

# **Men Speak Up: A toolkit for action in men's daily lives**

**A report by Dr. Michael Flood  
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**White Ribbon**



The White Ribbon Campaign is the largest global male-led movement to stop men's violence against women. It engages and enables men and boys to lead this social change. In Australia, White Ribbon is an organisation that works to prevent violence by changing attitudes and behaviours. The prevention work is driven through social marketing, Ambassadors and initiatives with communities, schools, universities, sporting codes and workplaces.

The White Ribbon Policy Research Series is intended to:

- Present Contemporary evidence on violence against women and its prevention;
- Investigate and report on new developments in prevention locally, nationally and internationally; and
- Identify policy and programming issues and provide options for improved prevention strategies and services.

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## Introduction

**Men's violence against women can be reduced and prevented. Individuals can act to lessen violence in their own lives and the lives of those around them, organisations and communities can work to build gender-equal relations between women and men, and governments can take action to shift the structural and cultural underpinnings of men's violence against women.**

There are everyday ways in which men can make a difference. This report explores how individual men can act to prevent and reduce violence in their everyday lives. It focuses on the role that individuals can play, as this is one important aspect of violence prevention, rather than the potential contributions of groups, networks, organisations, and other larger entities. This report focuses on the role that individual men in particular can play, for several reasons. On the one hand, too few men have taken up the issue of men's violence against women, and too many stay silent. On the other hand, growing numbers of men are joining efforts such as the White Ribbon Campaign, and growing numbers are asking, "What can we do?"

Growing numbers of men are asking: How can I support a victim of domestic violence? What steps can I take when I realise that a man I know is abusing and controlling his wife or girlfriend? What do I do when a mate makes a joke about rape? How can I be part of the solution? This report answers this need. It provides a toolkit for men of the everyday strategies they can use to make a difference.

Individuals can make real contributions to the reduction and prevention of men's violence against women, as this report details. At the same time, this will not be enough. We will need widespread social and cultural change in order to shift the social conditions which foster violence against women. In particular, we must address the systemic gender inequalities which underpin men's violence. This requires that groups, movements, communities and governments mobilise to take action. Still, individual men and women play vital roles in generating and sustaining such collective and institutional efforts.

This report is organised into four sections, as follows:

- Part 1 outlines exactly what it is we are trying to reduce and prevent.
- Part 2 identifies how speaking up and taking action make a difference.
- Part 3 explores what men can do.
- Part 4 notes the strategies with which to nourish personal strength, support and inspiration, and acknowledges the mistakes it is easy to make.

## 1. What is it we are trying to reduce and prevent?

The phrase ‘men’s violence against women’ refers to a wide range of forms of violence, abuse, and coercion perpetrated by men against women. Forty years of scholarship and activism have generated a series of insights regarding the key features of this violence.

First, it is important to recognise the range of behaviours which can be identified as violent.

‘Commonsense’ and dominant beliefs limit the range of behaviour which is deemed unacceptable and define other behaviours as normal or inevitable. In contrast, by listening to women’s experiences, feminists have documented a wide range of male behaviours which women perceive as threatening, violent or sexually harassing (Maynard & Winn 1997: 177). This work has broadened what can be named as violence, and generated new terms for forms of violence and abuse which had been invisible or normalised. For example, it is a feminist achievement that forms of forced, coerced, and pressured sex in relationships and families now are named as violence or abuse.

Related to this, feminist work has identified a *continuum* of violence experienced by women (Kelly 1996), from seemingly extreme events like intimate murders to the daily dripping tap of sexual harassment (Wise and Stanley 1987: 114). The notion of a continuum highlights the range of abusive and coercive behaviours women experience, the sheer pervasiveness of violence, the links between seemingly diverse behaviours and events (in terms of their impact, dynamics, and causes), and the overlaps between violence and everyday forms of social and sexual interaction between men and women (Kelly 1987). The continuum is not a representation of the seriousness of different forms of physical and sexual violence: all forms are serious and all have effects (Kelly 1987: 49).

Another crucial insight is that that when it comes to men’s violence against female partners or ex-partners, rather than talking about isolated aggressive acts, often we are talking about a *pattern* of behaviours, linked by *power and control*. Men’s physical violence towards women in relationships and families frequently is accompanied by other forms of abusive, controlling, and harmful behaviour. (Indeed, a man may be using a series of psychological and social tactics of power and control against his partner while avoiding physical violence altogether.) Violence prevention advocates typically use the term ‘domestic violence’ to refer to a systematic pattern of power and control exerted by one person (usually a man) against another (often a woman), involving a variety of physical and non-physical tactics of abuse and coercion, in the context of a current or former intimate relationship. In the typical situation of male-to-female domestic violence, the man often

*threatens his partner with the use of violence against her or their children, sexually assaults her, and intimidates her with frightening gestures, destruction of property, and showing weapons. He isolates her and monitors her behavior, which increases his control, increases her emotional dependence on him, and makes it easier to perpetrate and hide physical abuse. He practises insults, mind-games, and emotional manipulation such that the victim’s self-esteem is undermined and she feels she has no other options outside the relationship. Finally, he minimizes and denies the extent of his violent behavior, disavows responsibility for his actions, and blames the victim for the abuse (Flood 2003: 235-236)*

In many ways therefore, domestic violence or intimate partner abuse can be best understood as chronic behavior that is characterized not by the episodes of physical violence which punctuate the relationship but by the emotional and psychological abuse that the perpetrator uses to maintain control over their partner.

Feminist advocates also have noted that terms such as 'domestic violence' and 'family violence' can deflect attention from the sex of the likely perpetrator (male), likely victim (female), and the gendered character of the violence (Flood 2003: 235).

Four further insights regarding men's violence against women are critical. First, in contrast to the stereotype that rape and other forms of violence are perpetrated by 'abnormal' and 'mad' individuals, the research highlights that most violence against women is perpetrated by 'normal' men, in the context of a gender-unequal society. They are 'normal' men in the sense that they are acting out the gender norms and values with which many men have socialised, in unequal gender relations which themselves have been seen as normal.

Second, there is a crucial link between violence and power. Men's violence both maintains, and is the expression of, men's power over women and children.

From feminist research we now have the important insight that men's violence is an important element in the organisation and maintenance of gender inequality. In fact, rape and other forms of sexual violence have been seen as paradigmatic expressions of the operation of male power over women.

Related to both of these, men's violence against women has social causes. These can be grouped into three clusters.<sup>1</sup>

First, men's violence against women is shaped above all by *gender inequalities*. These are linked to violence at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels, and there are strong associations between violence against women and gender roles, gender norms, and gender relations. Second, there are links between violence against women and the acceptance and perpetration of *other* forms of violence. Third, violence against women is shaped by the material and social resources available to individuals and communities, including patterns of disadvantage (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005).

The fourth and final insight is that men's physical and sexual violence against women is a fundamental barrier to gender equality.

