

10 Everyday Things You Can Do To Eliminate Gender-Based Violence

- 1. Consider the importance of language**
 - Challenge language that silences or denies women access to their sexuality (e.g. bitch, slut, whore).
 - Stop using homophobic and feminizing slurs to reinforce problematic notions of masculinity (e.g. fag, pussy). These degradations work to police gender expression and perpetuate sexism, homophobia and transphobia.
- 2. Interrupt sexist jokes, attitudes, and norms.** Norms are standards/unspoken rules that are socially enforced and provide a model for behavior. Gender-based violence will not end unless the prevailing norms of socialization and acceptance of gender-based violence are challenged and changed.
- 3. Interrupt racist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, etc. jokes, attitudes and norms.** All oppression is connected. The norms that allow gender-based violence to continue also allow for hate speech and hate crimes.
- 4. Challenge victim blaming beliefs and statements.** Shift the conversation away from “How’d they let that happen?” and “Why don’t they just leave?” and instead ask questions like “Why did the perpetrator think it was okay to commit this act of violence?”
- 5. Believe victims/survivors when they share their story.** Victims/survivors face countless obstacles to reporting, which is why the vast majority of incidents go unreported. Fear of not being believed should never be one of them.
- 6. Practice obtaining affirmative consent when choosing to be sexually active and beyond.** Communicate with your partner(s). We all know to obtain consent when making everyday requests like “Want to meet up for lunch?” or “Can I have your Netflix password?” Why should our expectations be any different when it comes to sex?
- 7. Recognize how internalized sexism impacts agency.** No one is born sexist. It’s through observing, learning and understanding society that we come to hold common attitudes and beliefs, including sexist ones. Sexist messages not only become a part of how we think about and perceive others, but also how we think about and perceive ourselves. Consequently, there are many choices women make that come with social consequences.
- 8. Don’t pressure people,** regardless of the matter or your intent. Many of us are desensitized to applying and receiving pressure. We often pressure people into doing everyday things that they don’t want to do, like sharing notes with someone who never shows up to class. When we apply this type of pressure, we’re normalizing the act altogether.
- 9. Be a critical consumer.** Sexism and cissexism sell because it’s what we’re being sold. Choose not to fund it. Refuse to support or purchase any magazine, television show, film or music that portrays girls, women or gender non-conforming people in a degrading or abusive manner.
- 10. Continue to educate yourself about the dynamics of a culture that allows this level of violence to occur.** Most of us are desensitized to implicit sexism either because we’ve come to accept it as commonplace or because it hasn’t directly impacted us. The same is true for all other forms of oppression. **Unlearning attitudes and norms that condone or excuse oppression takes time. Holding ourselves accountable requires commitment. We all have to start somewhere.**

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