw the highest number of assaults since 2008.

In 2017, 75% of assaults were categorised as minor assault offences.

Assaults linked to the night time economy were up 1% between 2016 and 2017.

The peak times for assaults at non-residential locations were in the early hours of Sunday morning.

87% of offenders in an **assault causing harm cases** are male; 53% are males aged between 18 and 34 years.

An Garda Síochána urge assault victims to report the crime, which, according to the CSO may be under-reported by approximately 40%.

An Garda Síochána are seeking to reduce assaults through targeted action

76% of offenders in **minor assaults** are male; 34% are males aged between 18 and 34 years

HELPLINES FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

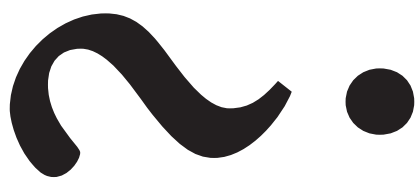
IN AN EMERGENCY	Call 999/112
CHILDLINE	www.childline.ie Call 1800 666 666 or Text 50101
SAMARITANS	www.samaritans.ie Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.ie
TEEN-LINE IRELAND	www.teenline.ie Call 1800 833 634
AWARE	www.aware.ie Call 1800 80 48 48
RAPE CRISIS NETWORK	www.rapecrisishelp.ie Call 1800 778888
Garda Confidential Line	Call 1800 666 111
Crime Victims Helpline	www.crimevictimshelpline.ie Call 116006
Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	www.abiireland.ie Call 01 280 4164

[illegible]

CAN YOU THINK OF REASONS THAT A YOUNG PERSON WOULD RANDOMLY ATTACK
SOMEONE?

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Healthy Leitrim



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government supporting communities



Comhairle um Fhorairt Pobail Áitiúil Liatroma
Leitrim Local Community Development
Committee



Youth Work Ireland
North Connaught



— SPORT IRELAND —



Leitrim
Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



An Roinn Sláinte
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH