The initial idea of the Citizens Theatre's Scratched Love project was to shine a spotlight on young people's personal rights, responsibilities and damaging behaviour in teenage relationships. The two plays Fine and Empty, which were created and performed by Young Co, explore emotional abuse, peer and partner pressure and self-esteem issues from different gender perspectives. We benefitted from useful input from the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme (MVP) in the creation of Fine.

The whole project was designed to give young people more confidence to assess and manage risk, to protect themselves and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible. By engaging with the issues raised in Fine and Empty we hope that young people will gain the confidence to discuss relationships with their peers, guardians and teachers, if appropriate, and in turn aid their own physical, mental and emotional health. This pack is designed to be used by teachers and leaders when looking at these issues with young people.

Scratched Love was funded by the National Lottery's Young Start funding.
Introduction from Young Co member Catriona McNicoll

Fine is a piece very close to my heart, as it was the first time I was able to tell my story of my abusive relationship with my high school boyfriend.

I never had the intention of telling the story until one day with other members of the Citizens Young Company, we discussed the prospect of putting together an educational show. Various ideas were thrown around but nobody brought up the one thing that plagued my teenage years: emotional abuse. This was something I didn’t know existed until years after my relationship ended, when one day I read an article titled, “signs of an emotional abuser” and realised I was reading an article about my own ex-boyfriend.

As soon as I suggested the idea, multiple other women in the room recounted their own experiences of instances where they questioned the lines between normal behaviour and abuse. And it suddenly became clear that what young people desperately needed to be educated on was what to expect from your first relationship and where to draw the line.

I began writing scenes based on my own experiences and workshopped them with the Young Company. And piece by piece, with their help, the play was finally complete. Writing the play and getting to tour it around schools has been the most rewarding experience. Not only have I got the chance to share something that has been a burden of mine for years, but in sharing that experience I might get the chance to help others, which is the most I could ever ask for with this piece.

It’s important to remember that abuse happens in a gradual, destructive cycle. And the only way to help victims is to break that cycle. So, I hope that Fine can be that first step in the process for young people who need reassurance that they are not alone in their experiences. It is possible to move on and live a much happier life, and I’m proud to say that I’m living proof of that.

‘The relationships were so realistic that one of the pupils disclosed to me that the main character reminded her of one of her friends and the relationship she was in. This relationship has now ended, and I believe the discussion she had with her friend about the performance was a major contributing factor to her having the courage to end the relationship.’ (Teacher, St Andrew’s Secondary School, Glasgow)
WHAT CONSTITUTES EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

Definition from the website of relationships counselling service Relate.

A variety of types of behaviour could be classed as emotional abuse. These include:

**Intimidation and threats**
This could be things like shouting, acting aggressively or just generally making you feel scared. This is often done as a way of making a person feel small and stopping them from standing up for themselves.

**Criticism**
This could be things like name calling or making lots of unpleasant or sarcastic comments. This can really lower a person's self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Undermining**
This might include things like dismissing your opinion. It can also involve making you doubt your own opinion by acting as if you’re being oversensitive if you do complain, disputing your version of events or by suddenly being really nice to you after being cruel.

**Being made to feel guilty**
This can range from outright emotional blackmail (threats to kill oneself or lots of emotional outbursts) to sulking all the time or giving you the silent treatment as a way of manipulating you.

**Economic abuse**
This can be withholding money, not involving you in finances or even preventing you from getting a job. This could be done as a way of stopping you from feeling independent and that you’re able to make your own choices.

**Telling you what you can and can’t do**
As the examples above make clear, emotional abuse is generally about control. Sometimes this is explicit. Does your partner tell you when and where you can go out, or even stop you from seeing certain people? Do they try to control how you dress or how you style your hair.


