

men as allies in sexual violence prevention



Sexual violence can be reduced and prevented when we begin to look at root causes of violence - harmful norms and behaviors which can lead to sexually violent actions. Men and boys can fulfill an important role in the prevention of sexual violence.

MEN IN THE MOVEMENT

Although research has shown that most sexual violence is committed by men, **most men are not perpetrators of violence**. Only a small fraction of men and boys commit acts of sexual violence. And it is critical to remember that men and boys are also harmed – **1 in 6 men will experience sexual violence during their lifetime**.¹ Men and boys have a meaningful role to play in education, awareness-raising, and prevention of sexual violence.

Learn more, support each other.

Sexual violence is 100% preventable! The crucial first step in creating lasting change is to acknowledge that sexual violence is a community problem. We all share the responsibility of creating safer communities.

Toxic Masculinity

Toxic masculinity refers to the ways that harmful and violent behaviors can be tied to defining one's 'maleness.' This includes harmful norms that are 'expected' of men – aggression, absolute dominance and control, having a lot of sexual partners, masking emotions, etc. Traditionally 'feminine' values – empathy, kindness, gentleness – are devalued.

▶ toxic masculinity:

the ways harmful and violent behaviors are tied to defining one's "maleness."





It's critical to remember that **toxic masculinity harms all of us – men included**. When messages are reinforced that these traits are the only ways to 'be a real man,' it limits the ways men and boys can engage with the world.

By challenging these harmful depictions of masculinity, we pave the way for men and boys to play a critical role in the creation of safer communities.



SPEAK UP!



KEEP LEARNING



ACTIVELY LISTEN



CONSUME CRITICALLY

HOW CAN MEN AND BOYS CAN PROMOTE ALLYSHIP?

Men and boys can promote a spirit of allyship in words and actions, such as:

- **Speak up** if someone tells a sexist joke or uses derogatory language about women.
- Attend events, like Take Back the Night rallies, in solidarity.
- **Keep learning!** Read articles or watch documentaries about how men and boys are affected by sexual violence and can play a part in changing our culture.
- **Practice and model empathic behavior.** Chances are, someone in your life looks up to you. You can have significant influence in how that person defines masculinity and what it means to 'be a man.' By modeling empathy, compassion, and good allyship, you can create a new model for strength.
- **Be a critical consumer of media.** Identify when harmful norms are perpetuated in media and start

allyship:

the act of learning about, unlearning harmful ideas, and standing in support of a group you do not belong to.²

conversations with others about these norms.

- **Actively listening to others.** If you've never experienced being the target of sexual violence, sexist comments, unwanted sexual attention, etc., take the time to listen to the experiences of those who have. If someone addresses your own behavior that they find problematic, respond with compassion and humility. We all have room to learn and grow.

These actions and behaviors are part of a lifelong journey of learning, listening, and practicing new interactions. Social and cultural norms can make men and boys feel uncomfortable challenging harmful norms — it takes courage and strength to find a new way of being.

RESOURCES

Learn more

Men Can Stop Rape
<http://www.mencanstoprape.org/>

A Call to Men
<http://www.acalltomen.org/>

For Community Education
Media Education Foundation
Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes (film)

The Representation Project
The Mask You Live In (film)

REFERENCES

¹ 1in6. "The 1 in 6 Statistic." Retrieved from <https://1in6.org/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/>

² Definition adapted from: The Anti Oppression Network. "Allyship." Retrieved from: <https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/>

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against sexual assault

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The New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) is the statewide organization representing 21 county-based rape crisis centers and Rutgers University's Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance. NJCASA elevates the voice of survivors and service providers through advocacy, training, and support for efforts to create safer communities for all people.