

## Working With Men: Strategies and challenges in engaging men in building non-violence and gender equality

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## Who is this guy?

- Early profeminist activism
  - Men Against Sexual Assault
  - XY (once a magazine, now a website)
- Community education and advocacy
- Academic research & teaching

## Involving boys and men in violence prevention

We must address boys and men because:

1. It is largely boys and men who perpetrate this violence.
2. Constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in shaping boys' and men's violence against women and girls.
3. Boys and men have a positive role to play in helping to stop violence against women.

## Men's anti-violence work

- Has a long history
- Is well established, through significant national and international groups and networks
- Shows evidence of effectiveness
- Has increasing support through both international commitments and state and national government policies
- Is growing in scale and sophistication

## Violence prevention: Multiple levels of intervention

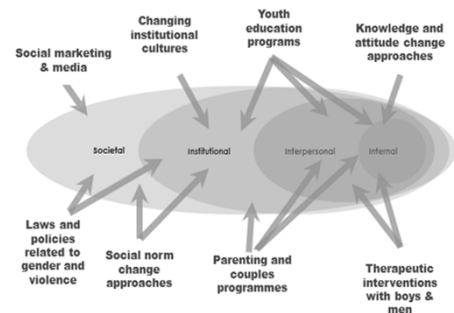
- Men's violence against women is the outcome of a complex interplay of individual, relationship, community, institutional, and societal factors.



Figure 1 - Ecological model proposed by the World Health Organization

- *Primary* prevention: Aims to prevent initial perpetration or victimisation
- Five levels of intervention – a spectrum of prevention.

## The field: Transforming masculinities through combined changes across the social ecology



## Level 1: Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills

- To increase individuals' capacity to prevent or avoid violence.
- Including;
  - Programs for boys who have witnessed or experienced violence in families.
  - Interventions in parenting and family relations
    - E.g., MenCare campaign



## Level 2: Promoting Community Education

- Face-to-face educational groups and programs:
  - Strong evidence of positive impact on males' attitudes and behaviours.
    - Although not all programs are effective.
  - Other promising strategies take place outside school and university settings.
  - Including peer education and mentoring.

Discussion groups fostering gender equality:  
On US college campuses



Discussion groups fostering gender equality: Men's  
Resources International training, Liberia, 2007



## Community Education *continued*

- Communication and social marketing
  - Well-developed campaigns have produced positive change in men's attitudes and behaviours.
- Other creative strategies: film, street theatre, comics, radio and TV, song, etc.
- Local educational strategies:
  - 'Social norms' campaigns
  - 'Bystander intervention' campaigns
- Other media strategies

## Violence Against Women — It's Against All the Rules (NSW, 2000 – 2003)



## Building men's support for non-violence: Men Can Stop Rape campaign (USA)



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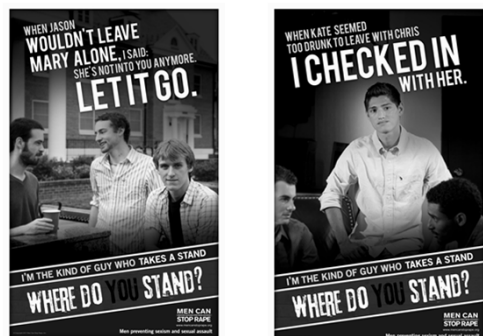


## Social norms campaigns

74% OF COLLEGE MEN  
**WOULD INTERVENE TO PREVENT A SEXUAL ASSAULT**

**Be a Friend**  
With a few well-timed words or actions, you could save someone from becoming a victim of sexual assault. To learn more, visit [www.mensupport.org](http://www.mensupport.org).

## Bystander intervention campaigns



### Campus anti-violence campaigns



### Mobilising particular groups of men: fathers

**Before you sit down to enjoy Father's Day, stand up for what it means.**

We know the importance of men's support in men's violence against women, and we know that men are the most important people in the lives of women who have been sexually assaulted. We know that men are the most important people in the lives of women who have been sexually assaulted. We know that men are the most important people in the lives of women who have been sexually assaulted.

On this Father's Day we ask you to join the movement.

### Community Education *continued*

- Local educational strategies:
  - 'Social norms' campaigns: closing the gap between actual and perceived agreement with violence-supportive norms
  - 'Bystander intervention' campaigns
- Other media strategies
  - Better news reporting
  - Media literacy
  - Media regulation



### Level 3: Engaging, Strengthening, and Mobilising Communities

- Need to change the social norms, gender roles, and power relations which feed into violence against women.
- Promising strategies of community engagement and strengthening...
  - Involve male community leaders.
- Foster coalitions and networks.

### Level 3 *continued*: Mobilising Communities

- Other important strategies, particularly with women:
  - Economic empowerment
  - Social empowerment interventions with vulnerable groups
    - E.g., among sex workers
  - Community mobilisation

### Level 3 *continued*: Mobilising Communities

- Mobilise communities through events, networks, and campaigns.
- Build grassroots men's groups and networks.
  - White Ribbon Campaign
  - Men As Partners program
  - Many other groups...

### More on mobilising: What men can do

1. Put our own houses in order.
  - Build non-violent, respectful and equitable relations with the women in our lives.
2. Challenge violence and violence-supportive behaviour around us.
  - Become positive bystanders.
3. Work for wider social and cultural change
  - Shift the attitudes, behaviours, and gender inequalities which feed into men's violence against women.

### White Ribbon Campaign in Australia



### White Ribbon Campaign in Australia



### Building men's support for non-violence: White Ribbon Campaign (over 60 countries)



Newspaper advertisement, USA



Poster campaign, China (2005)

### White Ribbon Campaign march, Syracuse New York (USA), 2007



### Mobilizing men for gender justice: South African Men as Partners Network





'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' campaign



'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' campaign (Los Angeles, 2007)



Pledge never to commit, condone, or remain silent about ...



"Coaching Boys into Men" conference, Plymouth County White Ribbon Campaign, Brockton USA, March 6, 2008

### Level 3 *continued*: Mobilising Communities

- Mobilise communities through events, networks, and campaigns.
- Build grassroots men's groups and networks.
  - White Ribbon Campaign
  - Men As Partners program
  - Many other groups...
- Foster alternative, non-violent norms and practices.

### Level 4: Changing Organizational Practices

- Educating professionals
  - Often involve working with men in male-dominated institutions.
  - Examples: with coaches, police, military forces.
- Changing organisational and institutional cultures and system
  - E.g., whole-of-school violence prevention



## Level 4: Changing Organizational Practices

- Intervening in male-dominated and homosocial contexts.
  - Example of a sporting institution taking systematic action to address sexual assault: the Australian Football League.
  - Example: the Australian military

## Level 5: Influencing Policies and Legislation

- We need national plans and funding for violence prevention.
- The criminal justice system has an important symbolic (and practical) role.
- Research monitoring and evaluation.



## Challenges in working with boys & men

### Challenge: Providing for boys & men

- Whether to address males at all
- Three key principles for male involvement:
  1. Pro-feminist
    - Feminist content and frameworks
    - Partnerships with women and women's groups
    - Protection of 'women's space', women-only, and women-focused programs.
  2. Committed to enhancing boys' and men's lives
  3. Acknowledge diversities and inequalities

## Further issues

- If we are feminist / pro-feminist, which feminism are we 'pro'?
  - Debates and conflicts among feminists and feminisms...
- Accountability:
  - Working in gender-equitable ways
  - At personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels
  - How do we practise it?

## Challenges: Reaching and engaging men

- What are the key barriers to men's involvements in ending violence against women?

## Key barriers to men's involvement

- A vested interest in the status quo
- Violence against women as a 'women's issue'
- Support for sexist and violence-supportive attitudes and norms
- Overestimation of *other* men's comfort with violence and their unwillingness to intervene
- Fears of others' reactions to intervention
- Loyalty to other men
- Negative reactions to violence prevention efforts
- Lack of knowledge of or skills in intervention
- Lack of opportunity or invitation

## Inspirations for involvement?

- What inspires men to become involved in efforts to end violence against women?

## Inspirations for involvement

- Personal, 'sensitising' experiences which raise men's awareness of violence or gender inequalities;
- Invitations for involvement;
- Making sense of these experiences in ways which are motivating.