Women’s Aid has a 24-hour helpline (0808 2000 247). They can talk you through any issues and help you figure out what you’d like to do next. They also have an email service: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

The Men’s Advice Line (0808 801 0327) provides the same service for men: [www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)
PLOT SUMMARY OF FINE

Use at any point to help young people relate to the scenes which follow:

A girl in 4th year at secondary school, Jenny, lives at home with her Mum and younger brother Kieran. Jenny is currently going out with a 5th form pupil Jacob. She views their relationship as a positive one and is unaware of how destructive Jacob’s attitude is towards her. Jenny is delighted that she is going out with a 5th former, this in itself is a big deal to her and Jacob can do no wrong in her eyes. Jacob also has another female friend in the 5th year called Sarah. Jacob and Sarah aren’t going out but are very close friends, and to Jenny and the audience the relationship between them is unclear. Sarah and Jenny are, however, on speaking terms. As the play progresses, we are made aware of Jacob’s inappropriate demands on Jenny and the effect this has on her emotionally.

Diagonal Line Questions

Imagine there is an invisible diagonal line from one corner of the room to the next. One end represents Agree and the other Disagree. Make the statements below and ask young people to stand anywhere on the line which best represents their opinion, which you can then explore, without any judgements.

- Friends are better than boyfriends / girlfriends (then ask: Why? How? Should they be? What’s the main difference?)
- A person always knows when they’re being bullied / disrespected (then ask: How do you know? Can you ever be unaware of it? Would other people know?)
- I would always speak up if I saw something happening that I thought was wrong (then ask: What stops you? Why is it hard? What’s the worst that could happen?)

Discuss: What does a good relationship look like?

In pairs write vital ingredients on post it notes. Stick them all on one flipchart page. Read them all out.

Do we agree? Is there anything vital missing?
SCENE FROM FINE

Read aloud

JACOB (to JENNY) Morning Jenny dodger!

JACOB GIVES HER A KISS ON THE CHEEK. HE PLACES HIS ARM AROUND HER SHOULDERS.

JENNY (to audience, whispered) Pet name by the way! (to JACOB) Eh... so what was the thing you wanted to ask me?

JACOB Thing?

JENNY You texted me this morning saying, ‘got something to ask you, see you later’. What’s up?

JACOB Aw right, it was about your phone.

JENNY Yeah? What about it?

JACOB Was something up with it last night?

JENNY Hmm, not that I know of. How, what was it?

JACOB You must’ve not got my text last night, you didn’t reply.

JENNY What text?

JACOB Ehhh, I canny mind, something about meeting tonight.

JENNY Awww no wait, that was me. I feel asleep soz!

JACOB (playfully) Aw aye is that how it is?

JENNY Is that how what is?

JACOB Is that your excuse for ignoring me eh?

JENNY Not ignoring, sleeping! There’s a difference babe.

JACOB If you say so Jen.

JENNY GIVES A NOD WITH A SMUG EXPRESSION ON HER FACE. SHE LOOKS AT JACOB FOR A FEW MOMENTS, HE IS LOOKING EXPECTANTLY AT HER.

JENNY (giggling) What?

JACOB Are you going to say sorry?

JENNY Sorry? Sorry for wit?

JACOB For ignoring me!

JENNY I just told you I was asleep!

JACOB Same hing! Either way I didn’t get a reply.

JENNY (exasperated but playful) Seriously?
JACOB NODS EXPECTANTLY. JENNY TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE AND GIVES AN EXAGGERATED SIGH.

JENNY (to audience) Boys, eh? (to JACOB, jokingly) Alright. I am so very very sorry my dearest and loving boyfriend. I should have kept my tired eyes peeled open for one more bloody text!

JENNY PLAYFULLY ELBOWS HIM IN THE CHEST. HE LOOKS AT HER TRYING NOT TO SMILE, BUT IT CRACKS THROUGH ANYWAY. JACOB PUTS A HAND BEHIND HER HEAD AND PULLS HER IN FOR A KISS.

JACOB You’re forgiven.

KIERAN (under his breath) Ugh, get a room.

Exploring Control

Who controls who in this scene? How does that control happen?

