

# Challenging your friends' behaviour

Sometimes you may see your friends behaving abusively, for example sexually harassing a woman in the street or telling sexist jokes. If this happens, you can:

- Distract your friends by saying something like 'relax, that's enough'.
- Don't laugh – silence cuts.
- Tell your friends to stop.
- Walk away to show that you do not approve of their behaviour.

**We have all found ourselves in situations like this. These people expect others to go along with them and to laugh or agree – they do not expect to be questioned. Here are some ways to show you do not support their actions and behaviour<sup>iv</sup>.**

## MAKE IT CLEAR

If you are with some friends, and someone says something that makes you uncomfortable, or that you feel is wrong, you can say something like:

*"Come on, I know you are better than that", or "What did you say? I'm not sure what you mean."*

## BRING IT HOME

Sometimes, people forget they are talking about a real person. To challenge them, you could say something like:

*"What if someone said that about your sister or your daughter?"*

This will remind them that they are talking about a real person and will help change the conversation.

Asking a question helps people think about what they said. It is important to say this in assertive and calm manner.

## I BELIEVE

This is a great way to give your opinion. You can say something like:

*"I believe abusing a woman is wrong."*

Saying this instead of something like "you are wrong" can be easier for people to hear. They may feel less defensive and accept the opinion.



## AM I THE ONLY ONE...?

Have you ever found yourself in a situation with a group of people and you feel uncomfortable about what is being said?

You're probably not the only one who thought it was wrong. You could ask:

*"Am I the only one uncomfortable with this?"*

This can let others know that they are not alone and will encourage them to speak up.

## TALK PRIVATELY

Talk to the person privately about what they said or did and its effect on others.

This increases the chance that they will listen to what you say. They won't feel the need to defend themselves in front of other people.

<sup>iv</sup> Based on: Flood, M. (2011) Men Speak Up: a toolkit for action in men's daily lives. Sydney: White Ribbon Policy Research Series No.4.