## Some common themes in male paths to involvement

- Connections to individual women: a mother, a partner, a friend, a sister, a daughter
- Connections to individuals and groups who model egalitarian gender roles and relations
- Exposure to feminist and progressive ideals and frameworks
- Commitments to other ethical, political, and/or spiritual ideals
- Experiences of violence

## Challenges: Reaching and engaging men

- Exercise: How can we appeal to men? How can we make the case that violence against women is something that men should be concerned about?
  - Each person to write down key appeals to men. And discuss if you wish.
  - 5 minutes

## Example: Framing VAW as a 'men's issue'

- Most men do not assault women. But physical and sexual violence is perpetrated overwhelmingly by men.
- Violence against women is men's problem;
  - VAW makes all men seem a potential threat
  - Men have to deal with the impact of other men's violence on the women and children that they love
  - As bystanders
  - As perpetrators



## Appealing to and engaging men

- Personalise the issue
  - Invite men's awareness of violence or the threat of violence against the women and girls they know and care about.
  - And go beyond this.
- Show that men will benefit
  - Personal wellbeing; Relationships; Communities
- Start where men are
  - Approach other men in a tailored and individualised way
  - Use relevant messengers and role models

## Example: Appealing to men's love for their children



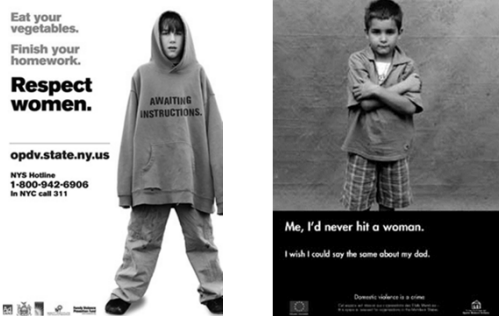
## Example: Appealing to men's love for their children



## Appealing to men's (and women's) concerns about the impact of their violence on their children



## Or men's roles in their children's lives



## Appealing to and engaging men *continued*

- Build on strengths
  - E.g.: Most men don't use violence. (Although it's not necessarily that simple...)
  - But continue to center a feminist critique of men's violence and men's power
- Start with small steps and build to bigger things
  - Offer men specific, small actions to take

### Appealing to and engaging men *continued*

- Show that other men agree.
  - Social norms campaigns
- Popularise violence prevention and feminism
  - Including challenging anti-feminist stereotyping.
- Diminish fears of others' reaction.
  - Address men's fears of being seen as 'less than real men'.
- Provide knowledge and skills in intervention

### Appealing to and engaging men *continued*

- Provide opportunities and invitations for involvement.
  - Find settings through which to recruit men.
  - Reach men through personal networks.
- Build communities of support
  - Create new kinds of social networks or peer groups for men.
  - Create 'compelling communities' which others will want to join.
  - Provide safe and supportive spaces for critical reflection.

### Challenge: Educating and changing males

- Use males to engage males: male facilitators and educators, and women and men working together.
- Use all-male groups and workshops.
- Create safe spaces for men to talk and learn.



### Challenge: Educating and changing males

- Use interventions with sufficient intensity, in terms of both length and depth.
- Offer programs which address cognitive, affective or emotional, and behavioural domains.
  - How men think
  - How men feel
  - How men behave

### Educating men *continued*

- Make your interventions culturally appropriate
- Exercise:
  - What would someone doing violence prevention in *this context* need to know and do?
  - Identify and write up five key elements to a culturally appropriate approach.

### Educating boys & men *continued*

- Be sensitive to local *gender* cultures.
- Address culturally specific supports for gender inequality. And draw on local resources and texts in promoting gender equality.
  - E.g., responding to defences of violence or sexism in terms of theology, 'tradition', or 'culture'.
- Match your intervention to men's stage of change.
  - From 'average Joe' to 'activist Joe'

	Aware Joe	Internalised Joe	Activist Joe
Aspiring Ally for:	Self-Interest	Altruism	Social Justice
Motivation	Selfish – for people I know and love	Other – I do this for them	Combined – Selfishness and Altruism – we do this for us
Ally to . . .	A Person	Target Group	An Issue
Relationship to system	Not interested in systems – just stopping the bad people	An exception from the system, yet ultimately perpetuates it	Seeks to escape, amend, and/or redefine the system
Privilege	Doesn't see privilege – but wants to maintain status quo	Feels guilty about privilege and tries to distance self from privilege	Sees illumination of privilege as liberating
Power	I'm powerful – protective	Empower them – they need our help	Empower us all
Admitting Mistakes	I don't make mistakes – I'm good, and perpetrators are just bad people	Difficult – struggles with critique or own issues – highly defensive about behavior	Seeks critique and admits mistakes – has accepted own limits and seeks help
Focus of the work	Perpetrators	Other members of the dominant group	My people – doesn't separate self from other agents

## Educating men *continued*

- Men are at different places along the continuum from passive indifference to active intervention. So...
- Match your intervention to men's stage of change.
  - Take men through different developmental stages over the course of your work.
  - Use different educational approaches with men at different stages of awareness and commitment.

