

16 Days of Activism
toolkit

Respect Women: 'Call It Out'



This toolkit has been created to assist organisations to participate in Respect Victoria's 16 Days initiative from 25 November – 10 December.

The campaign coincides with the United Nations' 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

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If you or someone you know is experiencing family violence, help is available.

If you believe someone is in immediate danger call triple zero (000) and ask for the police.

Safe Steps (1800 015 188)

safesteps.org.au

Safe Steps is Victoria's 24/7 family violence support service.

For a more comprehensive list of support services, see [During the 16 Days – ensure support services are visible](#) on page 56 of this toolkit.

Acknowledgements



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and we pay our respects to their Elders, past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty of this land was never ceded and we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our work.

Safe and Equal has been funded by Respect Victoria to work with community organisations across Victoria to participate in the Respect Women: 'Call It Out' (Respect Is) 2022 initiative, which coincides with the United Nations' 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. This resource is an updated version of the toolkit developed by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) in 2020 in partnership with Safe and Equal (formally known as DVVic/DVRCV at the time) and Respect Victoria.

Safe and Equal acknowledge the contributions of our Project Advisory Group members, MAV, Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), No To Violence (NTV), GEN VIC, Frankston City Council, Didi Bahini Samaj Victoria, Women's Health Services Council (WHSC) and Elizabeth Morgan House.

Toolkit illustrations by Chris 'ROY' Taylor.

About this toolkit

This toolkit provides information about the Respect Women: ‘Call It Out’ (Respect Is) initiative coinciding with the United Nations’ (UN) 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (16 Days of Activism).

The toolkit features information and resources for organisations to use during the 16 Days of Activism and beyond as well as ‘conversation starters’ to stimulate community discussion about the prevention of family violence and gender-based violence.

Many sections within this toolkit can be used on their own, as posters or pull-out resources.

The resources within this toolkit have been designed so that they are suitable for use in Victoria in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and changing restrictions.

Respect Victoria is an independent Statutory Authority dedicated to the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women.

Respect Victoria’s Respect Women: ‘Call It Out’ campaign encourages individuals, communities, and organisations to ‘call it out’ and intervene when safe to do so when they witness sexism and gender inequality – drivers that can lead to family violence and violence against women.

The UN’s 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign that takes place annually between 25 November and 10 December.

In Australia, on average, one woman is murdered by a current or former partner each week, and one in two women has experienced sexual harassment. Violence against women and their children costs Australia \$22 each year (KMPG, 2016), however, the way women are treated is more important than the dollar cost to the economy. It is everyone’s responsibility to be an active part of addressing gender inequality in Australia, because women and girls deserve to be treated as equals.

A note on language

‘Gender-based violence’ includes all forms of violence against people based on their gender, or violence that affects people of a particular gender disproportionately. It is most frequently used to describe men’s violence against women.

Throughout this toolkit, the term ‘gender-based violence’ will refer to men’s violence against women. Violence in this domain is where the strongest evidence base exists and is consistent with the historic and current focus of the UN’s global campaign.

Gender-based violence causes severe harm to families and communities. Campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism highlight the need for us to prevent all forms of family and gender-based violence experienced within our society.

“Everyone has a role to play in ending gender-based violence”

Key terms

These terms are used throughout this toolkit, with definitions listed below.

Active bystanding

Refers to the act of 'calling out' (refer to [Tools to help 'call it out'](#) on page 18 of this toolkit for more information) sexist and/or disrespectful language or behaviour, either in the moment or following an incident.

Backlash

Describes extreme, aggressive, or organised forms of resistance to preventing gendered violence. Resistance can range from denial to passive attempts to maintain the status quo. Examples may include men's rights groups inciting misogyny or online trolls abusing social commentators.

Bystander

Describes a person who is present or witnesses an event or incident but is not actively involved in it.

Bystander action

Refers to 'how' a bystander calls out, or engages others in responding to incidents of violence, sexism, harassment, or discrimination. It also refers to action to address the attitudes, behaviours, norms, policies and structures that contribute to violence against women.

Examples may include calling out inappropriate behaviour, changing the topic, eye rolling, enlisting support, referring to organisational policies, or changing discriminatory workplace policies and practices. These actions can be taken in the moment or following an incident.

Coercive control

Coercive control is defined as a course of conduct or behaviour that is aimed at dominating and controlling another person. Coercive control can involve strategies like physical, sexual, verbal and/or emotional abuse; psychologically controlling acts and manipulation; depriving someone of resources and other forms of financial abuse; social isolation; exploiting systems, including the legal system to perpetrate harm; stalking, deprivation of liberty; intimidation; technology-facilitated abuse; and harassment (ANROWS, 2021).

Disclosure

Occurs when someone tells another person about violence they have experienced, perpetrated, or witnessed. Undertaking prevention of violence against women activities can lead to an increase in disclosures as people learn more about harmful attitudes and behaviours and think about their own lives.

In some cases, it is because the activity has created a safe space for people to discuss their experiences.

Domestic violence

Is sometimes interchanged with 'family violence'. Victorian legislation and policy documentation uses the term 'family violence' as it is more inclusive of diverse family units and kinship networks. As noted below 'family violence' encompasses more than just violence occurring in a domestic situation.

Family violence

[Involves patterns of coercive, controlling, and abusive behaviours](#) inflicted on victim survivors resulting in fear for their own or someone else's safety and wellbeing. Family violence can take many forms including coercive control, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and cultural violence. It also includes financial/economic abuse and technology-facilitated abuse.

Family violence can occur within a diverse range of family units including:

- > Intimate partners (current or former): married or de facto couples with or without children
- > Other family members; including siblings, step-relations, extended kinship connections
- > Adolescent or adult children and their parents
- > Older people and their adult children, relatives, or carers
- > People with disabilities and their relatives or carers
- > Other family members; including but not limited to siblings, step-relations, chosen family, extended family members, kinship networks and communities.

Gender-based violence

Describes violence rooted in gender-based power, inequality, and discrimination.

Gender-based violence causes or can cause physical, sexual, psychological, or financial harm. It can occur in the home, at work, online or in public. People of all genders can experience gender-based violence, including transgender and/or non-binary people.

Gender-based violence is sometimes used interchangeably with 'violence against women' because of the disproportionate number of women and girls who experience violence ([UN Women](#)).

Gender equality

Is the outcome reached through addressing gender inequality. Achieving gender equality is not about erasing gender differences, but protecting and upholding people's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, and ensuring that access to these is not dependent on their gender or the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender equality provides the necessary conditions for addressing the [underlying causes](#) that drive or predict violence to help achieve long-term change. Find out more about the underlying drivers of violence against women in [Change the Story](#), Australia's national framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children.

Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020

The Victorian Gender Equality Act came into effect in March 2021 and sets out a series of mandatory reporting obligations for public entities, including councils and universities. The reporting obligations under the Act are focused on encouraging organisations to define, plan, and implement targeted actions, report on specific gender equality metrics in the workplace, and conduct gender impact assessments on policies, programs and services that directly affect the public. Understanding the connection between broader gender equality and primary prevention is essential for achieving long-term change.

The Gender Equality Act signifies a growing commitment to achieving change, and importantly, creates the enabling environment required for effectively addressing the underlying causes and reinforcing factors of gender-based violence. Ultimately, progressing gender equality at all levels of society provides the necessary levers for reducing and ending family violence and gender-based violence.

Intersectionality

Describes the interactions between multiple systems and structures of oppression (such as sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ableism, heteronormativity and cissexism), as well as policy and legal contexts (such as immigration status). It acknowledges that some people are subject to multiple forms of oppression and ‘the experience is not just the sum of its parts’.

An intersectional approach is ‘a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other’. Intersectionality highlights the intersection of multiple forms of power and privilege. An intersectional approach is critical for preventing violence against women because patriarchal power structures always intersect with other systems of power. Violence against women occurs in the context of both gender inequality and other multiple forms of structural and systemic inequality, oppression and discrimination. All of these intersect to influence the perpetration of violence, the prevalence, nature and dynamics of violence, and women’s experiences of violence.

Understanding and addressing these intersections is necessary to effectively address the drivers of violence against women and prevent this violence across the population (Our Watch, 2021).

Perpetrator

Is the term most used in Victoria to describe people – mainly men – who choose to use family violence or commit violence against women. ‘Offender’ or ‘sexual violence offender’ are used to describe perpetrators of violence in clinical or legal contexts.

Primary prevention

Is a public health approach that addresses the underlying causes of a problem to prevent it from occurring in the first place. It is geared towards education, upskilling individuals, communities and organisations to identify the issue, and generating systems and practices to stifle the issue’s ‘progress’.

Prevention of/preventing violence against women (PVAW)

Often used interchangeably and generally understood to mean the primary prevention of violence against women.

While there is an established evidence base around the drivers of violence against women, our understanding of what drives other forms of family violence is still emerging.

Resistance

Is an active pushing back against initiatives that aim to prevent violence against women and promote gender equality. Examples may include denial of the problem, refusing to make a change or dismantling a change initiative. There are a range of resources to help you learn more about responding to resistance and backlash, including:

- > VicHealth's [\(En\)Countering Resistance](#)
- > Safe and Equal's [Talking About Change](#)
- > Safe and Equal's [Fast Facts](#)
- > Respect Victoria's [Understanding Backlash and Resistance](#)

You can also watch this [webinar from last year's 16 Days Campaign](#) looking at how to manage resistance in online campaigns.

Respect

Understanding and appreciating every person for who they are. All people deserve to be treated with respect, as a basic human right.

Sexism

Is a form of discrimination and refers to the language, attitudes, behaviours and conditions that create, support or reinforce gender inequality. Sexism can take many forms from inappropriate jokes or comments and discrimination to sexual harassment and assault. Sexism can occur in a range of settings either at the hands of an individual perpetrator or embedded within organisations that reinforce sexist behaviour through organisational culture and hierarchy.

Sexual harassment

Refers to unwelcome sexual behaviour that could make a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be a single incident or repeated behaviour. It can be physical, verbal or written. It doesn't matter what the intention is: sexual harassment is against the law. The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 makes sexual harassment illegal in certain areas of public life including at work, school and in shops. For more information, please visit the [Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission website](#).

Victim survivor

Describes people, including children and young people, who have experienced or are experiencing family violence or gender-based violence. The term acknowledges the strength and resilience shown by people who lived, or are currently living with, violence. People who have experienced violence have different preferences about how they would like to be identified and may choose to use victim or survivor separately, or another term altogether.

Violence against women

Is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual, psychological, or financial harm or suffering to women. This includes threat of harm or coercion and can occur in public or in private life.

While violence against women often occurs in a family or relationship context, violence against women is broader than what is covered by the term 'family violence' as it includes, for example, harassment at work or sexual assault by a stranger, colleague, or acquaintance.

About the Respect Women: 'Call It Out' (Respect Is) campaign

Respect Victoria's Respect Women: 'Call It Out' (Respect Is) campaign encourages Victorians to call out sexism, sexual harassment and disrespect towards women.

This campaign aims to support the Victorian community in understanding what respect means, what it looks like, and how to put it into practice in their everyday lives. We have an opportunity to support our communities to understand what gender equality looks like and how striving for equality can prevent violence against women.

Gender inequality involves devaluing or disrespecting women or women's contributions. Research has consistently found that these forms of disrespect increase the likelihood of violence against women.

Respect Victoria wants to inspire action and to encourage members of the public to embrace the types of behaviours and actions that represent and personify 'respect'.



About the UN initiative: 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence originated from a petition that was circulated during the 1991 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights.

This petition called on the conference committee to comprehensively address women's human rights and recognise gender-based violence as a human rights issue. Almost three decades on, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a widely recognised global campaign that signifies action towards ending violence against women and girls around the world.

The 16 Days of Activism begins on the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) (25 November) and ends on [International Human Rights Day](#) (10 December). The dates for the campaign were chosen to link violence against women and human rights. During this time, organisations and individuals from around the world raise awareness about women's rights being human rights, and that violence against women is a fundamental violation of those human rights.

Respect Victoria's Respect Women: 'Call It Out' (Respect Is) campaign seeks to align with the timing of 16 Days of Activism as recognition that this is an important period of the year to be actively focusing on violence against women.

[More details on the activist origins of the 16 Days of Activism](#)

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a global initiative galvanising individuals, communities, and organisations to address gender inequalities and eradicate violence against women and girls around the world.

Applying an intersectional lens to this campaign

It is vital that this campaign and others like it are inclusive of the diversity that exists within our communities. As such, we encourage you to collaborate with communities and individuals who hold different identities across your organisation, local government area, or region as you prepare for your 16 Days of Activism. To find out more visit the [Research & Resources page](#) on Rainbow Health Australia's website.

The [Pride in Prevention Evidence Guide](#), [Pride in Prevention Messaging Guide](#) and [Rainbow Health Australia Partnership Guide](#) provide useful insights into the drivers of violence against LGBTIQ+ people and how to address those drivers.

The International Day of People with Disabilities is recognised on 3 December, which coincides with the 16 Days of Activism. We strongly encourage you to collaborate with organisations led by people with disabilities to ensure your activities are inclusive and raise awareness of the rights and agency of people with disabilities. For helpful information, visit the [Women with Disabilities Victoria website](#).

Those engaging with this campaign should seek to address systemic and structural discrimination, and in particular, elevate and strengthen the way they work with and listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

You can actively engage culturally diverse communities, including refugee and migrant communities by using community language and culture as part of a strengths-based approach to addressing gender-based violence.

For helpful information, please visit the [Prevention of Family Violence page](#) on Djirra's website, the [Resources page](#) on Multicultural Centre for Women's Health website, and the [Family Violence Impacts resources](#) on the Elizabeth Morgan House website.

“It is vital that this campaign is inclusive and celebrates the diversity of our community”

16 ways to get involved

Here are just a few ideas. Many of these ideas can also be used beyond the 16 Days of Activism to encourage year-round action for gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence.

1. Join us on 25 November for the 2022 Walk Against Family Violence (WAFV) hosted by Safe Steps with support from Respect Victoria

For more than a decade, the annual Walk Against Family Violence has taken place in Melbourne's CBD, gaining momentum and drawing larger crowds and increased interest from the community each year. The walk launches the 16 Days of Activism suite of activities and community initiatives, encouraging Victorians to stand up and speak out against family violence.

In 2022, Safe Steps will be hosting an in-person walk in the Melbourne CBD, with details to be shared on the WAFV website prior to the event. We encourage those that are attending in-person to register.

For those unable to attend the Melbourne metro event, we encourage you to stage your own 'neighbourhood walk' either by yourself or in groups on the same day. Walkers are encouraged to register for the walk and wear orange to raise awareness of family violence.

To register and for additional resources, visit the [Safe Steps website](#).

2. Host an online event: start conversations about preventing gender-based violence

Organise an online morning tea, panel discussion, book club or exhibition. Use the [conversation starter kit](#) on page 46 of the toolkit to support a conversation about respect, gender-based violence, everyday sexism and how to call it out. Engage with the online workshops designed to support campaign participants. Take a look at resources from previous campaigns for ideas and inspiration. Use VicHealth's [Framing Gender Equality Messaging Guide](#) to help inform your messaging.

3. Get active on social media

Social media can be used to drive behaviour change. We encourage individuals and organisations to share the social media tiles to promote respect and bystander action. Use the [Fast facts: Attitudes to violence against women and gender equality](#) on page 36 to support your messages. See [Dealing with resistance and backlash](#) on page 50 for tips on dealing with online resistance and backlash. Ask your Councillors, Presidents or Chairs to support the initiative through social media. Use the selfie frame provided in this toolkit.

4. Engage with diverse sources of lived experience

For primary prevention work to be safe and effective, we need to engage with different forms of lived experience. This could be lived experience of discrimination or marginalisation, which helps us understand the drivers of violence for diverse communities. It could also be the lived experience of family or gender-based violence, shared by survivors. Make sure those with lived experience are involved in the development of your campaign. Ask survivor advocates for their perspectives in a way that is safe for them, and be ready to really listen to what they have to say. Ensure you frame lived experiences through a primary prevention lens in your work.

For further information about the multiple sources of lived experience and how your campaign could include lived experiences, see the Safe and Equal paper [Sources of lived experience in the family violence sector](#).

5. Share books that challenge traditional gender stereotypes

Record people reading books, or parts of books, aloud and share the videos. Use the [book lists](#) beginning on page 40 to create library displays, promote to book clubs and distribute among colleagues, family and friends.

Print the bookmark template included in this toolkit and distribute to local libraries.

6. Elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, refugee and migrant women

Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, refugee and migrant women, to share their stories, achievements and initiatives in print, video and on social media.

Three helpful resources include Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency's (VACCA) [#SafeKooriFamilies – There Is Another Way](#) information, Djirra's cartoon-style [YouTube videos of Kirra, Alinta and Marli](#), and resources and [social media tiles](#) developed by InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence in partnership with Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria and Multicultural Centre for Women's Health.

7. Share learnings about gender diversity

Achieving change in this space requires explicit and active allyship for trans women, gender-diverse and non-binary people. Advocating for equality, safety, security, freedom and respect for all women, transgender, gender-diverse and non-binary people is a critical component of long-term, sustainable primary prevention. Demonstrating strong allyship, and helping empower transgender and non-binary people is a critical part of intersectionality and primary prevention. Encourage colleagues to learn about gender diversity, and how to support transgender and non-binary people.

The [Trans101 gender diversity crash course](#) is a great place to start. Ensure you centre the expertise, stories and lived experiences of trans women. [Transfemme](#) is a great entry point. Host an online workshop to discuss how your organisation can improve the way it demonstrates allyship and explicitly supports, respects and protects trans and gender diverse people.

8. Add the Respect Women: 'Call It Out' logo to your email signature

Use the digital signature banner in this toolkit and the virtual background in your Zoom meetings.

