



# Respect and Responsibility

Creating a safe and inclusive environment for women at all levels of Australian Football and in the broader community





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# Preventing violence against women – what can you do?

You as AFL players, as teammates, as men who care about the women in your lives, play a vital role in preventing violence against women. Here are some possibilities:

**LEARN about the problem.** The basic rights that most men enjoy – safety in their homes, ability to go out at night, a job free of harassment – are a source of fear for women in much of the world. The fear is greatest in women’s own homes. A common myth is that most violence is committed by strangers. In fact, women are most at risk from men they know – husbands, boyfriends, fathers, relatives, employers, and caregivers.

**LISTEN to women...learn from them.** The path starts with listening. Who knows better about violence against women than women who experience it? Learn about violence by asking a woman who trusts you how violence has affected her life. Then, if she feels comfortable to talk, sit back and listen.

**CHALLENGE sexist language and jokes that degrade women.** Sexist jokes and language help create a climate where forms of violence and abuse have too long been accepted. Words that degrade women reflect a society that has historically placed women in a second-class position. One of the most difficult things for men is to learn to challenge other men.

**LEARN to identify and oppose sexual harassment and violence in your workplace, school, and family.** Sexual harassment refers to unwanted sexual advances or sexually-oriented remarks or behaviour that is unwelcome by another person. Flirting and joking are fine if they are both consensual and wanted.

**LEARN why some men are violent.** Men are not naturally violent. There have been societies with little or no violence. Studies over the past century have found that half of the tribal societies studied had little or no violence against women, against children, or among men. Furthermore, even today, in many countries the majority of men are not physically violent. Violence is something that some men learn. Men’s violence is a result of the way many men learn to express what it means to “be a man” and how they abuse power in their relationships with women, children, and other men.



## RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

# Thirteen Steps Men Can Take To Prevent Sexual Violence



### **Think about the sex you have with your partner, or in one-night stands.**

Make sure you always have consenting sex. Don't pressure a woman into having sex. Realise that your strength, size, social role, and age are all factors that can contribute to a woman's feeling of powerlessness against your pressure for sex. Don't guilt-trip your partner, expect sex in return for buying dinner, or blackmail your partner with threats about leaving the relationship.



**Take no for an answer.** The assumption that women say "no" when they really mean "maybe" or "yes" is just that, an assumption. Do not ignore a woman if she says "no" or seems resistant in any way. If she really means "yes" then it's up to her to communicate her consent. Your partner should always have the right to say no, regardless of your previous sexual relations. And silence doesn't mean consent.



**Talk about sex.** If you are unsure what a sexual partner might want, ask. Say what you want to do and make sure the person wants to do it too. Discussing mutual expectations and clarifying mixed messages eliminates confusion and greatly reduces the risk of sexual assault. If you are unsure about how someone is feeling, you could ask, "Is this comfortable?" or "Are you feeling OK about this?"



**It's never OK to use force or coercion.** Don't assume that because a woman wears a sexy dress or flirts, she wants to engage in sexual activity. Realise that women don't provoke rape by their appearance or by agreeing to go to a man's room or house. The person responsible for the rape is the person who uses force or pressure.



**Take responsibility for your sexuality.** Don't assume that if you are being sexual with a person on one level, you can automatically start being sexual on other levels. Kissing doesn't mean that intercourse comes next.



**Excessive use of alcohol or other drugs adds to the risk of getting this stuff wrong.** These substances may make you aggressive and impair your ability to think clearly or communicate effectively. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not a defence against criminal behaviour, and rape is a criminal act.



## RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

- ✓ **Understand how sexual stereotypes influence attitudes and behaviours.** Social roles and expectations may affect a man's decisions about sex. Some men feel pressured by their peers to have sexual intercourse. Men are also taught that expressing feelings is not why you want to have sex. Learning how to express your feelings directly and in non-violent ways can help you create deeper and more meaningful relationships. You don't have to prove yourself.
- ✓ **Don't engage in any form of sexual harassment, such as wolf-whistling or unwanted touching.** Women aren't public property, available for our intrusions. Neither are men.
- ✓ **Develop an awareness of the cultural supports for violence against women like film or media.** Inform yourself and develop the ability to recognise the myths (e.g. that women lie about rape – they rarely do). When you see sex without consent on TV or in a film, remind yourself that it is rape.
- ✓ **Talk to other men about sexual assault.** Start by mentioning something you read, a conversation you had or something you've been thinking about.
- ✓ **Believe people when they tell you they've been raped or harassed or that they know someone who's been raped or harassed.** Support what they say about it. Don't ask, "What were you wearing?"
- ✓ **Don't assume that women want or need your 'protection.'** But support them if they ask, with actions such as walking a woman to her car. If a woman is walking in front of you along a dark street, give her a lot of room or cross to the other side of the road.
- ✓ **Don't be a bystander who does nothing.** Take action if you see violence happening. Intervene or call the police – do something directly or indirectly to stop the incident. Get involved in local efforts to end sexual assault. Wherever you work and live, on the street and in your community, do what you can to end sexual assault and harassment.

This information is adapted from the White Ribbon Day Resource Kit, Fact Sheet 4, page 6.  
For more information see [whiteribbonday.org.au](http://whiteribbonday.org.au)



## RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

### When is consent freely given?

- ✓ When she's able to make a decision about free agreement (not so affected by alcohol or other drugs that she can't make decisions about consent).
- ✓ When she's conscious – AWAKE!
- ✓ After you check with her about whether sex is "on" and she says or does things that indicate it's a "yes."
- ✓ When you don't need to pressure her in any way.
- ✓ When she's actively engaged in what's happening.
- ✓ When you ask her what she'd prefer.
- ✓ If she stops, that you check before anything further happens.
- ✓ When you check with yourself – you know for sure you're both there because you want to be.
- ✓ When she knows who she is having sex with.
- ✓ When she's 16 years old or above.



## RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

### Options for the bystander

- ✓ Talk to another teammate about your concerns and decide on a response.
- ✓ Distract the person whose behaviour is a worry and talk to them later about it.
- ✓ Drift away from the activity and later apologise to the woman for your teammate's disrespectful behaviour.
- ✓ Leave the scene and later let the person know you had a problem with the way they treated the person.
- ✓ Enlist the help of friends of the person you think is at risk of harm to check that she is OK.
- ✓ Confront your teammate directly and say their behaviour is not on.
- ✓ Don't do anything at the time, but later talk to a woman you know about how you could deal with the behaviour in the future.



For more information about the Respect and Responsibility program, or for referrals to access support services or other service information contact:

## **VICTORIA**

Sexual Assault (statewide)  
1800 806 292

Women's Domestic  
Violence Crisis Service  
(03) 9373 0123 (metro)  
1800 015 188 (regional)

Men's Referral Service  
(03) 9428 2899 (metro)  
1800 065 973 (rural)

Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Yarrow Place Rape and  
Sexual Assault Service  
(08) 8226 8787

Domestic Violence Helpline  
1800 800 098

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277

Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Sexual Assault Referral Centre  
1800 199 888

Domestic Violence  
1800 007 339

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277

Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978

## **NEW SOUTH WALES**

NSW Rape Crisis Centre  
1800 424 017

Domestic Violence Service  
(Department of Community Services)  
1800 656 463

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277

Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978

## **ACT**

Canberra Rape Crisis Service  
(02) 6247 2525

Services Assisting Male Survivors  
of Sexual Assault (SAMSSA)  
(02) 6262 7377

Domestic Violence Crisis Service  
(02) 6280 0900

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277

Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978

## **QUEENSLAND**

Statewide Sexual Assault Helpline  
1800 010 120

Domestic Violence Services  
(‘DV Connect’)  
1800 811 811

Men's Information Line  
1800 600 636

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277

Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978



## **R E S P E C T   A N D   R E S P O N S I B I L I T Y**

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