This violence harms women's physical and emotional health, restricts their sexual and reproductive choices, and hinders their participation in political decision-making and public life. Men's violence is a threat to women's autonomy, mobility, self-esteem and everyday safety. Violence against women is now also being described as a threat to or denial of women's human rights and of women's rights to full citizenship. In these senses, men's violence against women is a fundamentally *ethical* and *political* issue.

In short, men's violence against women comprises a diverse range of violent, coercive, or controlling behaviours and strategies. These may or may not involve physical violence. They often take place between men and women who know each other, and they may be deliberately hidden from public view. They may or may not be illegal and criminal. And they may be seen as 'normal' or acceptable by community members.

## 2. Action makes a difference

When individual men take action in their daily lives to challenge men's violence against women, this makes a difference. There is a small but increasing body of evidence that a wide variety of actions adopted by individuals can create change in violence against women or the factors which feed it. There have been various studies documenting that it is possible to encourage people to be 'active' or 'pro-social' bystanders, that is, individuals who act to prevent or reduce violence. Bystander interventions have been shown to increase men's and women's willingness to intervene, skills in intervening, and actual involvement in intervention (McDonald and Flood in-press). There has been far less research, however, on the effectiveness of these interventions themselves. Nevertheless, we can draw support for the claim that action makes a difference from two kinds of studies, of violence prevention efforts and of factors associated with violence against women.

What can individual men do to help reduce or prevent men's violence against women? There are three broad classes of action:

- behaving non-violently ourselves,
- taking action among other men and women, and
- joining in collective action.

First, men must take responsibility for our own violent behaviour and attitudes, and build respectful relations with the women and girls (and other men and boys) in our lives.

Second, men can take steps to challenge violence and violence-supportive behaviour around us, thus acting as active and involved bystanders: intervening in incidents of violence or the situations which lead up to them, supporting victims, challenging perpetrators, and so on.

Third, men can tackle the social and cultural causes of violence, the social foundations of violence, particularly by challenging the attitudes and norms, behaviours, and inequalities which feed into violence against women.

The first step any man must take in seeking to reduce or prevent men's violence against women is to ensure that he is not using violence himself, as noted in further detail below. The discussion of how particular actions can make a difference therefore starts here. But it then moves to other types of everyday intervention.

- When a man who has used violence against a woman chooses to cease doing so, by definition this reduces violence against women.

The troubling fact is that male perpetrators of violence against women may have lengthy patterns of abuse and/or other criminal behaviour, perpetrating chronic and repeated abuse on partner after partner (Klein and Tobin 2008). Many are unlikely to stop without serious intervention by the police and courts. Indeed, some perpetrators – particularly those with unstable lifestyles, substance abuse, and criminal histories – may not be deterred by expectations of negative consequences, whether social or official (Hanson and Wallace-Capretta 2004). Some men cease using direct physical violence against a partner, but intensify their use of other strategies of power and control. On the other hand, men who do cease abusing and controlling a partner are also less likely to use such behaviour with subsequent partners (Klein and Tobin 2008).

A wide range of factors shape the likelihood that any individual man who is using violence against his partner or ex-partner will stop. Men are more likely to fully reform if they acknowledge their violent behaviour and the harm it has caused others; make and enact a commitment to change; address the sense of entitlement that can be used to justify controlling behaviour; address sexist beliefs about the acceptability of using anger and violence against partners; divorce themselves from anti-social and violent peers; address alcohol and drug use; and seek professional help in perpetrators' programs. Other factors also are influential, including arrest, prosecution, and court interventions, and completion of a perpetrator program, although none of these are guarantees that an individual will not persist in abusing or controlling his partner (Hanson and Wallace-Capretta 2004; Klein and Tobin 2008; Scott 2004).

- When a man supports a woman who is being subjected to violence by a partner or ex-partner, he increases the chance that she will seek help, report the violence, escape the violence, and recover from the abuse.

When a man (or woman) responds supportively and respectfully to a female friend, work colleague, or other who is living with violence, it makes a difference. Abused women's psychological wellbeing and their ability to escape from abuse are shaped by the levels of material and emotional support they receive (Goodkind *et al.* 2003). In a qualitative study among New Zealand women who had experienced abuse from a male partner, others' responses to their help-seeking influenced subsequent help-seeking, separation, and eventual recovery from the abuse (Giles *et al.* 2005: 99).

Men's supportive and non-blaming responses to women living with violence also influence their likelihood of reporting the abuse. While victims avoid reporting violence for various reasons, one is their fear that they will be blamed by family and friends, stigmatised, and the criminal justice system will not provide redress (Lievore 2003: 8-28).

- When a man intervenes in a violent incident in progress by offering support or assistance to the woman being attacked, he may lessen the harm she suffers during that incident, and she may hear the message that she is not to blame for and does not deserve the violence inflicted on her.

Existing research from the US suggests that a significant number of incidents of violence take place with others present, and that these bystanders' actions generally are seen by

victims to help. A study of data from crime victimisation surveys over 1993-1999 found that bystanders were present in 29 percent of rapes and sexual assaults (including both sexes of victim and perpetrator, not just men's violence against women) (Hart and Miethe 2008: 638). A more recent study of data on violent crime reported in crime victimisation surveys over 1995 to 2004 found that others were present in nearly two-thirds of the violent victimisations, including 68 percent of physical assaults and 28 percent of sexual assaults (Hart and Miethe 2008: 641).<sup>2</sup>

This data does suggest however that others are less likely to be present in incidents of men's violence against women than in some other forms of violence. There is dramatic variation in the likelihood of bystander presence across different situational contexts for violent crime. Bystanders are most likely to be present in incidents involving physical assaults by strangers and in public, while bystanders (other than women's children) are less likely to be present for the many incidents involving violence against women by known men and taking place in private locations such as houses. For example, bystanders were present during 83 percent of the stranger assaults in public places at night that did not involve a dangerous weapon, compared to only 14 percent of the weaponless nonstranger rapes and sexual assaults that occurred in private locations during the daytime. In general, bystander presence was highest for situations of physical assaults in public places, and lowest for sexual assaults in private locations (Hart and Miethe 2008: 642).

It is encouraging to note that bystanders' actions generally were seen to help. In fact, one of the most traumatic issues for victims or survivors is that others do nothing (Herman 1992). In general, actions by bystanders in response to incidents of rape and sexual assault were perceived by victims to have 'helped' rather than 'worsened' the situation. In addition, perceptions of others as helping were higher for rape than for other forms of violent crime such as robbery (Hart and Miethe 2008: 642-646).

- When a man intervenes in a violent incident in progress by challenging the man who is using violence against a woman, he increases the chance that the perpetrator will at least slow down or limit the violence he's inflicting. The perpetrator may be put on notice that he won't get away with violence, and he may be more likely to take responsibility for his actions.