9. Wear orange and get your colleagues to wear orange too!

[Orange symbolises](#) a brighter future and a world free from violence against women and girls. Take a photo of you and your colleagues in orange using the virtual selfie frame and share. Consider printing orange t-shirts or distribute orange face masks.

10. Use values-based messaging to strengthen the impact and reach of your campaign

Values-based messaging is a form of communication that appeals to people's core values and principles to affect change. When developing actions for engaging in the 16 Days Campaign, or designing your own messages, consider how these resonate with individual and collective values to strengthen the impact and reach of these, and drive progress.

For more information on values-based messaging, see these messaging guides developed in collaboration with [Common Cause](#):

- > [Framing Gender Equality](#)
- > [Framing Masculinity](#)
- > [Framing Age](#)

11. Make the link with masculinities and health to engage men and boys in primary prevention

Visit VicHealth – [Masculinities and health](#)

Patriarchal systems and structures that uphold, maintain and perpetuate discrimination and disadvantage also negatively impact the health and wellbeing of men. [Build men's awareness](#) of the negative impacts of outdated forms of masculinity and encourage them to challenge dominant forms of masculinity as an avenue for engaging in preventing violence against women. Thinking about masculinities and health requires challenging stereotypes, and encouraging equality and respect, non-violence, reflection and self-awareness, emotional expression and vulnerability, and accountability. While engaging men and boys is critical to progressing prevention work, it is essential that in doing so, men are not made the focus of the issue, nor are women's voices and concerns marginalised. Maintaining accountability to women is key.

[Rainbow Health Australia](#) publish a wide range of accessible guides and resources that support the LGBTIQ+ community. [The Victorian Pride Centre](#) is the home to practical and supportive services for LGBTIQ+ communities.

Our Watch has recently published its [Men in focus practice guide](#) which outlines the long-term, collective, and intersectional approach needed to dismantle and transform the norms, structures and practices that reinforce gender inequality and lead to men's violence against women. This guide complements Our Watch's earlier resource, [Men in focus – evidence review](#).

[No To Violence](#) also have a range of resources to help support work in this space.

12. Run a competition

Organise a 'challenging gender stereotypes' art competition or a competition relating to what respect looks like in the context of gender equality and prevention of violence against women.

13. Display physical or digital posters/banners in your workspace and around your community

Display [posters or banners](#) (for example, the [A-Z of Preventing violence against women](#)) in your workplace, on your website and social media channels and on community notice boards. Consider ways in which you can use a wide range of platforms and mediums to share the campaign messages, including online. Ask to put up posters in libraries, neighbourhood houses, schools, community halls, sporting clubs and other settings within your municipality or organisation encouraging people to 'call out' disrespectful behaviour.

14. Partner with local businesses

Ask local cafes to put stickers or printed sleeves on their coffee cups during the 16 Days of Activism. Ask local businesses including medical centres, supermarkets, chemists and petrol stations to display posters.

15. Ensure your events and materials are accessible to people with disabilities

Women with disabilities are twice as likely as women without disabilities to experience violence throughout their lives, but they are often left out of the conversation. [Changing the Landscape](#), by Our Watch and Women with Disabilities Victoria, is a national, evidence-based resource to guide the prevention of violence against women and girls with disabilities. A suite of complementary resources to help drive progress and action in preventing violence against women and girls with disabilities can be found at [Our Watch – Changing the landscape](#). In 2021, Women with Disabilities Victoria created a [suite of social media tiles](#), which could be utilised throughout the 16 Days of Activism. Find out more on the [Women with Disabilities Victoria](#) website.

16. Learn more about preventing violence against older women

A particular area of focus for strengthening bystander action is in recognising, elevating and responding to the experiences of older women. For more guidance, see these resources:

- > Our Watch's [Preventing intimate partner violence against older women](#)
- > Australian Institute of Family Studies' [National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Summary report](#)
- > Southern Melbourne Primary Care Partnership's [Elder Abuse resources](#)



Tools to help ‘call it out’

This section provides organisations with pointers to stimulate conversations among their workforce and communities. This information will help build capacity among all Victorians in understanding the issues and how to respond to them.

How to ‘call it out’

‘Call it out’ is a broad term for responding in some way to behaviours that may be deemed sexist, disrespectful, abusive or constitute sexual harassment.

Inappropriate behaviour can be ‘called out’ by saying something or using body language to indicate disapproval in the moment. Bystanders can also say or do something later, after the incident (see [16 ways to #callitout](#) on the next page). You should use your judgement about the best way to respond, to show that the comment or behaviour is not okay. If the behaviour is directed at a particular person, your response may be primarily to support them (see number five and 10 under [16 ways to #callitout](#) on the next page).

‘Calling it out’ does not mean physically intervening when you witness violence and does not include hostile or aggressive responses.

If you believe someone is in immediate danger call 000 and ask for the police. It is important that when you react to inappropriate behaviour directed toward women, you do not put yourself or the person who is being targeted at risk. Before responding, you should assess safety and risk of escalation. It is also important to stay within your comfort zone and be pragmatic about your level of skill or confidence. As with any bystander intervention, your safety is paramount.

Different types of bystander action

There are a range of ways you can respond to sexism, harassment, and disrespect towards women, depending on the context and your level of confidence. These can be grouped into four categories:

- > **Diffuse** – Make light-hearted comments or give disapproving looks
- > **Check in** – See if the target is okay
- > **Call it out** – Declare the statement or behaviour offensive and explain why it is harmful
- > **Report** – Access incident reporting systems or report to management where applicable.

See VicHealth’s [Take action: Empowering bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours](#) for more information.

16 ways to #callitout

What to do when you hear or see sexist, disrespectful or sexually harassing behaviour:

1. Don't laugh at sexist jokes.
2. Give a disapproving look to show a behaviour or statement is not okay. Shake your head or roll your eyes.
3. Leave a pointed and uncomfortable silence.
4. Make a light-hearted comment: "What century are you living in?"
5. Check in with the person affected: "I heard what he just said – are you okay?"
6. Privately let them know the behaviour is not okay: "The joke you made in yesterday's meeting was not funny, and actually not okay."
7. Calmly disagree and state that the comment is wrong or unacceptable: "I know you probably didn't mean it, but I found what you said to be offensive."
8. Speak up and educate by explaining why you disagree: "Actually evidence shows the vast majority of women do not make up false claims of sexual assault" (you could use the Key Facts in this toolkit).
9. Challenge the logic: "That's not my experience." or "What makes you think that?"
10. Stand up for the person affected: "Michelle was saying something, and you cut her off again."
11. Make eye contact with the person affected – let them know you're an ally.
12. Show your emotion: "It actually makes me sad/uncomfortable when you say that."
13. Support others when they call it out: "I agree, that's not funny."
14. Appeal to their better self: "Come on, you're better than that."
15. Report the behaviour to management, or via incident reporting systems if available.
16. Disrupt or distract the situation to redirect focus from the incident to something else.

For more examples of how to #callitout visit:

- > Respect Victoria [Respect Women: Call It Out campaigns](#)
- > Our Watch [Doing Nothing Does Harm campaign](#) Our Watch [No excuse for abuse campaign](#)

What should be called out?

To call out sexism and disrespect towards women, people must first be able to recognise it. Here are a few everyday examples of sexism, disrespect, and harassment that should be ‘called out’:

- > Using ‘like a girl’ as an insult: “Stop whingeing, you sound like a girl!”
- > Sexist jokes at the pub: “I wouldn’t kick her out of bed”
- > The stereotype that men and boys don’t cry
- > Comments that transgender women are “not real women”
- > Sitting back while female colleagues clean the work kitchen or get the coffees
- > Stereotypes about skills: “I need a bloke’s brain for this”
- > Belittling women: “Given what your husband does, do you really need to work?”
- > Comments made about a person’s suitability for a role based on their gender: “I think it’s weird for a guy to be a childcare worker”
- > Leering or staring
- > Sharing inappropriate images with co-workers
- > Fathers being congratulated for doing basic parenting tasks: “Great job babysitting the kids!”
- > Sexism and racism disguised as a compliment: “She’s pretty... I guess, for a [insert nationality] girl”
- > When your mate puts his partner down
- > Catcalling / wolf-whistling
- > Comments about women being “too emotional”
- > Sexually suggestive comments or jokes: “I know just what you need to release some stress!”

To learn more about a different bystander action of ‘calling it in’, see this [Ted Talk](#) by Loretta J Ross.

Campaign collateral

A selection of campaign collateral and materials has been developed for councils and organisations to use during the 16 Days of Activism initiative and beyond (as appropriate).

Below is a list of digital collateral. On each item, there is a blank space for you to drop in your organisational logo(s) in Adobe Photoshop or Canva.

Additional information that is specific to the Respect Women: 'Call It Out' (Respect Is) campaign messaging will be provided by Respect Victoria at a later date. This will include social media tiles and posters.

Logos

Please note: the **Respect Women: 'Call It Out'** logo is current and should still be used in 2022, along with the Respect Victoria logo. In terms of hierarchy, your council/organisation's logo should come first, then Respect Victoria's logo, then your partner organisation's logo.

