



## The *Nabilan* Prevention Toolkit

# FACT SHEET 6. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN?<sup>1</sup>

Updated October 2016

Whether you are a man, woman, girl, or boy, a parent or a student, an NGO worker or a teacher, there are many steps that you can take to build healthy, respectful relationships in your family, home, place of work and community. Here are a few ideas:

### ▶ **Start with yourself**

- Don't use any form of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence. Be a role model for others.
- Look at your own attitudes and behaviours. Do you treat women and men, or girls and boys, differently? Do you expect them to act differently? Ask yourself why.
- Be respectful: listen to women and value their opinions.
- Share responsibility for child caring and household chores.
- Make financial decisions and other family decisions together with your partner.
- Every time before you have sex, make sure that the other person also wants to have sex, even if it is your wife/husband or girlfriend/boyfriend.
- Support the goals of the women in your in life (wife, girlfriend, sister, daughter, etc.), and respect her right to her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.
- Inform yourself about where to report cases of violence that you witness and how to refer victims to support services (see Referral Poster in this Toolkit)

### ▶ **Be a positive influence for children in your life**

- Use only positive, non-violent method to discipline children.
- Talk to your children about how to deal safely with anger and aggression.
- Speak to your daughters and sons about the importance of mutual respect and consent in relationships.
- Model equality at home and in your own relationship.
- Treat your daughters and sons in the same way – ask yourself, would I say the same thing to her if she was a boy (or to him if he was a girl)?

### ▶ **Take action among the people around you**

- If a friend, family member or colleague makes a comment supporting violence against women or makes a sexist joke, challenge them. Some ways that you can do this are:
  - Say "That's sexist and I don't think it's funny," or, "I think those words are really hurtful."
  - Refrain from laughing even if you're expected to by others.
- If you know or suspect that a friend, family member or colleague is being abusive to a woman, say something. Some ways that you can do this are:
  - Talk to the friend/family member/colleague in a private, calm moment, rather than in public or directly after an abusive incident. Tell him that his behaviour is not acceptable, and he needs to get some help.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Flood 2011 and Our Watch.

- Talk to a group of other people who are friends with him and, together, decide on a course of action.
- Report it to the police.
- Check in with the woman and ask if you can help. Share with her information about the services available (see poster on referral network in this Toolkit).
- If someone that you know is behaving in a controlling manner towards their partner - like telling them who they can and can't spend time with, or checking up on them excessively – say or do something, by following the steps above. Being jealous and controlling is not a sign of love or commitment, it's a sign of violence.
- If you know any women or children who you know, or suspect, are experiencing violence, be supportive.
  - **Listen:** To what the woman or child has to say and let them take their time. Don't judge.
  - **Believe:** Women and children rarely lie about abuse that they experience. It is important to believe what they are saying.
  - **Respect:** Both her the woman or child's feelings and decisions. Support their choices – they are theirs to make even if they are not the ones you think you would make. Ask what you can do to help and let them know what services are available.
- If you hear or see someone you know blaming a victim of violence, for example by asking 'What was she wearing?' or by saying 'Well, she shouldn't have burnt the food,' tell them that those kinds of attitudes contribute to a society that excuses violence against women. Remind them that the person responsible for violent actions is the perpetrator, not the victim. We, as members of a community, also have the responsibility to stand up against violence.
- Talk to the people in your life about your commitment to preventing violence against women and children and encourage them to support gender equality in their own lives.

#### ► **Take action in public**

- Treat women and children in public respectfully, regardless of whether you know them or not, and encourage others to do the same.
- If you witness an incident of violence against women or children in public, take action – even if you do not know the people involved. Some ways you can do this are:
  - Call the police.
  - Verbally intervene. Tell the violent person clearly that his or her actions are not okay, they are committing a crime, and you are calling the police. Ask the victim if she or he needs help.
  - Be a witness. Stand far enough away to be safe but close enough for the violent person to see you and be aware that they are being watched.
  - Get others' support. Ask others who are nearby to help.
  - Create a distraction – such that the victim has time to get away or the perpetrator slows down or ceases the violence.
- Join public events and campaigns to show your support for ending violence against women and children.
- If you see or hear something sexist or excusing violence in the media – whether it is an ad or something that an influential person has said – speak out or make a statement about it on social media. You are probably not the only one who thinks that it is wrong.
- If you experience violence or harassment, report it to the police. If this happens at work, tell your supervisor or someone else senior who you trust. Share your story to help give others the confidence to speak out.

**For more information on the Prevention Toolkit, please contact:**

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