There has been little research on the impact of bystanders' interventions with the perpetrators of violence during violent incidents. Nevertheless, the research above suggests that, at least as far as victims are concerned, bystanders' actions make the situation better rather than worse. At the same time, third parties may make things worse, by overreacting or saying something which escalates the violence, or inciting the perpetrator to inflict greater injury to victims as a way to maintain or reaffirm masculine, 'tough guy' identities (Hart and Miethe 2008: 638).

There is also evidence that the presence of a bystander may limit the extent to which violence occurs *per se*. A number of studies have found that rapes are less likely to be completed when a bystander is present (Clay-Warner 2002: 692).<sup>3</sup> In one US study for example, rapes were 44 percent less likely to be completed when another person was present (Clay-Warner 2002: 697).

- When a man questions a mate's joke about rape or a colleague's violence-supportive comment, he takes away the mate's false assumption that everyone else agrees with him, he makes it more likely that their opinions and attitudes will shift, and he increases others' willingness to speak up as well.



If individual men think that their peers support and also engage in violence against women, they are more likely to use violence themselves. A series of studies document that men are more likely to sexually assault and harass women if they have peers who give violence-supportive advice, if they are closely attached to abusive peers, and if their peers share negative beliefs about gender and about violence and are involved in physically aggressive or coercive behaviours (Flood and Pease 2006: 40-41). Men who perceive that their male peers support rape myths have a greater willingness to perpetrate rape themselves (Flood and Pease 2006: 41). Therefore, men who take action to break down peer support for violence against women undermine these dynamics.

In addition, there is evidence that when individuals are more likely to intervene in a high-risk situation when they have seen someone else model active bystander behaviours first (Coker et al. 2011: 779). Thus, when individual men (or women) intervene, they make it more likely that others will intervene as well.

- When a father behaves in non-violent and respectful ways in his family, he increases the likelihood that his children will grow up with non-violent and respectful attitudes and relations.

Fathers' gender-just involvements in parenting and gender relations have a positive impact not only on their partners but among their children, in terms of children's attitudes to and involvements in violence. As Crooks et al. (2006: 85-86) note;

*At the individual family level, shifting fathers' attitudes about masculine ideals may help prevent individual perpetration against children and intimate partners, but will also support their children in developing healthy gender identity roles that can withstand prevailing societal messages. Fathers who model nonviolence and gender equity, and also attempt to actively engage their children in exploring these topics, will help their children develop into healthy, well-adjusted adolescents who have some resilience for resisting the destructive gender-based messages propagated by the popular media.*

There is strong evidence that children who either witness violence in their families or are subjected to violence themselves are more likely as adults to adhere to violence-supportive attitudes and to perpetrate violence (Flood and Pease 2006: 33-35). The effects of this 'intergenerational transmission' of violence are particularly strong for boys. In other words, it is boys, rather than girls, who are more likely to grow up to perpetrate violence against women having witnessed or experienced violence themselves (Flood and Pease 2006: 34). It follows from this that if a man treats his female partner with respect and care, rejecting the use of violence and coercion, their children also are more likely to do so in their own relationships in later life.

Fathers also can have positive impacts on their children's potential involvements in violence by avoiding harsh and violent discipline and parenting. The evidence suggests that harsh parenting and corporal punishment by parents is associated with an increased likelihood of dating violence perpetration by boys (Foshee and Matthew 2007: 440). In addition, supportive parenting (including warmth, adequate monitoring, consistent discipline, and communication) decreases the likelihood of dating violence perpetration by boys (Foshee and Matthew 2007: 441).

- When men who are senior leaders of organisations use their influence to encourage take-up of violence prevention initiatives, they also make it more likely that other members of the organisation will support these efforts too.

There is evidence that when individual leaders become advocates for violence prevention, this has flow-on effects for others' support for such work. Men with influence can become 'champions' for violence prevention in their organisations and communities, and this makes a difference. For example, in schools where teachers and other staff intervene in bullying, students themselves are more likely to intervene (Powell 2010: 26). It is easy of course for high-profile men to pay lip-service to violence prevention, with support which is merely tokenistic. Male leaders' support only makes a real difference if it is substantive and tied to action.

### **3. What men can do**

What can individual men do to help prevent or reduce men's violence against women? There are three broad forms of action: behaving non-violently ourselves, taking action among other men and women, and taking wider collective action. Given its focus on what individual men can do, this report focuses on the first two.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***What individual men can do***

- Start with yourself.
  - Don't use violence.
  - Build respectful and non-violent relations with women.
  - Boycott and resist sexist and violence-supportive culture.
  - Inform yourself of the realities of men's violence against women.
- Be an active and involved bystander.
  - Intervene in violent incidents.
  - Intervene in high-risk situations.
  - Challenge perpetrators and potential perpetrators.
  - Support victims and survivors.
  - Be an egalitarian role model.
  - Challenge the social norms and inequalities which sustain men's violence against women.

Men do not necessarily work through these three kinds of strategies in order. Some men start with the second and third, and in doing so, realise that they need to work on the first. Some men focus on the first and second, and never take up the third form of action. They work on themselves and with others, but do not engage in public and collective action. In any case, doing the first – behaving non-violently ourselves – is a bottom line for all efforts to reduce and prevent men's violence against women.

Different men will enact the strategies below in different ways, with differing styles and strategies. There is no one right way. Some men use humour or anecdote, others are stern or even angry, while others speak from the heart or from their ethical or political or spiritual principles. While there is no one right way, there are certainly some wrong ways. Some men's responses to violent and violence-supportive behaviour are wrong either because they are unethical or ineffective or both. For example, they may be unethical if they replicate the problem, using violence to stop violence. Some responses are

ineffective. For instance, when a male friend makes a violence-supportive comment or joke, you are unlikely to change his mind with hostile personal attack.

The discussion below offers a range of tips for intervening in violence and the behaviours and relations associated with violence. It assumes that appropriate strategies depend in part on the circumstances, the participants, and the context, and that even the most carefully enacted strategy may not be successful.

### **(a) Start with yourself**

Men must start by 'putting their own house in order'. Take responsibility for violent behaviour and attitudes and strive to build non-violent and respectful relations with the women and girls (and other men and boys) in your life.

*Don't use violence.* Look honestly at your own behaviour. Reflect on, and work toward changing, any abusive and controlling behaviours of your own. If you have been violent towards your spouse or girlfriend in the past and have any chance of continuing in the future, then you urgently need professional intervention. Contact local domestic violence or sexual assault services and enrol in a behaviour change program.

Men must look critically at our own social and sexual relations with women, rather than assuming that violence is a problem simply of 'other men'. (See Part 4 for more on this.)

*Ensure that your sexual relations are consenting.* Check out the sex you have with your girlfriend, wife, boyfriend, partner or in one-night stands. Don't pressure a woman or man to have sex. Realise that your strength, size, social role and age are all factors that can contribute to a woman's feeling of powerlessness against your pressure for sex. Don't guilt-trip, expect sex in return for buying dinner or blackmail her or him with leaving the relationship.