In 2022, the 16 Days of Activism campaign will be running during the Victorian State Government's Caretaker Period (the period of time preceding the State election).

For this reason, organisations must not use the Victorian State Government logo on any resources that they create or any outward facing communications during this time.

Respect Women: 'Call It Out' logo



Respect Victoria logo



Sticker

This is designed to be printed as 7cm wide by 9cm high.



Bookmark

This is designed to be printed as 4.5cm wide by 15cm high.



Front

Back

Selfie Frame



This is a virtual selfie frame. It is designed for you to drop an image (photo) of you/someone/people into the frame and share on social media or online.

Virtual Background



These are designed to be used as a virtual background on Zoom and other online meeting platforms.

Email Signature Banner



These are designed to be used by your organisation in your email signatures.

Respect Is... A4 Cards



You may wish to use the 'TO ME / TO US, RESPECT IS...' cards to hold up in your photos, describing what respect is to you/them (in your/their own words). Words can be either handwritten or typed in using Adobe Photoshop. e.g. "To me, respect is... listening to what other people have to say."

If you are developing your own 'Respect Is...' key messages (as opposed to personal statements), please email these to 16days@safeandequal.org.au prior to distribution.

Please note this is not for approval purposes but so Safe and Equal can keep a register of these key messages along with any collateral developed by participating organisations.

Hashtags include

#respectis

#callitout

#16days

Beyond the 16 Days

Efforts to prevent violence against women, such as this year's 16 Days initiative, are more likely to be effective and to achieve lasting change when they are part of a broader suite of activities to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women.

To increase the likelihood that you will achieve positive and lasting change, consider the following:

Get leadership on board

Leadership involvement and support is essential for getting traction on gender equality initiatives. When leadership is on board, bystander action can more easily be embedded into organisational policies, code of conduct and performance management. Having strong leadership on preventing violence against women helps to create an authorising environment in which bystander action is encouraged and supported. Our Watch has advice on [how to secure support from leadership](#).

Make sure your organisation has an effective reporting and resolution process. If not, develop one!

Having an effective reporting and resolution process supports people to take action easily and safely against sexism, disrespect and sexual harassment. [VicHealth](#), [WorkSafe](#) and [Our Watch](#) have useful suggestions to support your workplace to respond appropriately to violence against women and sexual harassment.

Ensure your organisation has an equal opportunity, sexual harassment, or gender equity policy

Policies provide a blueprint for the kind of workplace culture you want to achieve. To encourage bystander action, you will need policies that let staff and other stakeholders know what behaviours are inappropriate, what action can be taken, and how privacy will be protected. This information does not have to be contained in a standalone bystander action policy, but can be included in other policies aimed at building a safe and respectful workplace, such as an equal opportunity or sexual harassment policy. Policies should be accessible, accompanied by complaint and grievance procedures, and communicated to all staff. Take a look at the [family violence prevention resources](#) and the [Local Government Guide for Preventing Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women Guide](#) on the MAV website.

Attend, deliver or organise gender equality or bystander action trainings/workshops

For information on a range of gender equality training and professional development workshops for individuals and workplaces visit:

- > [Safe and Equal](#)
- > [Our Watch resources](#)
- > Subscribe to receive the [MAV gender equality and prevention of violence against women](#) monthly e-news update
- > Sign up to the [Partners in Prevention Network](#)
- > [Women's Health Victoria](#)
- > [No To Violence](#)
- > Your regional Women's Health Service

Roll out messaging about bystander action throughout the year

Consider doing this through a series of simple emails. These emails should:

- > Be clear about what constitutes sexism, harassment and disrespect
- > Provide suggestions on how bystanders could respond.

For more information on how to do this, view VicHealth's [Take action: Empowering bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours in universities](#).

Develop a code of conduct

A code of conduct is an important guide for employees when thinking about how they are expected to behave in the workplace.

Use of tools and resources beyond the 16 Days

The tools and resources provided in this toolkit have been deliberately designed to be useful beyond the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. We encourage councils, organisations, and community members to continue to use these resources to support bystander action, prevent violence against women and promote gender equality.

Fast facts: Prevalence

For more data on violence against women, visit the [Prevention of Violence Data Platform](#), developed by Respect Victoria in partnership with the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency.

We can create a world where everyone is equal, free and safe and yet violence continues to impact our communities in gendered ways

Women killed by a current or former partner

Every 9 days a woman is killed by her current or former partner

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019) Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019

Gender of perpetrators

95% of all victims experience violence from a male perpetrator (regardless of the victim's gender)

Source: Diemer, K. (2015) ABS Personal Safety Survey: Additional analysis on relationship and sex of perpetrator

Women's and men's experience of violence

Almost 1 in 4 women have experienced intimate partner violence by the age of 15

Almost 1 in 5 women have experienced sexual assault since the age of 15

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) Personal safety, Australia, 2016

1 in 13 men have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15

1 in 20 men have experienced sexual assault since the age of 15

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) Personal safety, Australia, 2016

Stopping gender-based violence starts with gender equality

Sexual assault offenders

97% of sexual assault offenders proceeded against by police are male

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) Sexual Assault – Perpetrators: Sexual assault statistics for offenders proceeded against by police, criminal court outcomes for defendants, and prisoners in adult custody

Women's experience of harassment

1 in 2 women have experienced sexual harassment by the age of 15

Source: ABS (2017) Personal safety, Australia, 2016

Almost 1 in 4 women have experienced sexual harassment at work in the last 12 months

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission (2018) Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces

Structural oppression impacts the frequency and forms of violence that women and gender diverse people experience

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

3 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have experienced physical or sexual violence perpetrated by a male intimate partner

This violence is perpetrated by men from many cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous men.

Source: Our Watch (2018) Changing the picture

To stop this violence we must address the ongoing impacts of colonialism

Women with disabilities

Almost 2 in 5 women with disabilities have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15

Women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence from multiple perpetrators, and over longer periods of time

Source: Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (2021) Nature and extent of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against people with disability in Australia

To stop this violence we must address ableism and gender inequality

Refugee and migrant women

1 in 3 refugee and migrant women living in Australia have experienced domestic and family violence

Those on temporary visas report higher levels of abuse. This is enabled by discriminatory migration policies and practices.

Source: Segrave, Marie; Wickes, Rebecca; Keel, Chloe (2021): Migrant and refugee women in Australia: The safety and security study

To stop this violence we must create a culturally inclusive and gender equal society

LGBTIQ+ people

More than 2 in 5 LGBTIQ+ people who have been in intimate relationships felt they were abused in some way by their partner/s

For intersex, transgender and gender diverse people these numbers are even higher

Source: The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University (2020) Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people in Australia

To stop this violence we must address heteronormativity, cisnormativity and gender inequality

All forms of inequality and discrimination are connected. We must address them all to create a safe and equal world for everyone.

Fast facts: Impacts of family and gender-based violence

Women and children disproportionately bear the burden

Young women

Although violence affects women across all ages, it's more prevalent among young women (18-24 years old)

Source: ABS (2017) ABS survey shows decline in rates of violence

In the last 12 months young women were **2.7 times** as likely to have experienced intimate partner violence than those aged 35 and over.

Source: ABS (2017) Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016

The number who had experienced sexual violence was **2 times** the national average

Source: Cox, P. (2015) Violence against women in Australia: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey, 2012. Sydney: ANROWS

38% had experienced sexual harassment

Source: ABS (2017) Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016

Violence by a current partner

For women who experienced violence by a current cohabiting partner:

- > **54.2%** had children in their care at the time of the violence
- > for **57.8%** of women in this group, the children heard or saw the violence

Source: Cox, P. (2015) Violence against women in Australia: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey, 2012. Sydney: ANROWS

Homelessness

Of adults seeking homelessness services due to family and domestic violence in 2018-19, **90%** were women

Family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children

No one should have to choose between safety and their home

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019) Specialist homelessness services annual report 2018–19

Cost of violence to society

The estimated cost of violence against women and their children in 2015-16 was **\$22 billion**

Stopping gender-based violence would save lives, and save survivors, families, friends, employers, communities and governments from bearing the costs of this violence

Source: KPMG (2016) The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia

Fast facts: Impacts of COVID-19 on family violence and gender equality

COVID-19 is a gendered problem

Women in cohabiting relationships

During the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic 2020:

- > **8.8%** of women in a cohabiting relationship in the previous 12 months experienced physical violence by a current or former partner – of these **1 in 3** said it was the first time
- > **22.4%** of women in a cohabiting relationship in the previous 12 months experienced emotional, harassing and controlling behaviour by a current or former partner – of these **1 in 5** said it was the first time

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology (2020) The prevalence of domestic violence among women during the COVID-19 pandemic

Compounding effects of other forms of oppression

The gendered impacts of COVID-19 are compounded by other forms of oppression

For example, Asian-Australian women have reported an increase in the intensity of highly racialised and sexualised abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: Asian Australian Alliance and Per Capita Thinktank (2020) COVID-19 Racism Incident Report Survey

