

What Can Men Do To End Violence Against Women?

Violence against women can be thought of as a continuum at which one end there is sexist behavior such as whistling, taunting, ogling, etc. and the other end - sexual assault. Here is a list of things men can do to end sexism and violence against women.

- ✓ **Understand** how your own attitudes and actions may perpetuate sexism and violence. Work toward changing them. Realize that men generally have more power in society than women. Whether it's spoken or not, it's still there.
- ✓ **Confront** sexist, racist, homophobic, and all other bigoted remarks or jokes.
- ✓ **Fight** for increased state and federal funding for battered women's shelters and rape crisis centers. Volunteer where men are needed – such as The Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education (www.umn.edu/aurora).
- ✓ **Don't fund sexism.** Don't purchase magazines (i.e. Maxim, FHM, Stuff, Playboy, etc.), rent videos, buy music, or support television programs that portray women in a sexually degrading or violent manner. Protest sexism in the media (i.e. The Man Show, Howard Stern, etc.). This includes both sexism against females (stereotyping women as sex objects) and males (stereotyping men as sex fiends and hyper-masculine idiots).
- ✓ **Support** candidates for political office who are committed to the full social, economic, and political equality of women. Actively oppose candidates who are not.

- ✓ **Organize** or join a group – in school, your workplace, or among friends – to work against sexism and violence. You can become a Violence Prevention Educator at The Aurora Center by calling (612) 626-9122.
- ✓ **Support** those who you know to be survivors of sexual assault by never putting the blame on a woman you've heard was raped. Do not say or support things like, "She shouldn't have gone there/worn that/drank that much." None of these things excuse a crime as heinous as rape.
- ✓ **Always** interrupt any friend or acquaintance who you see violating, verbally or physically, a woman's space.
- ✓ **Never** think a woman owes a man sex, under any circumstances. Never voice, believe, or support the idea that a woman "wanted it." If you heard that a buddy who was tossed in jail for one night was raped, would you think he "wanted it" because he "got himself into that situation?"
- ✓ **Ask** permission before touching someone in any way. Remember, it's sexy to ask first.
- ✓ **Use** peer pressure to help stop behaviors that may lead to acquaintance rape. For example, condemn rather than condone a friend who has taken advantage of a sexual partner.
- ✓ **Don't** exploit others sexually.
- ✓ **Understand** that sexual assault and rape are crimes. An acquaintance rape happens if you have intercourse with a partner against her/his will and without consent. Also understand rape is a problem for both men and women.

- ✓ **Don't** feel as if you always have to initiate sexually, don't do so if you don't want to. You are allowed to not want to be sexually active!
- ✓ **Never** be sexual with a person who is passed out or too drunk to know what they're doing.
- ✓ **Assume** "no," "maybe," or silence means "NO." If you are right, you have not offended your partner. If you are not, your partner will have to initiate what s/he really wants. If you're confused, ask and clarify. Say things like, "Tell me what you want," and then follow the instructions – a real turn on for many women.
- ✓ **Learn** by reading articles, essays, and books about masculinity, gender inequality, and the root causes of sexual violence. Suggested readings: M. Miedzian, *Boys Will Be Boys*; P. Kivel, *Men's Work*; D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*; M. Messner, *Power at Play*; J. Stoltenberg, *Refusing To Be a Man*; and Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth, *Transforming a Rape Culture*. Another excellent resource is the video "Tough Guise" by Jackson Katz, available for viewing at The Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education.

MEN'S PLEDGE TO END RAPE

Because:

- I believe that rape will not end until men become part of the solution;
- I take pride in myself as a man;
- I care about the women in my life;
- I am angry that people I know have been hurt;
- I know that a woman is raped every 3 minutes in this country;
- I understand that rape is a crime of violence against victims' bodies, emotional well-being, and right to do with their bodies what they choose;
- I recognize that men and women will not be equal until rape ends;
- I know that happiness between men and women is difficult in a world where rape exists;
- I accept my responsibility to assist in making this a safer world.

I pledge to:

- Speak my anger about rape;
- Talk with other men about rape;
- Look at how we create a culture where rape is possible by the way men are raised;
- Interrupt rape or sexist jokes;
- Support laws that encourage men to take responsibility for ending rape;
- Listen to women friends' fears and concerns for their safety;
- Pay attention to cries for help;
- Challenge images of violence against women in advertising and pornography;
- Encourage women to be strong and powerful;
- Recognize that cooperation is power;
- Change whatever I am doing that helps create a culture where rape is possible;
- Support women and men working to end rape.

Original version of this statement by the California Anti-Sexist Men's Political Caucus.

Bothered by Sexist Remarks? YOU'RE NOT ALONE!

“As a teenager I was frequently uncomfortable with the language my friends used to describe women's bodies, or the sexual relations they claimed to have had with women. Often in all male groups someone would use language that objectified or put down women, or describe alleged sexual exploits in graphic detail. In some cases, I knew from private conversation that what was being described had not happened at all, or that it was being exaggerated. In each one of these situations, I kept my discomfort to myself, assuming that others enjoyed or at least did not mind the conversation, and that I was in the minority.”

- Alan Berkowitz

“A large number of men continue to be silent about male violence against women. Men need to recognize that by not criticizing their sexist and abusive male peers, they help to perpetuate the tradition of male violence... it would appear that many men are afraid to risk suspicion among their peers that they are not masculine men. Speaking out against male violence demands a critical approach to one's real and mythical peer group.”

- Kilmartin et al. (1999)

This information was taken from "Applications of Social Norms Theory to Other Health and Social Justice Issues" by Alan D. Berkowitz, Ph.D. January 2000.

Men's Work



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