*Talk about sex.* Consent should happen at every stage of sexual activity. Say what you want to do and check out what she or he wants to do. Discussing mutual expectations and clarifying any mixed messages eliminates confusion and greatly reduces the risk of sexual assault. You can ask general 'check-in' questions: How do you feel about this? How are you doing? Is everything okay? Is this good? (Weinberg and Biernbaum 1993: 96). And you can ask specific questions: Can I touch you here? Can I lick you? Can I be inside you? Say what you'd like to do and ask what she or he would like to do. Take "no" for an answer, and do not assume that silence means consent. Take responsibility for your sexuality. Don't assume that if you are being sexual with a person on one level, then you can automatically start being sexual on other levels. When a man has an erection, it doesn't mean he has to put it somewhere.

Individual men also can minimise the ways in which they appear threatening to women. For example, if a woman is walking in front of you along a dark street, give her lots of room or cross to the other side of the road. Women have good reasons to be afraid of men in public, and until men's violence against women ends, men in general will be perceived as potential threats.

*Build respectful and non-violent relations with women.* Beyond ceasing or avoiding the use of physical and sexual violence, men must also work to build egalitarian relations with the women in their lives. This includes addressing the myriad of more subtle ways in which it is possible for one person to control or dominate another. Do you dominate conversations? Do you crowd women's space? Do you put women down?

Whether we like it or not, males are routinely socialised in ways which encourage us to act in dominating and privileged ways. Resisting and undoing this is a lifelong task. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work toward changing them.

**To build non-violent and equal relationships with female partners, men should:**

- Be respectful: listen non-judgementally, be emotionally affirming, value opinions;
- Negotiate and behave fairly: seek mutually satisfying resolutions to conflicts, be willing to compromise;
- Share responsibility: mutually agree on fair distributions of household work, make family decisions together;
- Adopt economic partnership: make money decisions together, and make sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements;
- Be non-threatening: talk and act so that she feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things;
- Be honest and accountable: accept responsibility for yourself, admit being wrong, and communicate openly and truthfully.
- Offer trust and support: support her goals in life, and respect her right to her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.<sup>5</sup>

*Boycott and resist sexist and violence-supportive culture.* Men must also address our involvements in the wider sexist and violence-supportive cultures which underpin men's violence against women. This is true for example of our use of language and media. Use inclusive, non-sexist language. Sexist language helps create a climate where women are second-class citizens, less than men, and violence and abuse become more acceptable.

Don't consume or fund media which is sexist or which endorses and normalises men's violence against women. Boycott films and TV, websites, music and literature that portray women in a sexually degrading or violent manner. Practice criticising their messages – that women are nothing more than sex objects, men are driven by uncontrollable desires, and so on. Develop an awareness of the cultural supports for violence against women. Develop a 'crap detector' to recognise the myths. When you see sex without consent on TV, in a film or book, remind yourself that it is rape. Question the homophobic (anti-gay) norms which limit men's lives and prop up dominating forms of manhood.

*Inform yourself.* Another part of putting your house in order is informing yourself. Build a solid working knowledge of the realities of men's violence against women. To do this, talk with and listen to women. Find out what it feels like to live with the threat of rape, harassment, and other forms of violence every day. Find out how they like to be supported. Ask what they would like you to do to challenge violence. Talk with your mother, your sister, your grandmother, your friends, your girlfriend or wife, or your co-workers about how they are treated, and ask them about the kinds of things that men can do to create a community of equality. One issue here is that men may be tempted to seek reassurance from women that they're 'one of the good guys'. In turn, women may

be tempted to give reassurance, given that women often are socialised to protect men's feelings. Strive to behave ethically, without inviting women to protect your ego.

You can also attend programs, take courses, watch films, and read articles and books about violence, gender inequality, and masculinities. Read women's and feminist writing and theory.<sup>6</sup> Educate yourself (and others) about how larger social forces and inequalities affect men's and women's relations. Learn from, and advocate for, feminism.

### **(b) Take action among the people around you**

*Intervene in violent incidents.* Men can intervene in other men's violence against women, that is, in incidents or situations of violence as they take place.

The first thing to note is that direct physical confrontation is rarely the most appropriate strategy. As Katz (2004: 6) notes,

*Many people mistakenly believe that they have only two options in instances of actual or potential violence – intervene physically and possibly expose themselves to personal harm, or do nothing. They often choose to do nothing as a result. But this is a false and limited set of choices.*

When men first begin to consider the part they can play in preventing or reducing violence against women, there are two roles which suggest themselves because they fit so neatly with traditional constructions of masculinity. One is the 'punisher', the violent hero who exacts violent revenge on his enemies. This means that some men imagine taking bloody revenge on the men who bash or assault women. Another is the chivalric 'white knight', who sweeps in on his horse to rescue the victim woman and save her from harm. This means that some men imagine that their role is to 'protect' women. Neither role, however, is particularly useful. And both are based in highly problematic notions of men as dominant, aggressive, and superior to women. Fortunately, there are better ways in which men can play a positive role in preventing and reducing violence.

There is a rapidly growing literature on the steps and skills needed for interventions in violent incidents, reflecting the emergence of various education programs based on 'bystander intervention'. While this report cannot provide a comprehensive guide to intervention, it highlights some key elements of effective interventions in violence.<sup>7</sup>

Appropriate strategies for intervention in violent incidents depend on various factors, including the levels of violence involved and the risks to you, the context, and the presence of others. Intervening in violent situations can make them less dangerous or more dangerous. Abusive situations are dangerous – stop and think before getting into them. But not stepping in keeps it dangerous and says to the violent person that it is okay to hurt someone. And it tells the person being hurt that no one cares, that she isn't important. When violence isn't challenged, it leaves all of us feeling unsafe (Creighton and Kivel 1995: 63).

Challenging perpetrators and potential perpetrators is a vital way of *holding them accountable*. When men using violence against women are not held to account for their violent behaviour, whether by bystanders or peers or workmates or the police and courts, they are more likely to continue their violence.

**When you encounter a violent incident – such as a man assaulting a woman in the street – some useful strategies are as follows:**

- Call the police.
- Be a witness. Stand far enough away to be safe but close enough for the violent person to see you and be aware that they are being watched.
- Get others' support. Ask others who are nearby to help.
- Verbally intervene. Tell the violent person clearly that his actions are not okay, they are a crime, and you are calling the police. Ask the victim if she needs help. Ask, "Are you okay, do you need a taxi?" Make the man feel noticed, and offer practical assistance to the woman. Say something to the man: "Hey, what are you doing?" "That's not on, mate," and so on. Stick around to make sure the situation has cooled down.
- Create a distraction – such that the abused person has time to get away or the perpetrator slows down or ceases his violence. For example, ask a man harassing a woman on the street for directions or the time (Virginia Tech 2010).