Reports by support practitioners

During the March 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, among support practitioners:

- > **42%** reported an increase in first-time family violence reporting by women
 - > **50%** reported an increase in the severity of family violence
 - > **59%** reported an increase in the frequency of family violence
 - > **89%** reported an increase in the complexity of women's needs
-

Practitioners also reported increased challenges:

- > providing support
- > undertaking effective risk assessment
- > carrying out safety planning during lockdown
- > supporting temporary visa holders (who face additional barriers when seeking help)

Source: Pfitzner, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K. and True, J. (2020). Responding to the 'shadow pandemic': practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions

Impacts on gender inequality

The COVID-19 pandemic has made gender inequality even worse:

- > more women than men have lost their jobs
- > more women have had their hours drastically reduced
- > women shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid caring responsibilities

Source: Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (2020) Affected communities: Workplace gender equality

A crisis response must address the gendered impacts and other forms of oppression

Fast facts: Gender equality in Australia

Gender-balanced leadership has been proven to improve performance, productivity and profitability

Source: Cassells R and Duncan A (2020) Gender Equity Insights 2020: Delivering the Business Outcomes, BCEC|WGEA Gender Equity Series

Australia's global ranking

Australia's global ranking for gender equality is showing promising signs of improving:

- > 2006: **15**
- > 2017: **35**
- > 2020: **44**
- > 2021: **50**
- > 2022: **43**

Change is possible

Just look at our neighbours, New Zealand ranked #4 in 2022 and is among the world's most gender equitable countries

Source: World Economic Forum (2022) Global Gender Gap Report

Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is still a problem:

- > Women's average full-time wages are **lower than men's** across every industry and occupation in Australia
- > Women are paid on average **14% less** per week than men
- > This means women must work approximately **60 extra days** to earn the same income as men annually
- > If we continue this way, it will take **26 years** to close the total gender pay gap

Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022)

Women's representation in key decision-making roles

Women are underrepresented in key decision-making roles across almost all industries in the workforce

In 2019-2020, women made up:

- > Board Chairs: **18%**
- > CEOs: **19.4%**

Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022)

The numbers are **even lower** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and women from multicultural backgrounds

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission (2018) Leading for Change: A blueprint for cultural diversity and inclusive leadership revisited

In 2015, only **1.0%** of ASX CEOs identified as culturally diverse women

Source: Diversity Council of Australia (2015) Capitalising on Culture and Gender in ASX leadership

Progress towards gender equality

Change is possible

There's been an increase in the percentage of women on ASX-listed company Boards:

- > 2009: **8%**
- > 2017: **26%**
- > 2021: **34%**

The implementation of diversity policies by the ASX Corporate Governance Council in 2010 has played a key role in this improvement.

Source: Fitzsimmons, T.W., Yates, M.S. & Callan, V.J. (2021). Towards Board Gender Parity: Lessons from the Past – Directions for the Future

A gender equitable society is a safe,
creative and prosperous society

Fast facts: Attitudes to violence against women and gender equality

Adapted from the 2017 NCAS infographics developed by ANROWS

Too many Australians continue to hold problematic attitudes

Gender inequality

Gender inequality continues to be a problem in Australia.

Women earn less pay on average than men across all industries.

Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2017, Find out more at the [NCAS website](#)

yet

40% of Australians believe that many women exaggerate how unequally women are treated in Australia.

Source: ANROWS (2017) National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)

Reporting to police

9 out of 10 women who have been sexually assaulted do not report to the police, and false allegations are rare.

Source: ABS (2017) Personal Safety Survey

For a review see the 2017 NCAS

yet

42% of Australians believe it is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men.

Source: ANROWS (2017) NCAS

Improving awareness is essential for the safety and wellbeing of all Australians

These attitudes are not acceptable and continue to harm us all

Leaving an abusive partner

Leaving an abusive partner can be difficult and often dangerous.

yet

32% of Australians believe that a female victim who doesn't leave an abusive partner is partly responsible for the abuse continuing.

Source: ANROWS (2017) NCAS

We need to focus on the abusive behaviour, not women's choices.

Controlling behaviour

Being controlling is a key risk factor for abuse in relationships.

yet

44% of Australians think it's natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends.

Source: ANROWS (2017) NCAS

Healthy relationships are equal and respectful.

We all have a role to play in changing attitudes and creating a more equitable world

The gendered impact of COVID-19

More than two years on, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our lives in various ways, particularly so in the case of gender-based violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender inequality and increased the risk of gender-based violence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we live. The impact of restrictions and physical distancing on individuals, families, and communities, while varied, has been profound. There is no doubt, that the impact of the pandemic is highly gendered.

Evidence on the impact of COVID-19

Data shows that both worldwide and in Australia, women have endured the greatest cost with higher unemployment rates, greater risk of exposure to the virus in lower paid jobs, greater caring responsibilities and significantly poorer mental health outcomes than men.

Family violence services have also reported increased demand during the pandemic. Intimate partner and family violence increase during disaster and emergencies, both in prevalence and severity.¹ Data released by the Crime Statistics Agency in September 2021 shows that Victoria is facing its highest reported rates of family violence in history, with a 2.8% increase in family violence related offences in the year ending 30 September 2021.²

The reported increase in violence has been compounded by reduced access to services and support during social isolation. To see further information please refer to the Crime Statistics Agency [COVID-19 Family Violence Database](#).

For more data on the gendered impact of COVID-19, see [Fast facts: Impacts of COVID-19 on family violence and gender equality](#) on page 32.

Addressing gender inequality, response and recovery

Violence doesn't happen because we're staying at home. Family violence and gender-based violence are driven by gender inequality, discrimination and marginalisation. That means that response to and recovery from the pandemic must address gender inequality and other forms of discrimination.

In aiding and strengthening the recovery from the gendered impacts of COVID-19, we must commit to deconstructing the systemic inequalities that lead to and exacerbate family violence and gender-based violence. By creating a more inclusive and equal Victoria, we can help everyone live free from violence.

1 [The Conversation – First come floods, then domestic violence. We need to prepare for the next inevitable crisis](#)

2 [Crime Statistics Agency – Key Figures: Year ending September 2021](#)

What your organisation can do

Your organisation can implement a COVID-19 recovery plan that addresses the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women. There are a range of resources and tools to help you do this, including:

- > Guiding principles for primary prevention in the context of COVID-19 ([Respect Victoria](#))
- > Addressing systemic and structural discrimination for primary prevention of family violence in the context of COVID-19: A resource for advocacy ([Respect Victoria](#))
- > Applying a Gender Lens to COVID-19 Response and Recovery ([Women's Health in the North](#))
- > Towards a Gender-Equal Recovery: COVID-19 Fact sheets ([Gender Equity Victoria](#))
- > Left Behind: Migrant and Refugee Women's Experiences of COVID-19 ([Gender Equity Victoria](#))

As practitioners and contributor workers in the primary prevention family violence sectors, which is a predominantly feminised workforce, it is important to remember that we continue to experience significant impacts as a result of the pandemic. We encourage practitioners and organisations to prioritise self and collective care and retain a healthy work-life balance as you undertake your 16 Days of Activism campaign.

Recommended health advice

Ensure you comply with the current Victorian Government Chief Health Officer's directions when organising activities or events for the 16 Days of Activism.

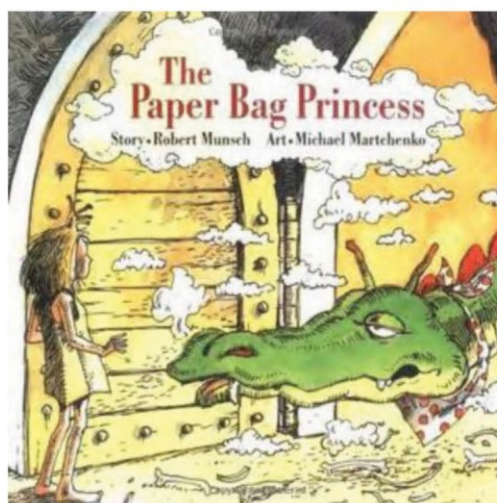
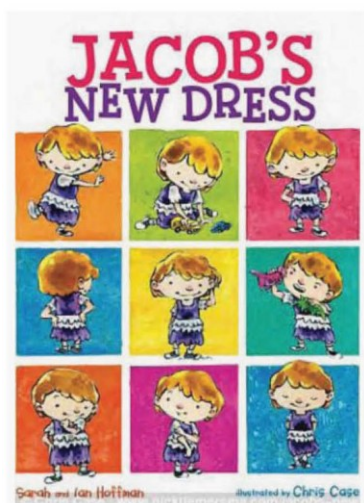
Visit the [Department of Health's](#) website for the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria.

Booklists: Children's books

Help parents to choose books with their children that promote boys and girls as equals. Here are some great examples.

