

# 10 Things You Can Do to Stop Rape

## **Know that language is powerful.**

Words that dehumanize women, frequently in a sexualized way, are common. When we describe someone as an object meant to be acted upon, then discarded, it gets easier to treat her that way. Use humane and respectful language. Challenge the people around you to do the same.

## **Communicate about sex.**

We have a cultural myth that “good sex should be intuitive,” but the reality is that it is based on communication. Consent can never be assumed. We also have cultural pressures for men to “score,” and myths that women really want to be forced. Coercion and force are illegal. Get comfortable talking with, and listening to, your partner. “No” means no.

## **Speak out.**

You may or may not ever have the opportunity to prevent a rape in progress. However, you will have many, many opportunities to challenge the attitudes and behaviors that are part of the larger rape culture. When you see harassment, intervene. When you hear jokes about violence against women, don’t laugh, and explain why it’s not funny. Write letters to magazines that promote images of women as dehumanized sex objects. Support laws that protect women from violence and help them successfully prosecute their abusers. Silence = Complicity.

## **Support Survivors.**

**Listen** to the women and anyone who may be a survivor in your life, and believe them. More than 1 million women are raped in America each year. One in three women will be sexually assaulted, 40 percent before the age of 18. Chances are, you already have survivors of rape in your life. Learn how to be supportive, know your local rape crisis center where they can get resources and help, and get support yourself.

## **Give your time.**

Volunteer for organizations working to end violence against women. Get further training on how to be an effective ally. Know that most rape crisis centers and community organizations are funded exclusively through grants and donations. Support their work in whatever ways you can.

## **Talk with women.**

Find out what it feels like to live with the threat of rape every day. Find out how they like to be supported. Ask what they would like you to do to challenge rape. Really listen.

## **Talk with men.**

Find out how rape has impacted their lives. Find out how much men lose by being seen as potential rapists. Find out what other men have to say about how to change that reality. Find out how to support male survivors of rape and sexual abuse. Really listen.

## **Organize.**

Create a men’s movement against male violence against women: start a dialogue group to examine cultural attitudes about rape, start a men’s anti-rape group, bring workshops and trainings into your school or workplace. Check in with your local men’s center or women’s center for resources and support.

## **Work against all forms of oppression.**

Violence against women, sexism, racism, heterosexism, and homophobia...all forms of oppression are linked. We cannot end one without challenging them all. Challenge yourself to grow every day, and know that every prejudice we hold injures others and limits our experience.

## **Create a new masculinity.**

Be brave enough to openly value equality. Use your strength and privilege in the service of justice. Live your potential without harming others. Celebrate the construction of a new masculinity that does not depend on the dehumanization of others. Find others who share your vision. You are not alone.

Courtesy of *Men Can Stop Rape*

## **10 things MEN can do to prevent men's violence against women**

1. Realize gender violence is a men's issue that affects women that you care about.
2. Don't remain silent--confront the abusive behavior in other males.
3. Understand how your own attitudes and actions may perpetuate sexism and violence and work towards changing them.
4. Gently offer your help and support if you suspect that a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted.
5. Respect women and treat them as equals.
6. Be an ally to women who are working to end all forms of gender violence.
7. Recognize and speak out against homophobia and gay-bashing.
8. Educate yourself and others about masculinity, gender inequality, and the root causes of gender violence.
9. Mentor and teach boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women.
10. Refuse to purchase any magazines, videos, or music that portray women in a degrading or violent matter.

## **10 things WOMEN can do to prevent men's violence against women**

1. Realize that gender violence is a major social problem that deeply affects the lives of all women.
2. Focus on how you, as an empowered bystander, can support other women by confronting the behavior of abusive males.
3. Gently offer your help and support if you suspect a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted.
4. Educate and empower your peers and younger women to end sexism and not tolerate abuse.
5. Familiarize yourself with the resources available to women in your school, on your campus, and in your community.
6. Support women and men who are working to end men's violence against women.
7. Recognize and speak out against homophobia and gay-bashing.
8. Support women's sports as a means of teaching girls to be confident in their athletic abilities and strong in body and spirit.

9. Respect yourself and use your strength as an example to empower other women around you.
10. Refuse to purchase any magazines, videos, or music that portray women in a degrading or violent matter.

PRODUCED BY THE MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION (MVP) PROGRAM

<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ro/www/MenAgainstSexualViolence/becomingactive.htm>