Think about actions / behaviour / what’s said / subtle pressure / emotional manipulation. Point out that control can be ongoing, not a one-off event. Ask:

• According to Relate’s definition, is Jacob’s behaviour emotional abuse?
• Could the power balance be the other way around, ie could the girl be in control?
• Would this power balance (ie a girl controlling a boy) be even harder to recognise and deal with because of stigma?
• Does control like this happen in same sex relationships?

Why is it that Jacob is exerting control over Jenny?

Explore:

• Might he not have control over other areas of his life, such as…?
• If you’re not in control you’re not seen as a ‘man’ – is this true?
• Could he be insecure and think she might leave him?
• Might he have seen other relationships like this – so this behaviour is his ‘normal’?

What effect would this behaviour have on Jenny long term? Playwright Catriona McNicoll talks about ‘manipulation subtly breaking down a person’s courage and self-worth without them realising it’.

SCRATCHED LOVE
JACOB MAKES HIS WAY OVER TO JENNY. JENNY AND JACOB EXCHANGE A HUG AND A KISS BEFORE HE SITS DOWN NEXT TO HER.

JACOB Hey gorgeous.

JENNY Awww, well hello handsome! (to audience, whispering) See that?! (to JACOB, playfully) So Sarah was just telling me some mega cute things you said about me.

JACOB Yeah, like what?

JENNY About how much you love me and stuff. Didn't know you could be so soppy!

JACOB (laughing) Well, I can be nice!

JENNY (jokingly) Yeah? Well maybe next time you'll let me see this soppy side! She even said you were talking to her about the flowers you bought me for our anniversary.

JACOB Aye of course she would bring that up, trying to get credit for it!

JENNY Wit? Jacob what are you on about?

JACOB Well, it was her idea after all.

BEAT. JENNY LOOKS TO THE AUDIENCE, PUZZLED. SHE TURNS BACK TO JACOB.

JENNY ...What?

JACOB Sarah was the one who suggested the roses.

JENNY Wait so... you didn't come up with the flowers idea by yourself?

JACOB Well naw obviously not!

JENNY (scoffing) How "obviously not"?

JACOB Cause I wasn't planning on buying you anything!

JENNY Why's that?

JACOB I took you out for dinner, that should've been enough!

JENNY Aye the dinner that a half paid for!

JACOB Aye so why don't you half the attitude then! God's sake, so ungrateful. I tried to do a nice thing buying you them flowers.

JENNY (to audience) Think he means Sarah tried.

JACOB Is that attitude I hear?

JENNY (shyly) Nope.
JACOB Good.

PAUSE. JACOB TAKES OUT HIS PHONE AND STARTS BROWSING. JENNY LOOKS UNCOMFORTABLE.

JENNY (sheepishly) So… are you gonnae come over later? My mum says it’s cool.

JACOB Canny tonight. Told Sarah I’d go out with her to walk her dog.

JENNY Can she no walk it herself?

JACOB Obvs she can Jen, but she always moans about getting bored doing it by herself.

BEAT. JENNY LOOKS SAD.

JENNY You’ve… never gone a walk with… me though.

JACOB Well you’ve never asked!

JENNY I would’ve thought you’d find that kinda thing stupid. I’ve probably asked you at some point-

JACOB See that Alana lassie in your year?

JENNY LOOKS TO THE AUDIENCE WITH AN EYEBROW RAISED, SHE TURNS BACK TO JACOB.

JENNY …Ayyeee?

JACOB The arse on that girl man! Have you looked at it recently? Unbelievable.

JACOB HOLDS UP HIS PHONE TO JENNY’S FACE TO SHOW HER A PICTURE OF ALANA.

JENNY Is that what you’ve been looking at this whole time?

JACOB PULLS HIS PHONE BACK, A SMIRK ON HIS FACE. JENNY SITS WITH A STERN AND CONFUSED EXPRESSION.

JENNY (to audience) Is he serious? (to JACOB, louder) Are you serious?! 

JACOB (defensively) What?

JENNY You canny just say that Jacob! For fuck’s sake who dae ye think I am? One of your pals?

JACOB STANDS UP IN SURPRISE.