- > **Ada Twist** by Andrea Beaty
- > **Amazing Babes** by Eliza Sarlos and Grace Lee
- > **Axle Annie** by Robin Pulver
- > **Be Who You Are** by Todd Parr
- > **Be Your Own Man** by Jessica Sanders
- > **Bold Australian Girl** by Jess Black
- > **Cactus Annie** by Melanie Williamson
- > **Crusher is Coming** by Bob Graham
- > **Do you want to play trucks?** by Ann Stott
- > **Easy as Pie** by Cari Best
- > **Every-day Dress-up** by Selina Alko
- > **Fly** by Jess McGeachin
- > **Giraffes Can't Dance** by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees
- > **Hunting for Dragons** by Bruce Whatley
- > **I am Enough** by Grace Byers
- > **I Could Be, You Could Be** by Karen Owen
- > **I want to be a superhero** by Breanna Humes
- > **Introducing Teddy** by Jessica Walton
- > **Jacob's New Dress** by Sarah and Ian Hoffman
- > **Made by Raffi** by Craig Pomranz
- > **Me and my boots** by Penny Harrison
- > **My Princess Boy** by Cheryl Kilodavis
- > **My Shadow is Pink** by Scott Stuart
- > **No Difference Between Us** by Jayneen Saunders
- > **Not All Princesses Dress in Pink** by Jane Yolen and Heidi Stemple
- > **One Busy Day** by Lola Schaefer
- > **Pearl Fairweather Pirate Captain** by Jayneen Sanders
- > **Piggybook** by Anthony Browne
- > **Princess Smartypants** by Babette Cole
- > **Roadworks & Demolition (series)** by Sally Sutton
- > **Rosie Revere, Engineer** by Andrea Beaty
- > **Ruby's Wish** by Shirin Yim Bridges
- > **Some Boys** by Nelly Thomas

- > **Some Girls** by Nelly Thomas
- > **Squishy Taylor (series)** by Ailsa Wild
- > **The Different Dragon** by Jennifer Bryan
- > **The Night Pirates** by Peter Harris
- > **The Paper Bag Princess** by Robert Munsch
- > **The Underwater Fancy-Dress Parade** by Davina Bell
- > **The World Needs Who You Were Made to Be** by Joanna Gaines
- > **Tina and Tom's Time Travelling Toilet** by Chris 'Roy' Taylor and James A Crabtree
- > **Tough Guys (Have Feelings Too)** by Keith Negley
- > **Two Mates** by Melanie Prewett
- > **Who Am I? I Am Me!** by Jayneen Sanders
- > **Who's your real mum?** by Bernadette Green
- > **Zephyr Takes Flight** by Steve Light

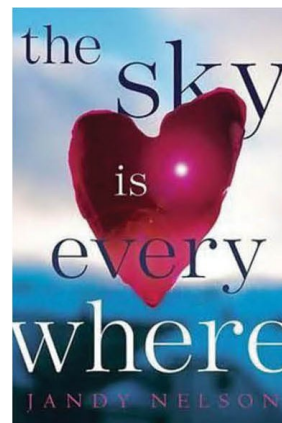
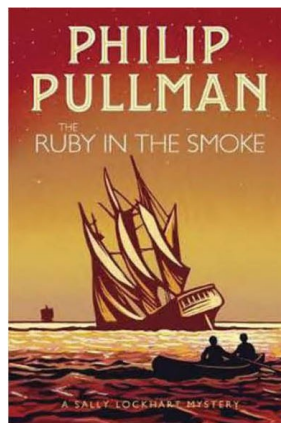
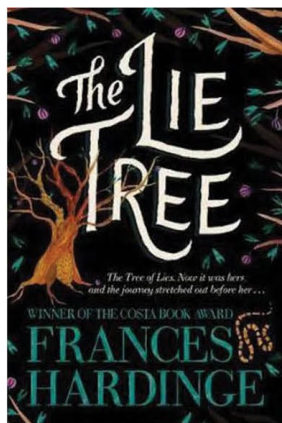
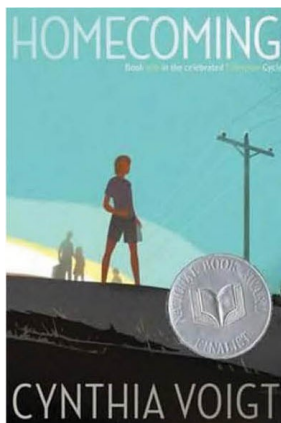


Booklists: Young adult books

What we read has a strong influence on what we think. Provide young adults with guidance towards literature that challenges stereotypes and gives characters non-traditional roles. Here are some great examples.

- > **A Court of Thorns and Roses** by Sarah J. Mass
- > **A Great and Terrible Beauty** by Libba Bray
- > **A Thousand Nights** by E.K. Johnston
- > **And I Darken** by Kiersten White
- > **Code Name Verity** by Elizabeth Wein
- > **Gabi, a Girl in Pieces** by Isabel Quintero
- > **Girls Can Fly** by Ambelin Kwaymullina and Sally Morgan
- > **Homecoming** by Cynthia Voight
- > **How to Make Friends with the Dark** by Kathleen Glasgow
- > **I Am J** by Cris Beam
- > **I'll give you the sun** by Jandy Nelson
- > **Ink and Ashes** by Valynne E. Maetani
- > **Kindred: 12 Queer #LoveOzYA Stories** by Michael Earp
- > **Luna** by Julie Anne Peters
- > **Lydia** by Natasha Farrant
- > **My Spare Heart** by Jared Thomas
- > **Not That Kind of Girl** by Siobhan Vivian
- > **Only Ever Yours** by Louise O'Neill
- > **Out of Darkness** by Ashley Hope Pérez
- > **Rebel of the Sands** by Alwyn Hamilton
- > **Remix** by Non Pratt
- > **Songs that sound like blood** by Jared Thomas
- > **The Boy from the Mish** by Gary Lonesborough
- > **The Boy in the Dress** by David Walliams
- > **The Curious Tale of the Lady of Caraboo** by Catherine Johnson
- > **The Hate U Give** by Angie Thomas
- > **The Hunger Games Trilogy** by Suzanne Collins
- > **The Lie Tree** by Frances Hardinge
- > **The Love and Lies of Rukhsana Ali** by Sabina Khan
- > **The Perks of Being a Wallflower** by Stephen Chbosky

- > **The Ruby in the Smoke** by Phillip Pullman
- > **The Servant** by Fatima Sharafeddine
- > **The Sky Is Everywhere** by Jandy Nelson
- > **The Tracey Fragments** by Maureen Medved
- > **Unbecoming** by Jenny Downham
- > **Wandering Son (series)** by Shimura Takako

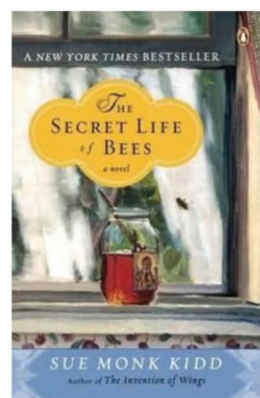
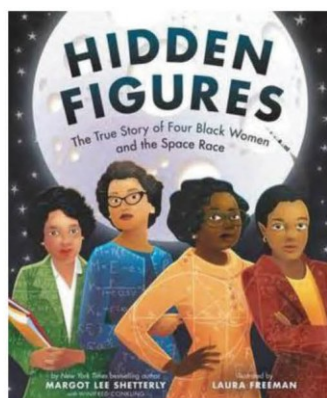
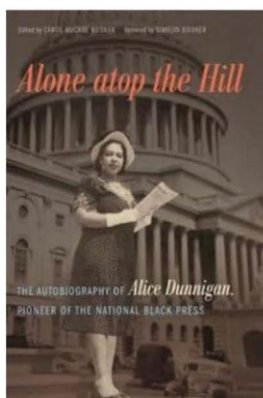


Booklists: Adult fiction and non-fiction books

Help visitors and borrowers to choose books that will help them think about gender and gender equality differently. Here are some great examples.

