

Coaching Young Men in the Fight to End Teen Dating Violence

Did you know that one in 11 high school students reports being a victim of physical teen dating violence? (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006*). Young men can play a crucial, every day role in taking a stand against this issue. The following are 10 things young men can do to end gender violence, courtesy of MVP Strategies:

1 Approach gender violence as a MEN'S issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. View men not only as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers.

2 If a brother, friend, classmate or teammate is abusing his female partner -- or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general -- don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help. Or if you don't know what to do, consult a friend, a parent, a professor or a counselor. **DON'T REMAIN SILENT.**

3 Have the courage to look inward. Question your own attitudes. Don't be defensive when something you do or say ends up hurting someone else. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence and work toward changing them.

4 If you suspect that a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, gently ask if you can help.

5 If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically or sexually abusive to women or have been in the past, seek professional help NOW.

6 Be an ally to women who are working to end all forms of gender violence. Support the work of campus-based women's centers. Attend "Take Back the Night" rallies and other public events. Raise money for community-based rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters. If you belong to a team or fraternity, or another student group, organize a fundraiser.

7 Recognize and speak out against homophobia and gay-bashing. Discrimination and violence against lesbians and gays are wrong in and of themselves. This abuse also has direct links to sexism. (e.g. The sexual orientation of men who speak out against sexism is often questioned, a conscious or unconscious strategy intended to silence them. This is a key reason few men do speak out.)

8 Attend programs, take courses, watch films and read articles and books about multicultural masculinities, gender inequality and the root causes of gender violence. Educate yourself and others about how larger social forces affect the conflicts between individual men and women.

9 Don't fund sexism. Refuse to purchase any magazine, rent any video, subscribe to any Web site or buy any music that portrays girls or women in a sexually degrading or abusive manner. Protest sexism in the media.

10 Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with gender violence prevention programs, including antisexist men's programs. Lead by example.

MVP Strategies is an international gender violence prevention, education and training organization. Email MVPStrategies@aol.com to learn more.

Colorado Men Against Domestic Violence

Launched in 2008, the Colorado Men Against Domestic Violence (CMADV) campaign is building a community of men that no longer tolerate domestic violence through the following objectives:

1 Raise awareness of the campaign through community outreach, the availability of an online pledge form and educational programs.

2 Educate young men on what it really means to be a man – kindness and respectful behavior toward women.

3 Challenge men to become role models for boys with their every day behavior. Act as a resource and referral source for local programs seeking to encourage men to take a stand against domestic violence in their own communities.

To learn more or to sign the CMADV pledge, visit www.coloradomenagainstdv.com.