JACOB C’mon I didn’t say anything that bad, was just being honest! It’s no lie that she has got a massive-

JENNY Jacob!

BEAT. JENNY STARES AT THE GROUND AS SHE SWINGS HER LEGS BACK AND FORTH.

JENNY (sullenly) How do you think that makes me feel?

JACOB SITS BACK DOWN, HE TILTS HIS HEAD DOWN TO SEE HER FACE. JENNY DOES NOT LIFT HER GAZE TO HIM. HE SIGHS DELIBERATELY LOUDLY AS HE LEANS BACK HIS CHAIR. HE WAITS FOR A FEW MOMENTS. HE EVENTUALLY MOVES IN CLOSER TO HER, PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER AND WHISPERS TO HER.

JACOB (teasingly) Jenny…
JENNY LIFTS HER GAZE BUT NOT TO HIM, SHE LOOKS FORWARD TO THE AUDIENCE.

JENNY (to audience) Here comes the ‘oh you know I think you’re way better looking than her’ excuse.

HER HEAD TURNS AROUND TO MEET JACOB’S GAZE, SHE LOOKS SMUG.

JENNY …Yes?

JACOB…Maybe if you didn’t have such low self-esteem you wouldn’t get insulted so easily.

Exploring Self-esteem

Looking back to the list of ingredients for a good relationship, how many do you think Jenny and Jacob’s relationship have?

Why doesn’t Jenny realise that something is wrong with her relationship?

• This is ‘normal’ for her – she doesn’t know any other way to be in a relationship

• Her self-esteem is attacked so she doubts herself all the time

• Maybe she does know, but doesn’t know what to do about it
At what point in this scene could Jenny have done or said something to improve the situation for herself? What specifically could she have done?

- How might that action or statement have helped?
- What would the result be of saying it or doing it?
- What’s the worst that could have happened as a result?

What stops Jenny seeing that a different way is possible? What could be the cause of Jenny’s low self-esteem?

- Jacob’s behaviour towards her and comments about her
- A lack of close friendships
- Her own self-doubt
- The pressure of social media and social expectations
- Her family dynamic
- School work pressures
- Do all these factors affect young men / boys just as much as girls?

What could you do if you think that one of your friends is struggling with low self-esteem?

- In threes discuss and record on post it notes.
- Share whatever ideas people have and discuss.
MONOLOGUE FROM FINE
Read aloud

JENNY

He pulls that kinda shite all the time man.

I remember this one time right, we were going to someone's 18th. Was Jacob's big cousin or something like that, doesn't matter.

Point is, that night was the most effort I'd ever fuckin put into my appearance. Like for school n that I can't really say I care that much. But that week Jacob had been texting some girl he met at a party the weekend before. Said she's got a boyfriend and stuff but meh, he'd say anything to get me to shut up about it.

Anyways, this girl was stunning right, like am talking Kendall Jenner type stunning. Like I might as well crawl into a hole and die kind of pretty. Ye get me?

So, I'm going full on out. Got my lashes on, highest heels I own, hairs all curled n my fingers all covered in burns cause ae it. Even got the red lippy on, I wisnae playing games.

Ye hink he notices? Does he fuck!

Spent that whole night textin this bird, who's apparently got a boyfriend, like it's no big deal!

So am sayin to him, 'put that phone away and talk to your actual girlfriend', right? And of course he ignores me, turns around and keeps on texting. So you know wit I do?

(laughing)

I take that prick's phone and put it in my bag!

Aw man you should've seen his face. Goes bright red, like ma red lippy red… then just when I think he's about to nab the bag and run for it, he disnae.

BEAT. HER LAUGHING HAS STOPPED NOW. SHE LEANS TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE. HER HAND STARTS SLOWLY SCRATCHING AT HER LOWER ARM.

JENNY (quieter than before)

Instead, he leans in, right up to my face. He starts whispering, only I can hear him. He says 'you give me my phone back, and I promise I won't smash this glass bottle off your head'.

So, I call him on his bluff. He's no gonnae dae that in front of his whole family is he? Aye, fat chance. So, I say, 'nice try, but I'll only give you your phone back if you delete her number'.