- > **Alone atop the Hill** by Alice Dunnigan
- > **Attack of the 50 Ft. Women: How Gender Equality Can Save The World!** by Catherine Mayer (2017)
- > **A Room of One's Own** by Virginia Wolfe (1929)
- > **Bossypants** by Tina Fey (2011)
- > **Brotopia: Breaking up the Boys' Club of Silicon Valley** by Emily Chang (2018)
- > **Carrie Pilby** by Caren Lissner (2003)
- > **Colouring The Rainbow: Black Queer and Trans Perspectives** by Dino Hodge
- > **Dead Beckoning** by Christina Engela (2016)
- > **Entitled: How male privilege hurts women** by Kate Manne
- > **Equal Partners: Improving Gender Equality at Home** by Kate Mangino (2022)
- > **Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics** by Bell Hooks (2000)
- > **Finding Nevo** by Nevo Zisin (2017)
- > **Girl Up** by Lauren Bates (2016)
- > **Here Lies Arthur** by Philip Reeve (2007)
- > **Hidden Figures** by Margot Lee Shetterly (2016)
- > **Honeybee** by Craig Silvey
- > **I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban** by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb (2013)
- > **I hope we choose love** by Kai Cheng Thom
- > **Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men** by Caroline Criado Perez (2019)
- > **Juliet Takes a Breath** by Gabby Rivera (2016)
- > **Kindred** by Octavia E. Butler (1979)
- > **Men Explain Things to Me** by Rebecca Solnit (2015)
- > **Middlesex** by Jeffrey Eugenides (2002)
- > **Milk and Honey** by Rupi Kaur (2014)
- > **My Life on the Road** by Gloria Steinem (2015)
- > **Not That Bad** by Roxane Gay (2018)
- > **Outlawed** by Anna North (2021)
- > **Pachinko** by Min Jin Lee (2017)

- > **Stealing the Show: How Women Are Revolutionizing Television** by Joy Press (2018)
- > **The Argonauts** by Maggie Nelson (2015)
- > **The Bluest Eye** by Toni Morrison (1970)
- > **The Great Believers** by Rebecca Makkai (2018)
- > **The Handmaid's Tale** by Margaret Atwood (1985)
- > **The Help** by Kathryn Stockett (2009)
- > **The Secret Life of Bees** by Sue Monk Kidd (2003)
- > **The Surface Breaks** by Louise O'Neill (2018)
- > **The Testaments** by Margaret Atwood (2019)
- > **The Time Has Come: Why Men Must Join the Gender Equality Revolution** by Michael Kaufman (2019)
- > **The Wife Drought** by Annabel Crabb (2015)
- > **We: A Manifesto for Women Everywhere** by Gillian Anderson and Jennifer Nadel (2017)
- > **Witness** by Louise Milligan (2020)



Conversation starters

Gender-based violence, sexism, harassment, and disrespect towards women can be difficult topics to bring up in conversation, especially in relationships, communities and settings where attitudes and beliefs about traditional gender roles may be strongly held.

It is, however, important that we do start talking about these issues, or we will never be able to solve them.

Below are some questions to help you start an informal conversation with colleagues, family, friends, and community members about gender-based violence, sexism, and disrespect towards women. These conversations can be challenging and may bring up a range of difficult issues and emotions for people. Consider this before you start a conversation and make sure you feel safe, supported, and prepared.

- > “What are the causes of gendered violence?”
- > “Why are women overwhelmingly the victims of family violence?”
- > “How do men and women experience violence differently?”
- > “Have you thought about who does the chores in your house? Why do you think labour is divided this way?”
- > “Who are your female role models? Do you think they experienced discrimination because of their gender?”
- > “Do you think the media treats women fairly? Does the media blame victims of sexual harassment?”
- > “How can we get men involved to help prevent sexism and harassment towards women?”
- > “Do you know what sexism is?” (Use definition and examples of [sexism](#) on page 8 in this toolkit to demonstrate)
- > “Do you think there is a problem with sexism / gender inequality in our community?”
- > “Have you thought about what you could do when you hear sexist comments? I know it can feel hard, but there are lots of ways to respond.” For ideas on ways to respond look at [Tools to help ‘call it out’](#) on page 18.

Conversations about gender inequality can lead to resistance or backlash from some people. See [Dealing with resistance or backlash](#) on page 50 of the toolkit for tips on how to manage this.

“It is important that we start talking about these issues, or we will never be able to solve them”

Responding to disclosures

When you open up conversations about gender equality, respectful relationships and violence against women, there's a good chance that someone may disclose that they have experienced or witnessed violence.

For this reason, it is important you know how to respond. This section provides information to support you to respond to disclosures effectively.

Do

- > Listen, without interruption or judgement, giving the victim survivor time to share their experience
- > Believe what the victim survivor is saying to you
- > Affirm the victim survivor has done the right thing in disclosing their experience
- > Affirm the victim survivor is brave in being able to come forward
- > Emphasise that they are not to blame for their experience
- > Respect the victim survivor's decisions – even if you don't agree with them
- > Be honest and open about your skills and knowledge and the types of support you can provide
- > Provide information about specialist support services (see [During the 16 Days – ensure support services are visible](#) on page 56) in a way that is safe and supportive. Ask them if they would like some personal and/or professional support, and whether they would like any help identifying particular services
- > Keep the conversation confidential. The only exception is if you believe the person's safety is at immediate risk (call 000), or you become aware that a child's safety is at risk. It is important to recognise however, whether you are a professional service and have a responsibility for escalating an issue under the framework.

In some cases, for example if you are a professional such as a teacher or doctor, it may be mandatory for you to report this to relevant authorities.

**“What has happened is not okay
and is not your fault”**

Don't

- > Try to find out details
- > Try to fix the situation for them
- > Suggest the situation is somewhat their fault – don't ask questions like 'why do you put up with it?' or 'how can you still stay with them?'
- > Give advice or tell them what to do – it will reduce their confidence to make their own decisions
- > Judge or criticise their choice – even if you don't agree with it
- > Criticise the perpetrator – it may only make the victim survivor want to defend the perpetrator. Focus on criticising the abusive behaviour and let them know that no one should abuse them
- > Provide counselling – if you are not a counsellor or do not have specialist training in responding to family violence, be honest and open about that.

Instead, you can provide information about referral pathways which are listed under [During the 16 Days – ensure support services are visible](#) on page 56 of this toolkit.

Examples of things you could say

These are some ideas. It is important you only say what you believe and use your own words:

- > What has happened is not okay and is not your fault
- > I'm glad you have told me
- > No one should have to experience what you have been through
- > Do you feel safe at the moment?
- > I don't have specialist knowledge in helping people with experiences like yours, but I can give you the contact details of a specialist you could talk to, if you want?
- > It's up to you to choose what to do with this information, but I can give you the contact details of a specialist whom you can talk to if you need.

Self-care

Self-care is a priority and necessity – not a luxury. If you find yourself feeling down, depleted, or irritable you may need to take some time out. There are lots of ways you can do this.

- > **Reach out to someone.** This could be a family member, trusted friend or colleague, your manager, a counsellor or another support person. You could also speak to your GP about seeing a counsellor or, if available to you, access your employee assistance program (EAP). For after-hours support, Safe Steps, Victoria's family violence support service, is available 24 hours a day for professionals to discuss the personal impact of working with people who have experienced violence. You can also call 1800RESPECT, which is the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service
- > **Find a way to escape physically and/or mentally** e.g. reading, days off, holidays, walks, seeing friends
- > **Rest** – have some time with no goals e.g. taking naps, watching clouds, lying on the beach
- > **Play** – have fun and do things that make you laugh e.g. playing with children and pets, creative activities, watching a favourite comedy.

The three most important things you can do when responding to disclosure:

1. Listen without interruption or judgement
2. Believe and validate their experience
3. Provide information about referral pathways

Responding to Disclosures virtual training

Safe and Equal offers a three-hour virtual interactive training focused on providing foundational knowledge in understanding family violence and responding to disclosures of family violence.

Dealing with resistance and backlash

When you bring up gender equality messages, it is likely that you will face resistance or even backlash. It is an uncomfortable experience for most people when their long-held beliefs are challenged – and naturally they want to resist. Experiencing resistance is not necessarily a bad thing, and in some instances can indicate that you are having a difficult but necessary conversation to help someone think about, or reflect on, an issue in a new way.

Preparing for potential resistance and coming up with responses in advance will help you communicate better on the spot and may help you open more conversations with the community. One way to do this is to develop a response register that can be used to guide responses in person, over the phone or online.

Here are some likely forms of backlash you may receive, and how you might want to challenge them:

What about men experiencing violence? You're just cherry-picking data to say that women are the victims

We acknowledge that both women and men can experience violence, but the nature of this violence differs in terms of its severity and impacts. Data comes from sources such as the [Crime Statistics Agency](#), the [Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform](#), and the [Personal Safety Survey](#) undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

As uncomfortable as it may be, the data consistently shows that women disproportionately experience intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual assault, and are more likely to be hospitalised, injured, express fear or be killed by a current or former partner. To address the violence experienced by women, we must recognise its gendered nature. We look forward to a future with very different data that shows all forms and rates of violence being eliminated!

Jokes are harmless – speaking disrespectfully does not mean the man is abusive

Speaking disrespectfully does not necessarily mean someone is abusive, but people who are abusive often speak disrespectfully. The [evidence](#) tells us that the most consistent predictor for support of violence against women by men is their agreement with sexist and disrespectful attitudes towards women. Sexist jokes reflect and reinforce sexist attitudes.

There are many jokes we can make that aren't sexist and disrespectful – why not challenge ourselves to be creative with our humour and not fall back on old stereotypes!

Sexism and disrespect do not cause violence against women. It is caused by poverty, unemployment, and stress

Poverty, unemployment, or stress alone do not drive violence against women. Women experience poverty, stress, and unemployment at equal or often higher rates than men. However, 93% of violence is committed by men, not women. Violence against women happens regardless of income, class, or unemployment status. While we recognise those factors may increase the likelihood or severity of violence against women, they only play a role when people hold beliefs and attitudes that are sexist and disrespectful.

Violence is only an issue within some community groups like migrant communities or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Family violence occurs among all types of families, regardless of income, profession, religion, ethnicity, or educational level.

