How men can prevent sexual violence

Here are some steps you can take to prevent sexual violence and ensure you have respectful sexual relationships:

**Before You Have Sex**
- Always have sex with consent. Don't pressure a woman or your partner into having sex or performing sexual acts they don't agree to. Don't make your partner feel guilty or emotionally blackmail them with threats about leaving the relationship.

**Take 'No' for an Answer**
- The idea that women say 'no' when they mean 'yes' is wrong. Do not ignore a woman if she says 'no' or seems reluctant. Your partner always has the right to say 'no', even if you are married or living together. Silence does not mean she agrees. Importantly, if a woman is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, she can't consent.

**Talk About Sex**
- If you are unsure what your partner wants, ask her. Talk about what you want to do and check that your partner agrees. You can try asking 'Is this comfortable?' or 'Are you OK with this?'

**Never Use Force**
- Don't assume that because a woman wears revealing clothing, flirts or agrees to go to a man's house, that she wants to engage in sexual activity. Forced sex is rape. The person responsible for rape is the one who uses force or pressure.

**Talk to Women**
- Ask a woman who trusts you about violence and how it has affected her life. If she feels comfortable to talk, just listen and learn from her experiences. Women who have survived or are surviving violence and abuse will have valuable insights.

**Be Aware of Language**
- Words like 'bitch', 'whore', 'baby' or 'dog' make women seem less human and inferior. Using words like this makes it easier to treat women with disrespect and to ignore their rights. This is not OK.

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**Remember the Facts**
- When you see sex without consent on the television, remind yourself that it is rape. When you hear about a woman staying in an abusive relationship, remind yourself that she is not to be blamed. Learn the facts so you can challenge these myths.
**TALK TO MEN**

Speak to other men to challenge their attitudes and beliefs about sex/consent and violence against women – a change in social attitudes will make it easier for victims to get help and make violence and abuse against women less acceptable. You can start by mentioning something you’ve read about sexual assault or something you saw on television. Ask if they know someone who has been sexually assaulted.

**TALK TO MEN**

**EXAMINE YOUR OWN BEHAVIOUR**

If you have been physically violent against a woman, committed sexual assault, threatened or tried to control their lives, get help today. Do not wait for it to happen again. Call MensLine on 1300 78 99 78 for support and advice.

If someone tells you that they have been abused, raped or harassed – listen, believe and support them. Ask if they need support (e.g. counselling) and help them find it. Don’t ask questions like ‘what were you wearing?’ By supporting survivors to share their experiences, more people will speak up and highlight the seriousness of sexual violence.

**EXAMINE YOUR OWN BEHAVIOUR**

**SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**TAKE ACTION IF YOU SEE VIOLENCE HAPPENING**

Call the police – never assume someone else has. Ensure you do something to stop the violence, but do not use violence yourself and ensure your own personal safety. Do not remain silent: stand up, speak out and act to stop men’s violence against women.

**TAKE ACTION IF YOU SEE VIOLENCE HAPPENING**

**CONTRIBUTE YOUR TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY**

Make a difference to your community. Join, support and/or donate to an organisation working to prevent men’s violence against women. Every contribution helps break the cycle of violence.