And he says to me 'Is this how you act in front of your boyfriend's family? When you're a stranger to these people? How do you think they're going to react when I tell them my girlfriend is blackmailing me? Do you think they're gonae like you? They'll hate you, tell me to break up with you. Maybe they'd be right. You've been moaning about a lot pish with me recently. Is that fair? I thought if you loved someone you're supposed to accept their flaws? I accept yours and trust me, you have plenty. I mean, look at the way you're dressed tonight, who are you trying to impress, some other guy here? I think it's your phone that should be taken away, I have no idea who you're texting right now!

So, Jen, babes how about you give me my phone back, keep your little fucking mouth shut, and we forget this ever happened'.
Jenny sits back upright in her chair, her face serious and stern. Her scratching stopped now.

Jenny

Well, you can imagine what I did next.

Beat.

(humorously) I gave him his fucking phone back!

Exploring Violence

Playwright Catriona McNicoll talks about violence being, ‘a bargaining tool for abusers’

In Fine we see three main types of violence, physical / verbal / emotional. Look at the definitions below then consider what sorts of violence we see described in Jenny’s monologue.

**Physical**: Using the body to exert power, use of space, stance, proximity. Punching an object or person. Do displays of physical anger happen in public or in private?

**Verbal**: Offensive put downs to lower someone’s self-esteem. This could be whispered, shouted, written on social media. It’s not ‘just banter’ if it has a negative impact on the person it’s directed at.

**Emotional**: Guilt tripping, twisting things, playing mind games, psychological manipulation.

Which type of violence / abuse is seen as the worst one in our society?

- Emphasise that they are all as bad as one another.
- Bullying is bullying it doesn’t matter what form it takes.

What can you do? What could you say or do if you suspect that control, violence and a lowering of self-esteem is happening with friends who are in a relationship?

Discuss the options below:

- Talking directly to the person involved (ie the Jenny character) in generalised rather than personal terms. Talk about what good and bad relationships look like using other people as examples – celebrities, people in the news, relationships portrayed on film and TV. Ask their opinion of these relationships; this might help them think about their own situation.

- Speak about the subject above as part of a group of friends, which includes the person involved. This means they get to hear other people’s opinions of relationships as well.

- Share your concerns about the person involved with other friends. If you feel something is wrong, your friends will probably feel the same. Sharing your opinion can give you confidence to speak out and try to do something to help your friend in the problematic relationship.

- Speaking to a trusted adult to get their opinion and seek their advice

- See if there are any initiatives in your school raising awareness or tackling this issue.

- Get advice by phoning Relate, Women’s Aid or The Men’s Advice Line
**EMPTY**

**Introduction from Young Co member Cameron Rickards**

*Empty* was created to shine light on the often overlooked side of the journey to adulthood from boyhood. We agreed as a company that the men's side of growing up hadn't been significantly touched upon, in theatre or other art forms, and decided to create our own piece. Basing a lot on genuine, personal experiences, we compiled ideas to form the structure for *Empty*. Our main goal was to highlight the lack of support for boys becoming teenagers and not knowing how to voice their concerns, confusions and most importantly their insecurities, as this is stereotypically viewed as not 'manly'. The play aims to help highlight the issues with masculinity and encourage teenage boys to open up about their thoughts and feelings to friends or family.

‘That play felt really true. Like, with a group of boys I see every day, they all try to look the strongest and they won’t talk about their problems. I mean, they call each other best friends, but they don’t talk. Our lives could be better if we talked more and listened more to other people’ (Pupil, Shawlands Academy, Glasgow)

In *Empty* our main character James has low self-esteem and anxiety. We wanted to encourage young men to feel more able to talk about their feelings and mental health. The *Scottish Association of Mental Health* (SAMH) says, ‘Talking is one of the first steps to improving mental health. It can help someone who is at their lowest point. I could save someone's life.’ [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

Here is what SAMH says about mental health:

**It's as important to look after our mental health as it is our physical.**

Mental health problems can affect the way you think, feel and behave. Some mental health problems are described using words that are in everyday use, for example, 'depression' and 'anxiety'. This can make them seem easier to understand but can also mean people underestimate how serious they can be.