There are other strategies which you may use either during or after the incident.

- Talk to a friend who is verbally or physically abusive to his partner in a private, calm moment, rather than in public or directly after an abusive incident. Tell him that what you witnessed was not okay, and he needs to get some help.
- Talk to a group of the perpetrator's friends and, together, decide on a course of action.
- If you have witnessed a friend or colleague abusing a partner, talk to a group of the victim's friends and strategize a group response.
- Talk to the woman – at some point – and let her know you saw what was going on and you're willing to help her.
- If you're a high school or college student, approach a trusted teacher, social worker, or health professional. Tell them what you've observed and ask them to do something, or ask them to advise you on how you might proceed (Family Violence Prevention Fund 2004).

There are situations in which individual men find that their male friends in a group are engaged in harassing or abusive behaviour, such as sexually harassing a woman walking by. As well as the strategies discussed below, the individual may wish to:

- Distract your friends by saying something like "chill out, guys".
- Try to convince your peers to stop.
- Walk away, signalling your rejection of their harassing behaviour.

The typical character of men's violence against women poses real challenges for intervention. Men's violence against female partners often takes place behind closed doors. Often it involves frequent, even routine, but low-level forms of assault rather than extreme physical violence. And often these are accompanied by a range of controlling and coercive tactics: verbal and psychological intimidation and degradation, social isolation, and control (over everything from basic material resources like food, money and sleep to imposed 'rules' about everyday living) (Stark 2010: 207). Thus, the violent 'incidents' which are the focus above are likely to be part of a much wider pattern of controlling behaviour used by the man against his female partner.

Given all this, interventions into men's violence against women are at least as likely to involve interventions into private behaviour as public behaviour. Rather than coming across a man assaulting a woman in the street, you may discover or suspect that a man is abusing and controlling his partner or ex-partner in private. The perpetrator is likely to be going to great lengths to hide and manage his coercive control of his partner. Nevertheless, many of the strategies identified above and below remain relevant, whether in challenging perpetrators or supporting victims and survivors.

*Intervene in high-risk situations.* It is also important to intervene in the situations which are high in risk for violence against women.

When it comes to forms of violence against women such as sexual assault, there are some situations which involve an elevated risk of violence. For example, there is some evidence that women in colleges and universities are at increased risk of sexual assault in situations where they or men present are intoxicated, in private locations with male acquaintances, or when left alone by their friends at a party or bar (Burn 2009: 780).

One scenario often used in bystander intervention training is where an individual is at a party and sees a man leading a highly intoxicated woman to a bedroom. In such situations, you may wish to:

- Talk to the woman, checking that she is aware enough to consent to potential sexual activity, and offering support;
- Talk to the man, emphasising that someone incapacitated due to alcohol or other drugs cannot properly consent to sex and that any sex will be sexual assault.

There are various ways in which men can help to lessen women's vulnerability to violence. This is delicate territory, as it is easy for men to fall into a protective and paternalistic role towards women, inspired by traditional notions of male chivalry and female weakness. Male chivalry is compatible with men's violence against women.<sup>8</sup> Men should not assume that women want or need their 'protection'. However, there are ways in which men can appropriately support women. For example, a man may offer, or a woman may ask, if he can walk with her to her car in a car park at night or make sure she gets home alright.

*Challenge perpetrators and potential perpetrators.* There are further strategies which are appropriate in challenging individual men's use of or support for violence and abuse, both after episodes of violence and more generally.

This discussion has focused so far on ways to challenge men who are seen actually using violence against women. However, it is also vital to challenge behaviours and

attitudes among men which either (a) are oppressive towards women in other ways, or (b) indicate that they are more likely than other men to commit violence. In terms of the first, some men treat women in controlling, dominating and humiliating ways, without ever using physical or sexual violence. In terms of the second, some men for example show 'pre-rape behaviours' which indicate an increased likelihood of perpetration (Burn 2009: 780). Such behaviours include various forms of sexual entitlement, power and control, hostility and anger, and acceptance of interpersonal violence (Rozee and Koss 2001: 299). For example, sexual entitlement may be evident in an individual "touching women with no regard for their wishes, sexualizing relationships that are not sexual, inappropriately intimate conversation, sexual jokes at inappropriate times or places, or commenting on women's bodies, preference for impersonal as opposed to emotionally bonded relationship context for sexuality, and endorsement of the sexual double standard" (Rozee and Koss 2001: 299).

Therefore, it is vital to challenge such behaviours and not just blunt expressions of violence. For example, men may encourage each other to treat women with respect, challenge violent or sexist behaviour, and demand responsibility and accountability from their male friends and family members. Strategies for responding for example to violence-supportive comments are given below.



## Support victims and survivors.

There are three key elements to appropriate responses to women who are the victims and survivors of men's violence.<sup>9</sup> When a woman tells you that she has been assaulted or raped or is experiencing control and abuse;

- *Listen:* To what she has to say and let her take her time.
- *Believe:* Women rarely lie about rape or sexual abuse, yet our culture includes the widespread myth that they routinely lie. It is important to believe what they are saying.
- *Respect:* Both her feelings and decisions.<sup>10</sup>

To play a positive role, also:

- Gently ask if you can help. Ask her what you can do for her. Know what services are available.
- Remember that it is not her fault. No-one asks to be abused or deserves abuse. Don't ask, "What were you wearing?" Nor can the victim be blamed for not preventing the abuse. The responsibility lies with the abuser.
- Say some simple things that are effective: I'm glad you told me. I'm sorry this happened to you. You did not deserve this. This was not your fault. You are not to blame (Eigenberg and Peters 2011).
- Recognise and praise the courage it takes for a survivor to speak.
- Refrain from asking questions. Victims do not want to feel interrogated. Let them share what they feel most comfortable talking about (Eigenberg and Peters 2011).
- Accept her reactions. Don't judge, even if this is not what you were expecting or does not fit your ideas of how a person who has been raped or assaulted should behave. A wide range of reactions are normal. Most victims just need you to "hear" them.
- Support her choices – they are hers to make even if they are not the ones you think you would make (Eigenberg and Peters 2011).

*Be an egalitarian influence.* Fathers, uncles, older brothers, coaches, teachers, and mentors can teach boys and young men that there is no place for violence in a relationship and foster non-violence and gender equality. This is the focus of campaigns such as the US Family Violence Prevention Fund's "Coaching Boys Into Men" effort.<sup>11</sup> These and other campaigns offer various tips, as follows:<sup>12</sup>

- Talk to and teach boys and young men and girls and young women about healthy and respectful relationships. 'Walk the walk' by being a good role model. Lead by example.
- Teach them early and teach them often.
- Talk to your children about how to be fair and respectful in relationships. And how to deal safely with anger and aggression.
- Encourage your sons and daughters to have egalitarian dating relationships. Address abusive behaviour among your children and their friends.

