



WHAT MEN CAN DO ON THE #16DAYSOFACTIVISM AGAINST MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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Internationally recognised researcher on men, masculinities and violence prevention, Professor Michael Flood, highlights practical and meaningful everyday actions men and boys can take to help prevent violence against women and contribute to safer, more equitable communities. His ideas encourage self-reflection, challenging harmful attitudes, supporting survivors, promoting respectful relationships and actively contributing to gender equality.



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- #1** Start by putting your own house in order. Take responsibility for violent behaviour and attitudes and build respectful relations with the women and girls in your life. See pp. 11-13 of [this report](#).
- #2** Inform yourself about the realities of men's violence against women. Check out [key organisations](#) and their info. Read [introductory pieces on violence against women](#).
- #3** Speak up. Start a conversation with your mate about men's violence against women. Challenge violence-supportive comments and jokes. See pp. 18-19 of [this guide to action](#) for men.
- #4** Make it less likely that you are coercing or pressuring your sexual partners into sex. Practise explicit verbal consent. See p. 11 of [this guide to action](#) for men.
- #5** Boycott and resist sexist & violence supportive culture. Avoid media that normalises or eroticises violence against women. Reject the aggression & sexism so routine in [pornography](#).
- #6** Support victims and survivors. a) Listen. b) Believe: Assume that something happened. (False accusations are rare.) c) Respect – both her feelings and decisions. See p. 17 of [this guide to action](#) for men.
- #7** Raise your sons to be non-violent, gender-equitable, and nurturing. Be a good role model for the children around you. See XY's collection on [raising nonviolent and feminist sons](#).
- #8** Join in the movements to end this violence. Attend an event, rally, or march. Donate to groups and campaigns. Volunteer to help. Join a network. Act in partnership with women and women's groups.
- #9** Realise how men's violence against women is relevant to your own life and to the women you care for. Be able to articulate how [violence against women is a men's issue](#).
- #10** Recognise that this violence both maintains and expresses men's power over women. It is a fundamental barrier to equality. It harms women's autonomy, mobility, everyday safety, and human rights.



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- #11** Realise that virtually every woman you know has experienced some kind of violence or abuse. Been touched or groped when they didn't want it. Been pressured into sex. Been followed or stalked.
- #12** Learn how to speak about violence against women. Speak from the heart. Be able to describe violence against women's seriousness, dynamics, impacts, and causes. (Here are [some introductions](#).)
- #13** Realise that the men who abuse and coerce women are *ordinary* men. Men *you know*. Not a tiny minority of mad bad men, but a large number of everyday men in the community.
- #14** Hold other men to account. Speak to your friend who talks about his wife in that abusive way, that man who texts his girlfriend all day to check where she is, that guy who thinks rape jokes are ok. (See XY's collection on [bystander intervention](#).)
- #15** Avoid some common mistakes: Seeing only other men as the problem. Waiting till you're perfect. Only talking the talk. Dominating feminists. See pp 23-24 of [this free guide](#).
- #16** Make yourself less of a threat to women. If a woman is walking in front of you along a dark street, give her lots of room or cross to the other side of the road. Give women space and respect.
- #17** Get comfortable with the F-word. Violence against women *is* a feminist issue, and men can and should support feminism. Voice your support for feminist ideals. (For more on men and feminism [see here](#).)
- #18** Work in solidarity with women, as allies. Don't take over or dominate. Listen to and consult women, including victim-survivors. Amplify women's voices and acknowledge their leadership.
- #19** Focus on changing and challenging *men*, not on telling women what to do to avoid rape or assault. Women already do plenty. Focus on supporting and enabling men's efforts at positive change.
- #20** See your own stake in change. Get involved because ending violence against women is the right and necessary thing to do, *and* because men will benefit from progress towards gender equality.
- #21** If you're heterosexual, get comfortable with the G-word. Some people will question your sexuality or masculinity when you speak up. Reject their homophobic and sexist assumptions. Keep speaking up.