A mental health problem feels just as bad, or worse, than any other illness – only you cannot see it. Although mental health problems are very common – affecting one in four people in Scotland – there is still stigma and discrimination towards people with mental health problems, as well as many myths about what different diagnoses mean.

However, despite these challenges, it is possible to recover from a mental health problem and live a productive and fulfilling life. It is important to remember that, if you have a mental health problem, it is not a sign of weakness. Most people experiencing a common mental health problem see their symptoms pass quite quickly.

[www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/mental-health-problems](http://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/mental-health-problems)

The *Campaign Against Living Miserably* are leading a campaign against suicide, the single biggest killer of men aged under 45 in the UK: [www.thecalmzone.net/about-calm/what-is-calm/](http://www.thecalmzone.net/about-calm/what-is-calm/)

The *Changing Room* has one goal – to promote men's mental health and wellbeing through the power of the beautiful game: [hibs.thechangingroom.org.uk/](http://hibs.thechangingroom.org.uk/)

*Brothers in Arms* is a Scottish charity, 'about and on behalf of men. We will use men's peers, their voices and their interests to reach them': [www.brothersinarmsscotland.co.uk/about-us/what-is-bia/](http://www.brothersinarmsscotland.co.uk/about-us/what-is-bia/)
PLOT SUMMARY OF EMPTY

Use at any point to help young people relate to the scenes which follow:

James is an awkward boy in 5th year. He has just started seeing a girl in the same year called Julie who he likes a lot and we see this relationship gradually develop. James has two pals, Jack and Liam who both give the impression they are more experienced with girls, particularly Liam, who puts pressure on James to take the relationship further. Julia's pals, Maria and Emma, arrange an empty/gaff at Maria's. The guys make plans to go. Prior to the empty, at Liam's, the guys pressurise James into saying he's had sex with Julie – but James tells them not to say anything in case it jeopardises his relationship. James has NOT had sex with Julie but feels he has no option but to lie under intense pressure. He immediately regrets doing this and becomes terrified who's going to find, particularly Julie. At the empty/gaff Jack tells Maria this juicy 'fact' and James realises everyone will find out. He'll be ridiculed for lying but worse, Julie will feel betrayed. James lays into Liam and Jack about revealing something he'd told them in confidence. Jack realises that James was in fact lying and he and Julie hadn't had sex. Now James is in a terrible situation with Julie, 'the whole school' and his so called 'pals'.

Diagonal Line Questions

Imagine there is an invisible diagonal line from one corner of the room to the next. One end represents Agree and the other Disagree. Make the statements below and ask young people to stand anywhere on the line which best represents their opinion, which you can then explore, without any judgements.

Friends are better than boyfriends / girlfriends (Then ask: Why? How? Should they be? What’s the main difference? Can they be both?)

You can always trust your pals (then ask: How far can you trust them? When can’t you? If you can’t trust them, are they not actually pals?)

Girls talk to each other more than boys talk to each other (then ask: Do they? Is that a cliché or truth? What sorts of things do they talk about?)
Read aloud:

JAMES

See this one time, I was in second year and we had our first social dancing class of the year. I hated it so much, I was actually almost shaking for some reason. I just kept thinking what if I get rejected in front of my full year? A lot of the other guys seemed more confident with girls.

So next social dancing class I decided I was going to ask anyone and just see what they said. There was this girl in my regi class and we kind of talked sometimes. She was really good looking, so I started to doubt myself. Maybe she’ll just laugh at me with her pals. I pulled myself together and the teacher told us to go and pick. There was the usual awkward couple of seconds where nobody wanted to move first, then he shouted at us and we all got up.