## How to inspire men's support for gender equality: (a) Content

- Make it real: Personal stories, anecdotes, and local examples
- Draw on culturally appropriate materials.
- Personalise women's disadvantage.
- Make analogies to other forms of inequality.
- Substitute race for gender.
- Appeal to universal values.
- Expose false parallels.
- Address men's own experiences of gender.

## How to inspire men's support for gender equality: (a) Processes

- Document inequalities.
  - Get men to document inequalities or collect data
- Imagine walking in women's shoes.
  - Scenarios of gender reversal
- Listen to women.
- Make the familiar strange.
  - A visitor from Mars...
- Bring men into intimate dialogues.
  - Between partners, with family members, etc.

## Effective interventions are

1. *Informed*: They incorporate both an appropriate theoretical framework and a theory of change;
2. *Comprehensive*: they use multiple strategies, in multiple settings, and at multiple levels;
3. *Engaging*: they engage participants;
4. *Relevant*: they are relevant to the communities and contexts in which they are delivered.

## Social marketing

- *Comprehensive*: Communication and social marketing interventions have greater impact if they:
  - Are more intensive
  - Involve exposure to messaging through more than one component, and/or
  - Are complemented by on-the-ground strategies

## Social marketing

- *Engaging and relevant:*
  - Understand the audience
    - Example: “Freedom From Fear”, Australia
    - Generate familiarity, or “social self-identification”
  - Offer a positive message
  - Use influential messengers
    - High-profile or influential men
  - Draw on masculine culture.
    - Tension between complicity and challenge

## Changing Norms, Mobilising Communities, and Building Gender Equality

- Mobilise men and communities
  - Work towards broader forms of social and political change
- For example:
  - Use community workshops and events.
  - Work with influential groups. And ‘gatekeepers’.
  - Use cultural work: art and drama

## Mobilising men *continued*

- Identify and recruit men who are already supportive.
- Use community workshops and events
  - Work through pre-existing groups of men and community structures
  - Use the preparation process as a tool for mobilising people
  - Use the power of personal testimony
  - Use the media for both recruitment and social marketing
  - Document the event
  - Plan for follow-up among those who participated

## Mobilising men *continued*

- Support men in getting organised
  - Technical assistance, resources and sustainability, community meetings
- Work collaboratively
  - Build the network
  - Strengthen civil society coalitions: A ‘big tent’ approach
  - Collaborate with government
  - Develop innovative civil society-government partnerships
- Build capacity
  - Through training and competencies, programme planning, organisational development, and management support

## Challenges in prevention programming and policy

- Implementing comprehensive and integrated interventions
- The transferability of initiatives and strategies across contexts, communities, and cultures
- Identifying and implementing effective forms of programming and pedagogy
- Evaluation: adopting rigorous evaluations, building local evaluation capacity

## What next?

- What are the strategic priorities for MAV?
  - Goals?
  - Strategies?
  - Settings?
  - People?
  - Organisations?
- What are the immediate next steps?
- And after that?

## Take-home messages

1. We must engage boys and men in preventing men's violence against women.
2. Primary prevention strategies can and do work.
3. There are also real challenges.

## Resources

- Online resources on men's roles in ending violence against women:
  - <http://www.xyonline.net/category/article-content/violence>
- Dr Michael Flood's publications:
  - <http://www.xyonline.net/category/authors/michael-flood>
- Contact:
  - [mflood@uow.edu.au](mailto:mflood@uow.edu.au)

## Key resources: on violence prevention, engaging men, etc.

- [www.xyonline.net](http://www.xyonline.net)
- Key guides to engaging men: <http://www.xyonline.net/content/engaging-men-preventing-men%E2%80%99s-violence-against-women-practical-guides-and-manuals>
- Articles, manuals, & other resources: <http://www.xyonline.net/category/article-content/violence>
- Web links to organisations, projects, and campaigns: <http://www.xyonline.net/links#a2>
- References on men's anti-violence work: <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/violence2.html#Antiviolenceactivism>
- References on violence prevention: <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/violence3.html#Violenceprevention>