Why must one gender be more respected than the others? Respect everyone regardless of gender, not just women!

We agree – everyone should be respected regardless of their gender. Taking a moment to focus on one particular crisis – in this case, learning more about the alarming rates of gendered violence experienced by women, transwomen and girls – does not negate or minimise the impacts of other crisis or incidents, and the conversation should not be co-opted or deflected away from the main conversation. [Advocating for the safety, equality and rights of women](#) and those who identify as women does not detract from the safety, equality and rights of others. Unfortunately, women experience casual and structural sexism daily and are not respected in the same way as many men are, and they are also disproportionately impacted by violence. To create a society where there is no disrespect and no violence, we need to look honestly at what the evidence is telling us.

Sexism only seems to work one way these days

Sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender. Although sexism can be directed at men, women have been and remain the predominant targets of sexism. Sexism toward women must be viewed differently to sexism toward men because it is based on systematic inequalities and historic oppression. Sexism and similarly inflexible beliefs and attitudes toward sex and gender roles (sexism) are the most consistent predictor of attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence against women.

**“Women are more likely than men
to be hospitalised, injured, express
fear or be killed by a current or
former partner”**

Why is gender equality and family violence/gender-based violence a council issue? Shouldn't you just stick to roads, rates and rubbish?

Family violence and violence against women is a serious and prevalent issue affecting the health and wellbeing of many people living within our municipality. The role of council is to address issues that are relevant to our community and we are legislatively required to work to prevent family violence (Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008). The reach of local government across the community is unrivalled and we are in a unique position where we can embed gender equality across multiple community settings and services. We believe that we can lead the societal change needed to achieve gender equality and subsequently prevent violence against women through the services we deliver, our organisational structure and operations, and most importantly through leadership in the community.

What happens inside a family is their business, no one else's

Family violence is no longer considered a private matter and is being addressed as a serious public health and criminal justice issue. If you know of someone who is being abused, express your concern, and encourage them to seek help.

Safe Steps is Victoria's 24/7 family violence support service.

Safe Steps (1800 015 188) safesteps.org.au

Continue to build your response register

Use the Women's Health West, [Speaking publicly about preventing men's violence against women: Curly questions and language considerations tool](#), Our Watch's Practice Guidance: [Dealing with backlash tool](#) and Respect Victoria's report on [Understanding backlash and resistance](#).

For more information on how to prepare for and respond to resistance and backlash to gender **equality initiatives** view VicHealth's [\(En\)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives](#).

Consider using the key facts and statistics provided in this tool kit to strengthen your response.

Dealing with resistance and backlash online

To respond to destructive comments or trolling on social media, here are some ideas on how you can start your response:

- > Hi (insert name), we see/hear from your comments that you don't agree with this initiative. Would you be open to hearing more about why (insert topic) is so important?
- > Hi (insert name), we're sorry to hear you say this. From our research we know that ...
- > Hi (insert name), we do appreciate other viewpoints, however, if you continue to be disrespectful to others, we will remove you from the page.
- > Hi (insert name), please be clear any further de-railing of the conversation with disrespect or hatred will not be tolerated.
- > Hi (insert name), thanks for sharing your feedback, we do appreciate other viewpoints however, this is a space for ... and will continue to serve that function.

It is important for social media moderators to strike a balance between allowing audiences to self-moderate and intervening when comments are offensive and de-rail constructive conversation.

Having clear moderation guidelines will support you to effectively manage resistance on online forums.

2021 campaign evaluation findings on backlash and resistance

In the 2021 initiative evaluation, seventy three per cent (73%) of respondents reported receiving no backlash from within their community or workplace. Less than one third (27%) of all respondents experienced some level of backlash from the community or their workplace. Nearly all experiences of backlash occurred on social media, due largely to the volume of social media activity that took place across the 16 Days campaign period in 2021.

Nearly all backlash objected that the activities demonise or portray men badly or focus too much on female rather than male victims:

“Largely the backlash suggested that talking about gender-based violence demonises men and that it’s ‘not an issue anymore.’ We were able to hide the comments from our social media platforms before they gained any traction.” – Online survey

Responding to backlash

As most of the backlash experienced during the 2021 campaign occurred online, grantees often responded to backlash by deleting, hiding or ignoring comments, often without responding. Grantees felt that this strategy was successful and empowering – by not engaging in online tit-for-tat debates, backlash instigators have nothing to respond to, and comment chains do not gain traction.

Proactively preparing for resistance and backlash is really important for developing strategies and responses, and for caring for your own safety and wellbeing. Preparation may include:

- > Reading and sharing the Preparing for Backlash content provided in the 16 Days toolkit
- > Backlash training delivered by Safe and Equal
- > Attending the managing resistance webinar
- > Internal training and briefing
- > Development of backlash response templates
- > Sharing of internal communications guides
- > Training with external organisations
- > Relying on existing internal capabilities
- > Opening lines of communications with local advocates and practitioners for support in responding to backlash
- > Relying on existing networks, including social workers advocates
- > Anticipating a list of curly questions and responses to these
- > Reflecting on past experiences in managing backlash.

Other approaches for responding to resistance and backlash included:

- > Blocking or removing offensive comments on social media; not responding to less offensive comments; providing a standard response explaining the rationale for 16 Days
- > Complaints via letter or email: prepared responses with manager
- > Phone call or in person: acknowledging comments, allow to vent, reply
- > Engaging multiple managers to take the lead in providing responses to their departments.

Some grantees did respond to backlash. One grantee explained that using value-based messaging in communications had been an effective strategy for reducing backlash. In this instance, this included:

- > **A vision statement.** For example, 'We have a vision that men and women are treated equally'.
- > **A barrier.** For example, 'Women face lots of hidden inequity and barriers'.
- > **An action.** For example, 'That's why we're hosting this event'.

Another grantee explained that their policy is to never delete or remove community comments. In this community, members of the public not associated with the organisation often respond to negative comments and backlash. As well as being a powerful display of support, this strategy promotes and normalises positive intervention.

Responding to resistance

Hosting online spaces that enabled the sharing of examples of how to best deal with backlash and resistance was particularly important. This helped build capability and confidence among grantees, and left them feeling in a good position to respond to backlash.

“I found the overcoming resistance [workshop] very useful.”

– Online survey

“[The workshop] helped me prepare for the campaign as well as understand some of the issues we might encounter and how to overcome them.” – Online survey

You can watch last year’s [Online Campaigns and Managing Resistance workshop](#), or look at the [Talking About Change](#) resource.

During the 16 Days – ensure support services are visible

Ensure the following support services are visible when running the Respect Women: ‘Call It Out’ 16 Days initiative.

At a minimum, the Safe Steps phone number should be included, and where possible add the following sentence “If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 000 and ask for the police. If you or someone you know is experiencing family violence, help is available.”

“If you or someone you know is experiencing family violence, help is available”

Safe Steps

1800 015 188

A confidential and supportive family violence response line for Victoria.
Phone services available 24/7.

[Safe Steps website](https://safesteps.org.au): safesteps.org.au

Orange Door

Family violence support and safety hubs.

To find your nearest location, visit the [Orange Door website](https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au): orangedoor.vic.gov.au

Elizabeth Morgan House

1800 364 297

Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women’s Service provides culturally safe, holistic case management and support. EMH is open 24/7.

[Elizabeth Morgan House website](https://emhaws.org.au): emhaws.org.au

Djirra

1800 105 303

Djirra is a culturally safe place where culture is celebrated, and practical support is available.

[Djirra website](https://djirra.org.au): djirra.org.au

Intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

1800 755 988

A specialist family violence service that works with multicultural women, their families, and their communities.

[Intouch website](https://intouch.org.au): intouch.org.au

1800 RESPECT

1800 737 732

The national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service. Phone and online services available 24/7.

[1800 RESPECT website](http://1800respect.org.au): 1800respect.org.au

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

Kids Helpline is a counselling service for Australian children and young people aged between five and 25 years. Phone and online services available 24/7.

[Kids Helpline website](http://kidshelpline.com.au): kidshelpline.com.au

Rainbow Door

1800 729 367

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ helpline providing information, support, and referral to all LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and family.

[Rainbow Door website](http://rainbowdoor.org.au): rainbowdoor.org.au

Men's Referral Service

1300 766 491

Men's Referral Service provides anonymous and confidential telephone counselling, information, and referrals to men, to help them take action to stop using violent and controlling behaviour.

[No to Violence website](http://ntv.org.au): ntv.org.au

Mens Line

1300 78 99 78

Professional support and information service for Australian men. Phone and online services available 24/7.

[Mens Line website](http://mensline.org.au): mensline.org.au

Seniors Rights Victoria

1300 368 821

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) provides information and advice to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights of older people.

[Senior Rights Victoria website](http://seniorsrights.org.au): seniorsrights.org.au

SAFE+ EQUAL



**For more information relating to this toolkit,
contact Safe and Equal by emailing**

16days@safeandequal.org.au

**Victorian Government departments
can contact Respect Victoria by emailing**

contact@respectvictoria.vic.gov.au