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- #22** Practise responding to the backlash responses you will get from some people. To typical MRA (men's rights advocate) claims about women's violence, false accusations, etc. Check out the useful critiques [here](#).
- #23** Find and build communities of support. You're not John Wayne and you can't go it alone. Join a group or network and find allies, to sustain your commitment to and involvement in anti-violence work.
- #24** Of course it's #NotAllMen. No one was suggesting otherwise. But it's far too many men. And women's concerns and fears about men are understandable and legitimate. ([See here](#) for more responses to "Not all men".)
- #25** Invite other men into change. Approach them constructively, critically, and compassionately. Appeal to their better selves & values. See pp. 144 – of my book, [free in PDF here](#).
- #26** When you vote, vote for candidates and parties that will address gender inequalities and violence against women, not for those who offer only platitudes and tokenistic half-measures.
- #27** Reject porn. It [teaches sexism and makes men rapey](#). At the very least, don't masturbate to scenes of women being choked, slapped, or degraded – you can't do that and pretend to be against violence against women.
- #28** Read books about men's roles as allies to women and advocates for gender equality and ending violence against women. Check out the reading [here](#).



- #29** Realise that the men who assault and abuse women are likely to be among *the men you know*. As 1 in 6 Australian women has been sexually assaulted since the age of 15 (ABS, 2017).
- #30** So hold the men around you to account. When male friends and acquaintances speak or act in violence-supportive ways, challenge them. If they don't change, [drop them](#).
- #31** Work against all forms of oppression. Violence against women, sexism, racism, heterosexism, and homophobia – all forms of oppression are linked. We cannot end one without challenging them all.
- #32** Create a new masculinity. Be brave enough to openly value equality. Use your privilege in the service of justice. Live your potential without harming others. Find others who share your vision.
- #33** Learn about victim-survivors' experiences of violence and abuse. Read survivors' stories, e.g. [here](#). Recognise the harms of violence. Value survivors' strength and knowledge.

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- #34** Address sexual violence, not only domestic violence. Recognise that SV and DV often co-occur, they have overlapping drivers, and men's SV is sustained by a '[rape culture](#)'.
- #35** Recognise that men's sexual violence against women is grounded in common social norms, e.g that men are entitled to sex, have an uncontrollable sexuality, sex is achievement, women are objects etc.
- #36** Extend your understanding of domestic violence by learning about coercive control, a repeated pattern of control and domination in a relationship. Read e.g. this [Research Brief](#).
- #37** Support violence prevention efforts wherever you are. In [sport](#). In [faith communities](#). In [workplaces](#).
- #38** If you're going to flirt with a woman, make it less likely that it will be intrusive, creepy, or threatening. Read her body language, Listen to what she says. More tips [here](#).
- #39** Reflect on how you were raised as a boy. Which messages about manhood were helpful, and which were limiting? Adopt healthy, equitable ways of being.
- #40** Be comfortable with being uncomfortable. A key way to learn – when talking about gender and feminism with women, reading feminist books, etc. – is through difficult conversations. Stay, and learn.
- #41** Strengthen your relationships with the women in your life. Treasure your friendships with women. Value their lives and experience.
- #42** Strengthen your relationships with other men. Find male friends who share your values and principles. Build friendship groups based on intimacy, trust, and respect, not shallow bonding and sexism.
- #43** Don't be the hero or saviour. Allyship isn't about rescuing people from their oppressors. Allyship is about standing in solidarity and working together to collectively tackle a social problem.
- #44** Use your male privilege to advance feminist discussions in male-dominated spaces. Your voice may carry more weight than women's in male-dominated spaces and professions. Challenge norms & structures



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#45 Respect women's spaces. While male allies are vital to the feminist movement's success, it's important that you respect spaces for women to share, support, and empower. Learn to step back.

#46 Do the work because it's important, not for recognition or affirmation. Don't chase or expect praise and status, especially when women get less. Do the work with humility and modesty.

#47 So, on this last day of the 16 Days... Commit yourself to making personal change and taking social action. Build gender equality into your life. Make use of [resources](#) and [networks](#).

