

How men can prevent sexual violence

Here are some steps you can take to prevent sexual violence and ensure you have respectful sexual relationships:

BEFORE YOU HAVE SEX

Always have sex with consent. Don't pressure a woman or your partner into having sex or performing sexual acts they don't agree to. Do not make your partner feel guilty or emotionally blackmail them with threats about leaving the relationship.

BE AWARE OF LANGUAGE

Words like 'bitch', 'whore', 'baby' or 'dog' make women seem less human and inferior. Using words like this makes it easier to treat women with disrespect and to ignore their rights. This is not OK.

REMEMBER THE FACTS

When you see sex without consent on the television, remind yourself that it is rape. When you hear about a woman staying in an abusive relationship, remind yourself that she is not to be blamed. Learn the facts so you can challenge these myths.

TAKE 'NO' FOR AN ANSWER

The idea that women say 'no' when they mean 'yes' is wrong. Do not ignore a woman if she says 'no' or seems reluctant. Your partner always has the right to say 'no', even if you are married or living together. Silence does not mean she agrees. Importantly, if a woman is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, she can't consent.

TALK TO WOMEN

Ask a woman who trusts you about violence and how it has affected her life. If she feels comfortable to talk, just listen and learn from her experiences. Women who have survived or are surviving violence and abuse will have valuable insights.

TALK ABOUT SEX

If you are unsure what your partner wants, ask her. Talk about what you want to do and check that your partner agrees. You can try asking 'Is this comfortable?' or 'Are you OK with this?'.

NEVER USE FORCE

Don't assume that because a woman wears revealing clothing, flirts or agrees to go to a man's house, that she wants to engage in sexual activity. Forced sex is rape. The person responsible for rape is the one who uses force or pressure.

DON'T ENGAGE IN ANY FORM OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Whistling at women, unwanted touching, sexual jokes and other types of unwelcome sexual behaviour, can make a person feel harassed, embarrassed and intimidated. Always treat women with respect and never engage in non-consensual sexual behaviour.



TALK TO MEN

Speak to other men to challenge their attitudes and beliefs about sex/consent and violence against women – a change in social attitudes will make it easier for victims to get help and make violence and abuse against women less acceptable. You can start by mentioning something you've read about sexual assault or something you saw on television. Ask if they know someone who has been sexually assaulted.

TAKE ACTION IF YOU SEE VIOLENCE HAPPENING

Call the police – never assume someone else has. Ensure you do something to stop the violence, but do not use violence yourself and ensure your own personal safety. Do not remain silent: stand up, speak out and act to stop men's violence against women.

EXAMINE YOUR OWN BEHAVIOUR

If you have been physically violent against a woman, committed sexual assault, threatened or tried to control their lives, get help today. Do not wait for it to happen again. Call MensLine on 1300 78 99 78 for support and advice.

SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

If someone tells you that they have been abused, raped or harassed – listen, believe and support them. Ask if they need support (e.g. counselling) and help them find it. Don't ask questions like 'what were you wearing?' By supporting survivors to share their experiences, more people will speak up and highlight the seriousness of sexual violence.

CONTRIBUTE YOUR TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY

Make a difference to your community. Join, support and/or donate to an organisation working to prevent men's violence against women. Every contribution helps break the cycle of violence.

*From Thirteen steps men can take to prevent sexual violence (n.d.) Retrieved 7 March 2016 from: <http://whiteribbon.org.nz/act/get-help/thirteen-steps-men-can-take-to-prevent-sexual-violence/>; What men can do to stop violence against women (n.d.) Retrieved 7 March 2016 from: <https://www.stsm.org/get-information/about-sexual-assault/what-men-can-do-stop-violence-against-women> and Kaufman, M. (2000). *The White Ribbon Campaign: breaking men's silence to end men's violence – statement of principles*. Michael Kaufman. Retrieved from: <http://www.michaelkaufman.com/2000/the-white-ribbon-campaign-breaking-mens-silence-to-end-mens-violence-statement-of-principles/>*

