



New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault Men as Allies in Ending Sexual Assault

It can be difficult for men to feel empowered to participate in the movement to end sexual violence, yet it is vital that men play an active role in stopping rape. Research has shown that men working against sexual assault and maintaining a stance against gender-based violence can have a highly positive effect on other men, and the anti-rape movement, overall. Here are some suggested ways to become involved in a campaign to stop sexual violence.

1. View gender violence as a MEN'S issue as well as a women's issue. Understand that men are not just perpetrators, offenders, etc – they are also *allies* who have the power to help stop gender-related violence. They are also survivors of sexual violence. Men are also hurt by the sexual violence perpetrated on their friends, family members and associates.
2. Commit to learning more about gender-based violence- read, see films, and talk to other men and women. Learn more about how men think about masculinity. Discuss with men: how it feels to be seen as a potential offender; about the reality that many males are sexually abused in their lifetimes; about whether they know someone who has been raped and how their lives are affected by sexual violence. Discuss with women: how the risk of being raped affects their daily lives; about how they want to be supported if they are already survivors, about what they think men can do to stop sexual assault. The information received may be difficult, frightening, and challenging – but it is important.
3. Assess the way you use language. A large amount of dehumanizing and derogatory terms refer to women; do you use these words? What do you think they say about the ability of men and women to be viewed as equals in society? Do such words keep women down?
4. Speak up! Sexism and other forms of oppressive behavior thrive on silence. Choose effective intervention strategies when you see friends, family members or others making sexually offensive jokes, remarks, or performing inappropriate behaviors. Let the other person know how important the issue is to you, and suggest positive, constructive alternatives for their behavior. Support legislation that supports victims' rights. Join or donate funds to an organization working to prevent sexual violence.
5. Work against ALL oppression – Sexual violence is fueled by all forms of prejudice including racism, homophobia, class and religious discrimination. Be aware that our culture stigmatizes homosexual behavior, and that many men do not speak up against sexual violence out of the particular fear of being taunted as "gay." Work against any ideology that supports the idea that one group of people is more important than another.
6. If you suspect that someone you know is being abused, ask in a respectful way if you can help. Listen. Be aware that men as well as women experience sexual assault; do not assume that it can't happen to men, or that the offender is always male. Find out about supportive resources available to survivors in your community. Offer support without blame.
7. Model respectful behavior for others in the community, particularly children who will shape their notions about gender roles from the influential adults around them. Be part of creating a less violent future!

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, call the New York State Hotline for Information on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence at **English 1-800-942-6906/TTY 1-800-818-0656, Spanish 1-800-942-6908/TTY 1-800-780-7660** OR visit our website to find information on your local Rape Crisis Center.

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