She was talking to her pals and I kind of didn’t want to just walk right up to her, so I did an awkward sort of route to get to where she was sitting. She just looked at me. I felt like shaking again and forgot what I was going to say to her. 'eh would... would you like to be my eh.... partner?’ She looked at her pals who sat there smiling and laughing. This was the most embarrassing moment of my life. Then she shook her head. Imagine that man. Where do you go from there?

I was 13 then, I’m 16 now. I’ve not changed. I still shake.

Exploring Social Anxiety

James remembers social dancing as an ordeal and has never forgotten the public humiliation of being laughed at. What other reasons could there be for James developing social anxiety?

- The pressure of social media and social expectations
- The expectation of the way you should look and behave – portrayed in the media
- Is this expectation the same for boys and girls? Are there any differences?
- A lack of close friendships
- His own self-doubt
- Do you think other people see how anxious James is, or does he manage to hide it?
SCENE FROM EMPTY

Read aloud

Boys Pres before the Empty:

(JACK AND LIAM HAVE BEEN DRINKING AT LIAM’S HOUSE. A KNOCK IS HEARD AT THE DOOR. ENTER JAMES)

JACK Who’s that?
LIAM I do believe it’s the man himself! What’s happening my man? ‘Mon in!
JAMES You alright? How you doing?
LIAM How was the business trip?
JAMES What? It’s just shirt, come on man…
LIAM Bloody hell, new shoes as well.
JAMES I just got some shoes.
LIAM And I can smell you from here. Did you take a short cut through Frasers?
JAMES I’ve just put some extra effort in, alright?
LIAM Ohh aye.
JACK It’s a gaff, not a job interview.
JAMES Should I go home and change?
LIAM No, no- you just got here. We all know what he’s dressed up for, right, is this for Julie aye?
JAMES Well…
LIAM Obviously things are going well if you’ve gone all Men in Black for her. Tell me, how’s it going?
JAMES I mean it’s alright, it’s just the same, alright.
LIAM PUTS HIS ARM ROUND JAMES’S SHOULDER. IN HIS FACE
LIAM Aye but what’s been going on, what’ve you been doing?
JAMES Just studying an’ that.
LIAM Studying?!
JACK Studying?
LIAM Studying? Studying as in ‘studying’??
LIAM RUBS HIMSELF UP AGAINST JAMES IN A DRY HUMPING WAY. JAMES SHRUGS HIM OFF
JAMES No mate, just studying.
LIAM Come on, where have you been studying then?

JAMES Well the library, at mine, hers.

LIAM Hers? Yours?!

JAMES Yeah.

LIAM Hang on a minute, you studied at yours? You must have shagged her.

JACK He's no.

LIAM He did.

JACK He's no.

LIAM He has, he's had her in his room. The desk is there, the bed is there.

JACK He's noo.

LIAM He would be a fucking idiot if he didn't.

JAMES Guys, guys...like I don't wanna talk about it, alright?

JACK Did you kiss her?

LIAM Did you kiss her?

JAMES I told you, I don't want to kiss an' tell!

JACK AND LIAM He kissed her!

LIAM Aww mate, right what else then? One thing leads to another mate.

JACK We don't know that.

LIAM Just tell us man.

JACK (sneering) He's not got it in him, look at him.

LIAM GETS RIGHT INTO JAMES'S SPACE, ALL OVER HIM, OPPRESSIVE

LIAM Where's your fuckin' faith? Come on gimme this, I need this James. I need it mate, tell me you did...

PAUSE. JACK AND LIAM LEAN IN, WAITING

JAMES (wanting to get rid of them) Yeah...Okay. We did it...I shagged her, right?

LIAM You did...you did! Jings he beat you to it! Not that that surprises me. My boy, he's become a man, I'm so proud of you!

JAMES I just wanted to keep it to myself until it got serious, you know.

LIAM Aye.

JACK She'll be at the gaff tonight.
LIAM So she will, round 2, ding ding!

JAMES But you cannae tell anybody, just keep this between us! Cause if she finds out, I’m screwed.

JACK Aye, aye whatever…

LIAM So, what we waiting for? Why we drinking here? Let’s drink there!