*Challenge the social norms and inequalities which sustain men's violence against women.* There are a wide range of ways in which men can act in their everyday lives to shift the attitudes, practices, and inequalities which contribute to men's violence against women. Doing so undermines the ways in which many men's silence as passive bystanders allows some men's violence against women to continue – the ways in which, while some men are direct *perpetrators*, many others are *perpetuators* (Pease 2008: 13).

One of the common situations in which men find themselves is where a mate, colleague, or other person makes a violence-supportive or sexist comment or joke. There are some typical ones. A man may suggest that women who are raped or assaulted somehow 'provoked' it, 'deserved' or 'asked for it', or enjoyed it. Victim-blaming is a key cultural support for men's violence against women. A man may recycle the myth that women routinely make false allegations of domestic violence or abuse in family law proceedings (Flood 2010b: 336-39). He may make a comment or joke which trivialises the seriousness and impact of violence against women. Men (and women) routinely find themselves in the presence of sexist insults and jokes, prejudicial comments, and stereotypical put-downs. In response to these, you may:

- *Make your concern plain.* Say "That's sexist and I don't think it's funny," or, "I think those words are really hurtful," or refrain from laughing when you're expected to. Question friends and acquaintances when they use insults like 'cunt' or 'slut'. You may want to use "I" statements, which involve three elements: state your feelings, name the behavior, and state how you want the person to respond. "I feel when you . Please don't do that anymore." (Virginia Tech 2010).
- *Personalise the violence or injustice. Bring it home.* Make the harms associated with violence more real by personalising them. Bring it home by asking, "What if that was your sister / daughter / mother?" Ask them if they would feel differently if it were their mother, sister, friend, girlfriend, etc. that they were saying things about. Say, "I hope no one ever talks about you like that." (Virginia Tech 2010). Describe the experiences of people you know or people you've read about and could know. "A good friend of mine was raped. It's a terrible experience – no woman ever deserves to be raped or wants to be raped."
- *Remind him that she has feelings and rights.* Sometimes a simple statement like, "Just like your mum or your sister, she has the right to be treated with respect" is a reminder that we are all human beings with the right to live free of abuse (Be The Hero 2009).
- *Provide information.* Provide the person with *information* about men's violence against women. Highlight the facts and debunk the myths.
- *Question the assumption.* Challenge the logic of the statement. No one deserves to be raped, beaten or stalked. No one asks for it. No one likes it. No one sets out to "make it happen to them" (Eigenberg and Peters 2011).
- *Convey your feelings and principles.* Show emotion and passion. Show that you're deeply affected by what was said or done: it makes you sad, angry, etc. Tell them that these types of statements make you uncomfortable and ask them not to say these things around you.
- *Use humour.* Sometimes you can make a serious point with humour. For example, you can playfully question sexist and derogatory remarks. Humour can make the situation less tense. Do this carefully so the man does not feel publicly mocked while at the same time he understands you are making a serious point (Be The Hero 2009).

- *Ask for an explanation.* You can ask the abusive person, “What are you doing?” or “What are you saying?”, to invite critical reflection and change.
- *Remind him of his ‘best self’.* You can encourage individual’s ‘best sides’, e.g. by saying, “Come on, you are better than that” (Be The Hero 2009).
- *Use your friendship.* You may reframe the intervention as caring and non-critical, for example by saying, “Hey John... as your friend I’ve gotta tell you that getting a girl drunk to have sex with her isn’t cool, and could get you in a lot of trouble. Don’t do it.” (Virginia Tech 2010)
- *Invite group pressure.* Often you will not be the only one who feels uncomfortable if someone is being disrespectful or abusive. It can help to say in front of everyone something like, “I don’t feel good about this. Does anyone else feel uncomfortable too?” (Be The Hero 2009)

Many of these strategies also are appropriate in more *proactive* efforts, in which you are starting a conversation about men’s violence against women rather than responding to something problematic which has already been said. So;

- *Talk to other men* about men’s violence against women. Start by mentioning something you read, a news story, a conversation you had, a woman or man you know, or something you’ve been thinking about.

There are a wide range of further ways in which men can help to build non-violent and gender-just communities through their individual actions. Gender inequalities are the key foundation for men’s violence against women, and building gender equality makes a vital contribution to ending men’s violence against women. Men can strive for gender equality in their identities, everyday interactions, and their relations with women and other men.

For example:

- Develop new forms of identity or masculinity, which do not depend on dominance or entitlement over others. Live your potential without harming others.
- Strive to ensure that your relations with women – in the kitchen, bedroom, the office, on the shopfloor and on the street – are egalitarian and just.
  - Do your fair share of childcare and housework.
  - Support equal employment opportunity. Treat women (and men) at all levels of your workplaces and organisations with respect.
- Find circles of friends and peers who share your vision of gender justice.
- Boycott and resist sexist and violence-supportive culture. (See above.) Find and celebrate forms of media and culture (books, film, music, blogs, etc.) which affirm gender equality and non-violence.
- Support local domestic violence and sexual assault services and projects. Give money, volunteer your time, and advocate for their funding and support. Ask women what they’d like to see men doing, and then follow up on it.
- Make your vote count. Support political candidates who are committed to the full social, economic and political equality of women. Oppose those who are not committed.

This report focuses on the steps individual men can take in their everyday lives to prevent and reduce men's violence against women. It should go without saying, however, that men must also take part in collective advocacy and activism in partnership with women. To create the widespread social change necessary to end violence against women, we will need concerted action by social movements and networks, community organisations and workplaces, other institutions, and governments (Flood 2011a, 2011b).

#### **4. Personal strategies for strength, support, and inspiration**

Most men believe that men's violence against women is unacceptable, and most believe that they can play a personal role in ending it (Flood 2010a: 12-26). At the same time, men often find it hard to speak up and take action. There are significant barriers to men taking steps to reduce or prevent men's violence against women (Flood 2010a: 35-38). Nevertheless, a small but growing band of men are working to make change, both in their personal lives and through wider public advocacy. Having outlined the strategies which individual men can adopt to make change, this report turns now to the ways in which men can nurture their own strength and their commitment to this work.<sup>13</sup>

##### ***Be bold.***

Develop the sense that you are *compelled to action*. You no longer have a choice to do nothing, and doing nothing contributes to the problem. You can make a difference, and you have strengths and skills which can help.<sup>14</sup> In other words, develop a passionate ethic that you can and will contribute to social change.

Doing this is partly about getting used to being *political* – to speaking up, making a fuss, causing a stir. It means becoming more comfortable with questioning taken-for-granted assumptions and challenging unjust behaviour. And it means moving from helplessness to action by learning what to do and how to do it.

##### ***Learn a language for speaking about violence against women.***

Men must learn a language for speaking about men's violence against women. This enables men to raise the issue with mates, colleagues, sons, and others, challenge violence-supportive comments and behaviours, and speak out in other ways. Be able to describe the seriousness of men's violence against women, its typical dynamics and impacts, and its causes and contexts. Be able to articulate how violence against women is a men's issue.<sup>15</sup> Realise the ways in which violence is relevant to your own life and to the women you care for.<sup>16</sup>

As part of this, speak from the heart. Find and nurture powerful personal stories of your commitment to ending violence against women: the experiences that have shaped it, the values and principles on which it is based, and the hopes and dreams it reflects.

### ***Get comfortable with the F-word and the G-word.***

Some men struggle with taking action to end men's violence against women because of concerns about the F-word (feminism) and the G-word (gay) (Flood 2011b: 36-37). Another important strategy therefore is to neutralise these concerns.

Reclaim the F-word. Men's violence against women is an unavoidably feminist issue: feminist women first identified the problem, and have led the way in analysis and activism in response. Develop a simple language for expressing your support for feminist ideals – for the principle of equality between men and women, for the simple idea that women are people too, for women's right to live free of violence, and so on. You don't have to be, or claim to be, an expert on feminism. But learn what feminism really is, whether through books or websites or groups, and move beyond simplistic and negative stereotypes in media and popular culture. Get good too at side-stepping or rebutting the idea that campaigns focused on violence against women are 'anti-male'.

Some will perceive men as 'less than real men' for taking up the issue of men's violence against women (Crooks *et al.* 2007: 231). Rather than defensively reasserting your manly credentials, undermine their assumptions. Decide to discard the narrow, sexist gender stereotypes – real men put other men first, real men are dominant over women, and so on – which keep men in line.

Reclaim the G-word. If someone accuses you of being gay because of your action to end violence against women, say, "So what? What's the problem?" Again, question the homophobic assumptions which guide such reactions. Argue that all men – straight, gay, and every other sexual flavour – can be great allies for women. Acknowledge and affirm gay and bisexual men's participation in this work. Point out the irony that men are thought to be gay for being involved in ending men's violence against women when many are involved because of their love and care for the women in their lives.

In short, move beyond the anti-feminist and homophobic norms which structure so many men's lives.

### ***Be vigilant.***

Sexism is seductive. Men are constantly invited into forms of domination over women. We're invited by advertising and pornography to see women only as objects and orifices. We're invited by male acquaintances to let women's interests come second to ours: 'Don't be wrapped around her finger. Are you pussy-whipped?' Indeed, sometimes we're invited by women themselves to be the one who makes the rules, because of gendered patterns of interaction. Only good habits or vigilance prevent us from accepting these invitations into inequality. Either we resist because we live habitually gender-just lives in which we see such behaviours as unthinkable or even incomprehensible, or we resist because we recognize that here is a moment when we can choose sexist inequality or justice, and we choose justice.

### ***Find and build communities of support.***

Communities of support are vital to your ability to sustain a personal commitment to and involvement in anti-violence work. Build communities of support through friends, groups, and networks. Join or form a White Ribbon group or anti-violence men's group or community group. Keep in touch with like-minded others through email lists, Facebook, and so on.

Research among men involved in anti-violence work finds that this involvement allows men to build connections with others, particularly other men, and to foster community and mutual support. And it allows them to have friendships with other men and 'do masculinity' in ways different from 'traditional' approaches (Casey and Smith 2010: 965-6).

### ***Start with small steps and build to bigger things.***

Start small. It is unreasonable to expect individual men to have completed a thorough self-evaluation and reconstruction prior to their involvement in anti-violence work (Crooks *et al.* 2007: 223). Men don't tend to walk through the door with an already sophisticated understanding of gender, masculinity, and violence against women. But individual men can take specific, small actions as part of their growing involvement in ending men's violence against women. Indeed, these actions in turn will alter their attitudes to masculinity and raise their awareness of gender issues (Crooks *et al.* 2007: 224). In the words of that lovely Paul Kelly song, "From little things, big things grow."

### ***Hold yourself and others to standards which are higher, but not impossible.***

Take responsibility for your own sexist and violent behaviour and attitudes. Strive to reach a higher standard. But as noted below, don't assume that you must be perfect.

### ***Acknowledge your mistakes.***

Rather than living in shame and silence, acknowledge the mistakes you have made. Make amends where you can, taking responsibility for violent or oppressive behaviour and acknowledging the hurt you have caused.

### ***Celebrate your successes.***

Celebrate the steps you take in reducing and preventing men's violence against women, whether through personal rewards (treats, gifts and so on) or through public celebrations (awards nights and so on). The evidence is that sustained behaviour change is maintained in part by positive reinforcement of desired behaviours (Crooks *et al.* 2007: 230). Also build rewards into your anti-violence work by involving yourself in groups with positive identities and dynamics,

### ***Remind yourself of what you are for, not just what you are against.***

In campaigning *against* men's violence against women, remind yourself of what you are *for*. Feminist activists and scholars have developed visions of an eroticism based not on inequality and violence but on consent, safety, and mutual pleasure. They wish to create relations between and among women and men which are just, empowering and peaceful. More broadly, there is a vision of a community, a country, characterised by equality and justice between and among men and women. Nourish your personal commitment by finding inspiring visions of gender equality and respect, whether in film, literature, music, or elsewhere. Develop an understanding of how you and other men (and women) will benefit from non-violence and gender equality.<sup>17</sup>

## ***Make use of resources. Do your homework.***

Finally, do your homework. There's no need to re-invent the wheel. There is now a wide range of introductions, guides, and other materials on men's positive roles in ending violence against women: books, articles, blogs, videos, workshop manuals, and more. Make use of resources, and spread the word.<sup>18</sup>

## **Mistakes to avoid**

For men who begin to take action in their everyday lives to end violence against women, there are some common mistakes to avoid.

### ***Seeing only other men as the problem***

It is tempting for individual men to think that the problem of men's violence against women is a problem only of *other* men. To speak personally for a moment, it may be easy or comforting to think, "I've never bashed a woman. I've never held a knife to a woman's throat and forced her into sex. Violence is a problem of *other* men, men *not* like me". But once we realise that violence and abuse can take various forms, it's not so simple. For me for example, I would not say that I have raped a woman. But I have realised that there were times when I have used 'soft pressure', guilt-tripped a woman into sex, or done something or kept going even when I knew she wasn't quite comfortable with it. I've become more aware of how using pornography in my teens shaped my sexual attitudes in dodgy ways. I've become more conscious of the ways I sometimes treat my partner unfairly. In short, I've realised that there are ways in which I too am 'part of the problem'. In involving ourselves in ending men's violence against women, men must critically scrutinise our own attitudes and practices, and avoid 'exceptionalising' ourselves as fundamentally better than other men.

While dedicating myself to ending violence against women has involved personal and troubling challenges, it has also had profound personal benefits. It's deepened my relationship with my partner – I've learnt skills in communication, and respect, our relationship is deeper, and yes, the sex is better too. It's enriched my parenting. It's helped my friendships with men too, encouraging me to move beyond bravado and boasting to more intimate forms of connection. My male friends and I still do 'boosy' things, but we don't bond by putting others down. More widely, I've been able to take part in networks and communities of amazing and inspiring men and women.

Related to the issue of men making exceptions of themselves is claiming to be free of sexism. While it is valuable that some men wish to see themselves as free of sexism, it's not quite accurate. In a sexist society, all of us are sexist to some degree. All men learn sexist thoughts and behaviours, all of us receive patriarchal privileges whether we want to or not, and all of us are complicit to some degree in sexism. Our task is not to be non-sexist, as this is impossible, but to be anti-sexist. Yes, we can rid ourselves of particular sexist assumptions and stop certain behaviours, but in a sexist culture we can never be entirely free of sexism, because as men, we will still receive patriarchal privileges. For example, our voices and beliefs will usually be given more authority, we will

be assumed often to be more competent and promotable workers than women, and we will experience levels of physical and sexual freedom denied to many women.

### ***Waiting until you're perfect***

While some men claim that they are free of the problem, others know they are not and feel they must wait for perfection before they can speak up. Instead, for men to play a positive role in ending violence against women, we do not have to be perfect. We do not have to have achieved sainthood. The White Ribbon, for example, is not a badge of perfection. And, in getting involved, even with the best of intentions, at times we will make mistakes, say the wrong thing, and so on. The bottom line is that we take responsibility for our actions and attitudes, recognise the hurt we have caused, and strive for a higher standard.

### ***Talking the talk but not walking the walk***

Another common mistake is 'talking the talk but not walking the walk'. Perhaps some kind of gap between our political aspirations and our personal practices is inevitable. Personal change is partial and uneven, and our personal lives are messy and complex. Still, men have a responsibility to shift what we do, not just what we say.

### ***Dominating***

Reflecting their socialisation as men in a sexist society, some men deliberately or inadvertently behave in dominating ways in anti-violence work: using their new-found knowledge to do power to women, claiming to be better feminists than women, playing off one women's group against another, or taking over women's spaces. Men and women learn to relate in ways which advantage men as a group and disadvantage women as a group, because of wider gender inequalities and gender norms. It should not surprise us that these same gendered patterns of interaction are visible sometimes in anti-violence work. Men

*may struggle with complicity in patriarchal behaviours and attitudes. Many men have carried an 'invisible backpack' of privilege, a taken-for-granted set of unearned benefits and assets... When women and men work together, gendered norms of male-female interaction can hinder egalitarian relationships and drain women's labour and emotional energies. In ways that mirror the patterns of traditional heterosexual relationships... men may expect nurturance and emotional support from women and women may comply with unequal relations because of their internalised sexism. (Flood 2005: 464)*

As men come to be involved in ending men's violence against women, inevitably we make some mistakes. There is much to learn, and we will sometimes get it wrong as we learn and grow.



## **5. Can we build it? Yes we can.**

Men can play vital roles in helping to reduce and prevent men's violence against women. This report has shown how men can make a difference. In their everyday lives, men can act in ways which will help undermine violence against women and the social and cultural dynamics which sustain it.

Men who care for women, men who care for justice and equality, and men who care for the wellbeing of our communities and society must act to end violence against women in their own lives and the lives of those around them. There is much to do, and we have only just begun.

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## Endnotes

- 1 See Flood (2011b: 9-11) for a short account of these, and Flood (2007) for a much more detailed account.
- 2 Bystanders were defined as any person or group of persons other than the victim or offender, and at least 12 years of age.
- 3 'Completed' means that forced or coerced acts of vaginal, anal, or oral penetration took place, whereas attacks in which forced or coerced penetration was attempted but not accomplished are considered 'attempted rape'.
- 4 This section draws on a variety of guides to what men can do to prevent and reduce violence against women and to build gender equality. These guides have been compiled at <http://www.xyonline.net/content/what-men-can-do-stop-sexism-and-male-violence>.
- 5 These are drawn from the 'Equality Wheel' developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, Minnesota, USA. See <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/training/wheels.html>.
- 6 You might wish to start with the introductory texts listed here: <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/feministworks.html#Heading3>.
- 7 These are drawn from various sources which you may wish to consult. Sources include Creighton and Kivel (1995), a section in the Family Violence Prevention Fund's online "Toolkit for Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-Based Violence" <http://toolkit.endabuse.org/GetToWork/WhatMenAndBoys/TakingAction.html>, the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign's "Say something" page at [http://www.whiteribbon.ca/educational\\_materials/default.asp?load=saysomething](http://www.whiteribbon.ca/educational_materials/default.asp?load=saysomething), and other materials.
- 8 Under traditional systems of chivalry, men may make use of women's fear of rape, with each man maintaining a hold on "his" woman by threatening her with what could be done to her, in the absence of his protection, by the rest of the men (Eisenstein, 1984: 31). In the chivalry system, men protect women from other men and women get chivalry for the price of chastity and faithfulness (Griffin 1979).
- 9 The term 'survivor' is used in recognition of women's agency and resistance in the face of violence.
- 10 Both this and the material immediately below are drawn from <http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/Howtohelp2.php> and a campaign presentation which was part of the Green Dot campaign (Eigenberg and Peters 2011).
- 11 See [http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/section/our\\_work/men\\_and\\_boys](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/section/our_work/men_and_boys).
- 12 For further online resources, see the following four items: (1) A webpage by the South African organisation Sonke Gender Justice: [http://www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=72](http://www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=72); (2) The Canadian White Ribbon Campaign's "It starts with you, It stays with him" campaign at <http://www.itstartswithyou.ca/>; (3) the Family Violence Prevention Fund's brochure "Tough Talk: What boys need to know about relationship abuse", available at [http://www.vawnet.org/summary.php?doc\\_id=1364&find\\_type=web\\_sum\\_GC](http://www.vawnet.org/summary.php?doc_id=1364&find_type=web_sum_GC); and (4) the African Fathers' Initiative at [http://www.africanfathers.org/page.php?p\\_id=357](http://www.africanfathers.org/page.php?p_id=357).
- 13 This isn't a guide to sustaining activism, but people wanting such guides may consult the works listed here: <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/menfeminism.html#Socialchange>.
- 14 This is one theme in the accounts of men involved in violence prevention work (Casey and Smith 2010: 961-2).
- 15 See the short article at <http://www.xyonline.net/content/violence-against-women-mens-issue> for such a discussion. This is also reprinted in Flood (2011b: 24-25).
- 16 Again, this is a theme in the accounts of men involved in violence prevention work (Casey and Smith 2010: 963-65).
- 17 See Flood (2011b: 24-26) for a brief discussion of these.
- 18 See the following for a short guide to key online resources: <http://www.xyonline.net/content/online-resources-men%E2%80%99s-roles-stopping-violence-against-women-one-page-handout>.

**White Ribbon**

