

**ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
AND GIRLS**

16 ACTS



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

www.thesmileoutreach.org

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RAISE AWARENESS

THE DANGERS OF HARMFUL TRADITIONS, CHILD MARRIAGE, FGM,
CHALLENGE RAPE CULTURE etc

The international community has become aware of the need to achieve equality between the sexes and of the fact that an equitable society cannot be attained if the fundamental human rights of half of human society, i.e. women, continue to be denied and violated.

However, the bleak reality is that harmful traditional practices have been performed for male benefit. Female sexual control by men, and the economic and political subordination of women, perpetuate the inferior status of women and inhibit structural and attitudinal changes necessary to eliminate gender inequality.

Despite the apparent slowness of action to challenge and eliminate harmful traditional practices, the activities of human rights bodies in this field have, in recent years, resulting in noticeable progress.

Join communities all over the world and raise awareness on practices such as FGM, Early marriage, Female infanticide, nutritional taboos, breast ironing etc.

Tell your own story,
Join global campaigns
Participate in interventions
Volunteer your skills

Do all you can to put an end to barbaric acts society has termed normal.

Credits: Fact Sheet No.23, Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children

BELIEVE SURVIVORS

Every time a woman makes an accusation of abuse or harassment, there is an alarming number of people who immediately question her motives. Why?

As few as one in five victims report their sexual assault, so they often don't get the help they need and without a report, law enforcement misses the chance to identify perpetrators in their community, repeat offenders go undetected, and more people are victimized. (<https://www.startbybelieving.org/home/>)

Speaking up is not easy. Doing so means allowing people to pick apart how "perfect" a victim you are.

It's not always easy to know what to say when someone tells you they've been sexually assaulted, especially if they are a friend or family member.

For a survivor, disclosing to someone they care about can be very difficult, so we encourage you to be as supportive and non-judgemental as possible.

RAINN recently shared steps to support survivors of domestic violence

- Remind them; you are not alone
- Ask about their current safety
- Respect their decisions
- Help with safety planning
- Have resources handy

Other Articles/Resources you should read

<https://theeverygirl.com/why-you-need-self-care-and-self-love/>

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/tips-talking-survivors-sexual-assault>

SUPPORT SURVIVORS

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

GBV guidelines shared a priceless pocket guide on how to support survivors.

DO reassure the child/adolescent that it is OK s/he told you what happened.

DO respect the child's opinion, beliefs, and thoughts.

DO use comforting statements appropriate to the cultural context... examples include:

DO NOT make promises you cannot keep such as saying "everything will be OK" when it is not within your control to assure a child's well-being.

DO NOT force the child/adolescent to continue talking with you if s/he does not want to.

DO ask if there is someone that the child/adolescent trusts, and if s/he wants help in reaching out to this person, or accompaniment to find this person.

DO stay with the child/adolescent until s/he feels safe or is in the care of someone who s/he identifies as safe and trusted.

DO provide the child/adolescent and adult s/he trusts with accurate, relevant information on services that are available and how to access them

DO say what you know and what you do not know. Say "I do not know" or "I do not have that information" if you do not have the information requested

DO NOT force a child/adolescent to have their caregiver or any other person with them when s/he talks to you as these individuals may have perpetrated the violence, or the child/adolescent may not want to share their experience with them.

DO NOT leave a child/adolescent unattended while s/he is in distress (for example, crying, angry, or in shock).

DO NOT try to solve the situation yourself, make a plan or make decisions for the child/adolescent.

Get a copy of the pocket guide here

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/gbv_pocket_guide.pdf

STOP AND FROWN AT EVERY ACT OF STIGMATIZATION

Stigma is when someone sees you in a negative way because of a particular characteristic or attribute (such as skin colour, cultural background, a disability, or a mental illness).

Stigma happens when a person defines someone by their illness or situation rather than who they are as an individual.

Stigma has made survivor recovery really difficult.

Some of the effects of stigma include:

- feelings of shame, hopelessness, and isolation
- reluctance to ask for help or to get treatment
- lack of understanding by family, friends, or others
- fewer opportunities for employment or social interaction
- bullying, physical violence, or harassment
- self-doubt - the belief that you will never overcome your illness or be able to achieve what you want in life.

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/stigma-discrimination-and-mental-illness#bhc-content>

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO ELIMINATE STIGMA

1. Know the facts. Educate yourself about mental illness including substance use disorders.
2. Be mindful of your attitudes and behaviour.
3. Communicate wisely, do not give off an aura of judgement
4. Educate others
5. Focus on the positive

<https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/addressing-stigma>

SPEAK UP AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE!

Did you know?

Each year, 12 million girls under the age of 18 become child brides?

Forced child marriage is a fundamental violation of human rights.

Children should never be brides! A girl should not be forced into marriage because she has reached puberty.

Marriage is a legal contract, not a natural phenomenon.

GIRLS NOT BRIDES!

#ZEROTOLERANCE

ENGAGE RESPECTED COMMUNITY ELDERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST VIOLENCE!

It takes a community to protect the girl child!

One of the key ways to prevent gender-based violence is the education and engagement of community elders.

We must educate and engage them to better understand through training and dialogue, negative socio-cultural norms and how they increase issues of gender-based violence.

Engage a community leader today!
#ZEROTOLERANCE

TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS IN SCHOOLS!

The UNWOMEN reported sharp increases in reports of violence against girls behind closed doors.

Also, according to Plan International, It is estimated that 246 million girls and boys are harassed and abused on their way to, and at school every year, with girls being particularly vulnerable.