Exploring Peer Pressure and Expectation

• Why did James lie about having had sex?

• How would Liam and Jack have reacted to him telling the truth?

• What social expectations do young people feel about when they should have sex?

• Do girls pressure each other as much as boys? About this subject or anything else?

• Do girls handle or respond to pressure from pals differently, do you think?

• How confident / self-assured would you have to be to handle the sort of situation we saw in this scene, and stand up for yourself?
MARIA HAS JUST SPOKEN TO JAMES, MAKING IT CLEAR TO HIM SHE HAS HEARD THE NEWS ABOUT HIM AND JULIE HAVING HAD SEX. JAMES SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE:

JAMES

You fucked up man! You FUCKED up mate! Look at you man, look at what you did! You ruined it with Julie man. What’s Julie gonna say when Maria speaks to her and it comes out that we didn’t do it and it’s a lie?

What is everyone in school gonna say when they find out I lied? You can’t show your face now, mate. Man, I’ve ruined it…

Ah, Julie mate…I didn’t mean it. I was forced into it, I didn’t even want to say anything Jules, I mean it’s not true, it’s not true, it’s just my pals kept asking me and kept asking me…I didn’t know what to say…It was just ‘cause Liam was fucking saying all this stuff and…Liam…It was fucking Liam.

LIAM EMERGES FROM THROWING UP IN THE TOILET, HE’S DAZED

JAMES Okay what did you say?

LIAM What you talking about?

JAMES To Maria.

LIAM Maria? I didn’t say anything.

JAMES Mate it’s gonna ruin everything I told you not to say anything, about Julie.

LIAM Alright mate calm down calm down, what you talking about?

JAMES I told you not to say anything – she’s gonna, she’s gonna dump me now.

LIAM You mean you and Julie?

JAMES Of course mate, me and Julie mate, of course – who else would it be?

LIAM Slow the fuck down…why’s this such a big deal?

JAMES ‘Cos I told you not to.

JAMES SHOVES LIAM, LIAM REACTS AGGRESSIVELY

LIAM Slow the fuck DOWN. Who do you think told Maria? Do you see me talking her?

She’s been giving me shit all night. You told two people, remember? Use your fucking brain, you prick.

LIAM STORMS OUT, PUSHING PAST JACK AS HE COMES IN THE ROOM

JACK What the fuck’s going on here?

JAMES Here Jack, what have you been saying?

JACK Saying? Wit? What just happened?
JAMES Mate I told you about that - I told you not to tell people – that was between us, man.

JACK What?

JAMES Between me and Julie. And you’ve told everybody.

JACK I only told Maria.

JAMES You told Maria?! She'll be telling the full school – do you know what that’s gonna do to me?.......I shouldn't have said anything.

JACK What's the big deal about it?

JAMES Cos Maria'll tell Julie.

JACK (slyly) Doesn't Julie already know?

PAUSE. JACK REALISES

Have you fucking lied about this?

JAMES You fucked it up for me.

JACK I fucked it up for YOU?

JAMES You fucked it up for me! You both did – I didn't want to say anything, but you kept asking me.

JACK (sneering) You could have just said no, I've not done it, but no, you couldnae, you had to be the big man.

JAMES What was I supposed to say there? What was I supposed to say?!

JACK YOU fucked it up, not me, you wee virgin.

Exploring the Benefits of Talking

Thinking about the consequences of this situation:

• What do you think will happen now with James and Julie?

• With James, Liam and Jack?

• With James and the rest of the school in terms of how he's treated?

• What impact will social media have on all this?
Would it have made any difference if James had had someone he trusted, who he could have talked to about the things that worried him in his life, and how he felt?
  • If so, WHO could that have been?

Do girls talk to each other more about important stuff than boys do?
  • If so, why is that?

What stops boys talking about stuff that worries them?

How’s it going to be for James if he carries on throughout his life without anyone to talk honestly to?

Individually on a post it, everyone writes in response to:
  • If you had one key piece of advice for James right now, what would it be?

As a group then discuss:
  • How can you start a conversation about how someone is feeling?