

Help end violence against women



Every woman has the right to live her life safely and free of violence. A life without violence is essential to women's health. You can take steps to protect women and to help promote a culture that does not allow or accept violence against women.

What are the challenges to ending violence against women?

Ending violence against women and girls is an effort that includes everyone in our society. Violence is a violation of a basic human right for safety. Violence against women has been happening for a long time, but we can work together to prevent it in the future.

Violence against women can be prevented by strengthening women's access to basic human rights and resources. Research shows that communities with more access to education, jobs, housing, health care, affordable child care and elder care, and equality for both men and women have lower rates of violence against women.¹

What are the challenges to ending sexual violence against women?

In addition to challenges in ending all violence against women, ending sexual violence against women requires more gender equality in all parts of society. Part of being human is our sexuality. Sex and gender influence many different parts of a person's life. Sexual violence against women can happen when a woman's value in society is seen only through her sexuality. When women are not seen as equals to men, they are more likely to be victimized through their sexuality.


Women who have experienced sexual assault are often blamed for the assault. Blaming a woman for another person's choice to assault her is wrong. Many women who report sexual assault are asked questions about what they were wearing, whether they were drinking or using drugs, or where they were during the assault. These questions imply that the sexual assault was the victim's fault. **Sexual assault is always the responsibility of the person who committed the assault. It is never the victim's fault.**

In order to end sexual violence against women, we must agree as a society that sexual contact between people cannot happen unless there is **clear consent**.

How can I help end violence against women?

Violence against women hurts the whole community. Learn ways you can work to help end violence against women in your community.


Here are some suggestions:

- **Call the police** if you see or hear evidence of domestic violence.
- **Learn about [bystander intervention](#)** . You can help prevent sexual assault from happening.
- **[Support a friend or family member](#)** who may be in an abusive relationship.
- **Volunteer** at a local domestic violence shelter or other organization that helps survivors or works to prevent violence.
- **Teach your children early on that they are the ones who decide who gets to touch them and where.** Consider teaching them the proper names for the parts of their body at a young age so that they can clearly communicate about their bodies. Teach children that it's their choice whether they want to hug or kiss others, even family.
- **Raise children to respect others.** Teach children to treat others as they would like to be treated. Talk to your children about healthy relationships and the importance of treating their dating partners and others with respect. Teach them that consent from a dating partner is a clear “yes” for sexual activity.
- **Lead by example.** Work to create a culture that rejects violence as a way to deal with problems. Speak up against messages that say that violence against or mistreatment of women is OK. Don't be violent or abusive yourself.
- **Become an activist.** Participate in an anti-violence event like a local Take Back the Night march. Support domestic violence services and violence prevention programs by donating your time.
- **Volunteer in youth programs.** Become a mentor. Get involved in programs that teach young people to solve problems without violence. Get involved with programs that teach teens about healthy relationships and healthy masculinity and femininity.
- **Ask about anti-violence policies and programs at work and school.** At work, ask about policies that deal with sexual harassment, for example. On campus, ask about services to escort students to dorms safely at night, emergency call boxes on campus, campus security, and other safety measures. Ask about any bystander intervention training programs that may be happening on campus or at work.

Learn more about [national programs](#) to end sexual violence in communities.

Did we answer your question about helping to end violence against women?

For more information about ending violence against women, call the OWH Helpline at 1-800-994-9662 or check out the following resources from other organizations:

- [Violence Prevention](#) — Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- [Your Role in Preventing Sexual Assault](#)  — Information on bystander intervention from the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN).

Sources

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). [Technical Packages for Violence Prevention: Using Evidence-based Strategies in Your Violence Prevention Efforts](#)

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