All girls deserve to feel safe - at home and in schools

In 2019, the right to safety from all forms of violence was included in the #GirlsBillsofRights, as decided by more than 1,000 girls worldwide.

We must keep up efforts towards the safety of the girl child.
Things you can do now

Inspect school routes

Display emergency/helplines

Inform and Deploy Law enforcement where security cases are discovered

PROTECT GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES!

Girls and young women with disabilities may face up to 10 times more violence than women and girls without disabilities.

Perpetrators may target them because of their limited physical mobility or means of communication.

In recognition of today as International Day of People with Disabilities, Smile Outreach speaks up and says violence against women with disabilities must end. Too long this has been an issue surrounded by silence.

Today we encourage you to join us to raise more awareness and increase efforts to create deep and long-lasting change for women and girls with disabilities.

#ZEROTOLERANCE

EMBOLDEN GIRLS TO SPEAK OUT AND ENGAGE BOYS AND YOUNG MEN TO BECOME AGENTS OF CHANGE

MALES CAN BE ACTIVISTS TOO!

Boys can be gender-based violence activists too. This space is not reserved for women alone.

Let us engage our boys and young men to speak up against these issues.

Teach them to not be bystanders, but to be actively involved.

Teach them to take action to address the attitudes, behaviours, norms, policies, and structures that contribute to violence against women.

#ZEROTOLERANCE

DON'T FUND SEXISM, DON'T LAUGH AT SEXIST JOKES OR COMMENTS, AND SPEAK UP AGAINST THEM IF YOU CAN

BOYS WILL BE ~~BOYS~~ HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

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.

A sexist joke is when one gender makes fun of or insults the opposite gender in a hurtful way. It is oftentimes made by men to women.

Sexist jokes and rape jokes should never be tolerated in the name of 'dark humour'. We need to change our mindset because we hurt victims when we make or laugh at such jokes. Even if rape jokes do not end in rape, it still trivializes such heinous crimes.

A woman's trauma is not funny. Our bodies are not a source of comic relief. Speak up against such behaviour. It is not 'JUST A JOKE'.

EXPLORE THE GENDER PAY GAP AND TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT IT AT WORK

Financial empowerment can help battle violence against women, and that is why the gender pay gap affects the rates of violence against women.

There are factors at play that increase the pay gap such as women working part-time, taking time out to have children, or women being employed more often in sectors that pay less.

But these factors do not constitute the reason for the entire wage gap. Even without taking these factors into account, women doing the same work, with the same working hours, same education level are still getting paid 5% to 7% less than their male counterparts.

Research has shown that women-dominated sectors that happen to 'earn less' are previously male-dominated sectors that become less-prestigious and less well-paid when more women join the sector.

But this should not be so. Equal pay for equal work. That should be the norm. Increase women's earnings and bargaining power, raise household incomes, reduce poverty, and promote more gender equality within and beyond the household. Today, talk to your co-workers about these issues.

Equal pay for equal work is possible if we are all well-informed and willing to put in the work to challenge and change this issue.

END THE GENDER PAY GAP!

RECOGNISE HOW VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS ALSO A MEN'S ISSUE

The damages caused by acts of gender-based violence go deeper than you can imagine.

Women should recognize that men have a part to play in the fight against gender-based violence.

Violence against women is not just a woman's issue, but a man's as well. Every woman that has ever been harassed, raped, abused, or made to feel unsafe in any way is someone's daughter, sister, or niece. It involves all of us. Men have no reason to say they do not know how to support the cause.

Today, we encourage you to involve the men around you in this fight. Educate them, correct them and hold them accountable.

LEARN WHAT VICTIM-BLAMING IS AND HOW TO RECOGNISE IT.

SHIFT THE CONVERSATION FROM WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE, TO WHO SHE IS AND WHAT SHE HAS ACHIEVED

Victim Blaming: An attitude that attacks and criticizes the conduct of the victim rather than the perpetrators of the crime.

The reality is that sexual violence can happen to anyone. It doesn't matter what she was wearing, what time she was outside, how she spoke, or how she behaved. What matters is that such acts of violence should never be committed and there is no excuse.

Victim blaming makes it difficult for survivors to come forward, it reinforces predator-like behaviours and it may cause survivors to feel shame and guilt for a crime that is not their fault.

When you see someone is being victim-blamed, speak up against it!
#ZEROTOLERANCE

START A FUNDRAISER

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. Worldwide, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime.

There are many causes and initiatives already in the fight against VAWG and GBV.

These activities, interventions, projects, and/or programs cost a fortune.

You can help by starting a fundraiser on their behalf.

Check out platforms like global giving, universal giving, and so on.

DONATE TO A WORTHY CAUSE

Another way to commit to the fight against gender-based violence is by donations. Your money can be used to:

- Support women's active participation in civil society
- Fund programs that scale up prevention efforts across multiple sectors
- Bring gender-based violence clinical services to lower-level health facilities
- Fund interventions that address the needs of survivors of gender-based violence

Below are links to organizations you can donate to:

<https://rosauk.org/>

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/donate/>

<https://avaproject.org.uk/about/support-ava/>

<https://www.thesmileoutreach.africa/>

www.unwomen-usnc.org/civcrm/contribute/transact?id=52

<https://www.paylink.ng/thesmileoutreach>

VOLUNTEER YOUR SKILLS

There are various ways to help end gender-based violence. One of those ways is by volunteering.

You can volunteer your time, your skills, and your talent.

With your help, organizations can improve coverage, impact and can engage with more people.

Not only do you get the opportunity to make a difference, but you also gain knowledge and experience through your work and feel positive change and self-growth.

You can become a volunteer!

Join us at Smile Outreach today!

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