

What men can do to stop relationship abuse

Be aware of language.

- Words are very powerful, especially when spoken by people with power over others. We live in a society in which words are often used to put women down, where calling a girl or woman a "bitch," "freak," "whore," "baby" or "dog" is common. Such language sends a message that females are less than fully human. When we see women as inferior it becomes easier to treat them with less respect, disregard their rights, and ignore their well-being.
- Be aware of sexual stereotypes and how they influence attitudes and behaviors. Social roles and expectations may affect a man's decisions about relationships. Men are taught that expressing feelings is not masculine. Examining your social role and learning ways to express feelings directly and non-violently can help to create deeper and more meaningful interpersonal relationships. You don't have to prove yourself.
- Don't fund sexism. Refuse to purchase any magazine, rent any video, subscribe to any Web site or buy any music that portrays girls or women in a sexually degrading or abusive manner. Protest sexism in the media.

Speak up.

- You will probably never see a man abusing his partner, but you will see and hear attitudes and behaviors that degrade women and promote abuse. When your best friend tells a joke about abusing women in some way, say you don't find it funny. When you read an article that blames an abusive relationship survivor for being abused, write a letter to the editor. When laws are proposed that limit women's rights, let politicians know that you won't support them. Do anything but remain silent.
- Don't engage in any forms of sexual harassment, such as wolf-whistling, cat-calling, unwanted touching, outrageous or inappropriate behavior. Women are not public property, available for our intrusions. Neither are men.
- Develop an awareness of the cultural supports for violence against women. Develop the ability to recognize myths which support violence against women.
- If a brother, friend, classmate or teammate is abusing his female partner—or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general—don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help. Or if you don't know what to do, consult a friend, a parent, a professor or a counselor. **DON'T REMAIN SILENT.**

Support survivors of domestic violence.

- Domestic violence will not be taken seriously until everyone knows how common it is. By learning to sensitively support survivors in their lives, men can help both women and other men feel safer to speak out about being abused and let the world know how serious a problem relationship abuse is.
- Believe people when they tell you they've been abused. Support what they say about it. Listen to them.
- Recognize that women neither ask for nor deserve to be abused ever.
- Be an ally to women who are working to end all forms of gender violence. Support the work of campus-based women's centers. Attend "Take Back the Night" rallies and other public events. Raise money for community-based rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters. If you belong to a team or fraternity, or another student group, organize a fundraiser.

Talk with women...

- about relationship abuse; about how they want to be supported if it has happened to them; about what they think men can do to prevent relationship abuse. If you're willing to listen, you can learn a lot from women about the impact of relationship abuse and how to stop it.
- Become an ally to the women in your life- do not participate in sexist behavior by objectifying or stereotyping women.

Talk with men...

- about how it feels to be seen as a potential abuser; about whether they know someone who's been abused. Learn about how relationship abuse touches the lives of men and what we can do to stop it.
- Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with gender violence prevention programs, including anti-sexist men's programs. Lead by example.
- Approach gender violence as a MEN's issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. View men not only as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers.