

What YOU Can Do to Prevent Violence against Women

While both men and women can be victims of violence, violence against women, often at the hands of men, is a unique category of violence that relies on the historical and current unequal balance of power between men and women, boys and girls. Violence against women is the crucial element that reinforces men's power and control over women throughout the world. On some level, most of us participate in the culture that supports and encourages violence against women and girls, in both small ways (like telling our friends to "man up" when they have to do something difficult) to large ways (beating and raping women and girls). Here are some small and big ways we can work to end it, or at least interrupt it, every single day.

For everyone:

- Educate yourself on violence against women; learn the facts and the prevalence
- Believe survivors
- Contact your local legislators and political leaders and advocate for tougher laws against perpetrators of violence against women
- Know that dating violence & sexual assault affects 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys by the time they are 18
- Contact your local school board and ask them to address sexual harassment in schools
- Speak out against all forms of violence
- Question gender roles and assumptions
- Respect and embrace diversity
- Respect a person's-even a child's- right to say no
- Respect your partner's right to disagree or have their own opinion
- Don't blame victims, and reinforce that rape is never the victim's fault
- Strive for equality for everyone
- Understand that putting boys and men down by calling them "ladies" and "girls" hurts everyone
- Speak out against the media's portrayal of violence
- Learn how racism, sexism and homophobia are connected
- Acknowledge that it does happen in your own community
- Learn about power and control tactics
- Attend Take Back the Night events
- Volunteer at HAVEN
- Ask permission before pursuing physical or sexual contact with someone
- Realize that sexual violence is about power and control, not sex
- Teach kids that respect is the minimum in a relationship, and lead by example
- Advocate for victim's rights
- Ask your priest, rabbi, pastor, cleric, or spiritual leader to hold a special service to raise awareness and promote safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators.
- Contact your local movie theatre and ask them to display HAVEN's Crisis & Support Line (1- 877-922-1274) on the screen during previews
- Avoid engaging in, supporting or encouraging sexual harassment by speaking up when you see or hear it
- Teach kids that violence will not solve problems
- Put HAVEN's 24 hour crisis & support line (1-877-922-1274) on your checks or business cards
- Sponsor a fundraiser for HAVEN
- Know that most sex offenders aren't strangers · 86% are known to their victim
- Avoid making threats or using coercion and pressure to get sex

- Be courageous; don't be afraid to speak up for those who have lost their voice or dignity
- Praise women and girls for something other than the way they look
- Speak out against racist, sexist or homophobic jokes
- Become a fan of HAVEN on Facebook
- Advocate for more youth violence prevention programs
- Don't spank your children
- Write an article on violence against women for your school paper or workplace newsletter
- Get others to speak out against sexual violence
- Stop your sexual advances if the other person says no and encourage others to do the same
- Avoid buying music that glorifies sexual violence and the objectification of women and girls
- Urge your local radio stations to stop playing music that contains violent lyrics
- Applaud others who speak out against violence and oppression
- Invite a speaker from HAVEN to share with your class, work or community group
- Pledge to never commit or condone acts of violence
- Stop yourself or others from taking advantage of someone who is intoxicated
- Make a decision to become an active bystander by speaking up and calling for help when necessary
- Respect the choices victims and survivors make to survive
- Encourage your local college and universities to offer prevention education to students
- Empathize
- Work toward eliminating oppression of all kinds
- Think globally and act locally
- Hold perpetrators accountable for disrespecting their partners when you see it or hear it
- Engage others in discussions about violence against women
- Learn about healthy boundaries and don't be afraid to voice your feelings in your relationship
- Notice when someone invades your boundaries
- Report it if you witness sexual harassment in your school or workplace
- Post awareness materials in restrooms and break rooms for easy & confidential accessibility
- Celebrate all aspects of masculinity, including compassion and sensitivity

For men:

- Choose your words carefully and respectfully when speaking of women in your life
- Show your strength by speaking up to men who are using their strength for hurting
- Refuse to let TV, movies, music or other people define what it means to be a man for you
- Understand that it takes more than just not being a batterer or a rapist to be a good guy
- Treat all women and girls with respect
- Don't patronize sex workers or strip clubs
- Ask, don't assume you know what your partner wants
- Get involved with HAVEN and be an example of kindness and compassion to other men
- Get involved with the Men Can Stop Rape movement at www.mencanstoprape.com
- Refuse to coerce or manipulate your partner in order to get your way; be willing to compromise