



# A CALL TO Action





# Made by Local Guys for Guys

## CALL TO ACTION TEAM MEMBERS:

Blake Andrea  
Daniel Clyde  
Brad Hieftje  
David Mallis

Juan Martinez  
Brandon Melnyk  
Seth Mika  
Dave Siegers

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# What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be?

The men who made this booklet asked other men in the West Michigan community between the ages of 16 and 84: what do a “Real Man” and a “Good Man” look like? Answers to what a “real man” looks like included: “Gets women, has big muscles, defines success as having a lot of money, doesn’t express emotion besides anger, cold, stoic, and lacks feminine qualities.” Answers to what a “good man” looks like were different and included: “Kind, respectful, has strong values, is a man of integrity, is a good family man, someone who listens, someone who is passionate, a good leader, a man who cares about others, and is strong in his beliefs.” Can you see a difference? Too often men are pushed into a “Man Box” or the thinking that they have to live up to what a “Real Man” should be, when in fact most men should be striving to be a good man.

Citations on page 38.

## THE MAN BOX

NO PAIN  
TOUGH  
STRONG  
PROTECTOR  
NO FEAR  
TOUGH  
NO EMOTIONS (EXCEPT ANGER)  
DOMINATING  
NO WEAKNESS  
DECISION MAKER  
AGGRESSIVE

WOMEN ARE OBJECTS  
POWERFUL  
COURAGEOUS  
WOMEN ARE PROPERTY  
NO FEELINGS  
ATHLETIC  
IN CHARGE

## THE MAN BOX RULES

DON'T BE VULNERABLE  
DON'T BE TOO LOVING  
DON'T ACT LIKE A WOMAN  
DON'T BE TOO CARING  
DON'T ASK FOR HELP  
DON'T BE TOO COMMITTED  
ALWAYS BE IN CONTROL  
DON'T BE TOO NICE OR TOO KIND  
DON'T SHOW WEAKNESS  
DON'T SHOW EMOTIONS  
ACT LIKE A MAN

The “Real Man” way of thinking comes with numerous negative consequences that many men fail to see. In order to start reshaping our concept of masculinity and become good men, we need to take the veil off and see that this way of thinking is not the only way to view manhood. One of the major steps in becoming a good man is to begin to respect others around us, especially women. We as men have a responsibility to care about issues like sexual and domestic violence because if we don’t, we are perpetuating the problem. Our silence is deafening, and only words and actions will be the solution. We need to become allies and work alongside women in order to create a better future for our sons and daughters. It is time for us to join women at the table—and take the first of many steps to become the good men we all can be. We are part of the solution toward helping shift the culture, break the silence, and help prevent abuse from happening.

# Why Do Men Need to Care?



Up to **60% of survivors** of domestic abuse lose their jobs due to reasons stemming from abuse. If you are an employer, knowing that some of your workforce could be survivors and giving them the help and support they need could help them retain their jobs.<sup>2</sup>

Every **98 seconds** someone in America is sexually assaulted, so in the time it takes you to read this page, 1-3 people will become a victim.<sup>3</sup>

**1 in 3 women** and **1 in 6 men** have experienced sexual violence in their life. More than likely you know someone or of someone who has experienced it.<sup>4</sup>

In the U.S., **1 in 4 women** (27.4%) and **1 in 9 men** (11.0%) have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime and reported an IPV-related impact (e.g., injury, fear, concern for safety, needing services). This needs to stop and we have a responsibility to say “No More.”<sup>5</sup>

**21% of TGQN** (transgender, gender queer, nonconforming) college students have been sexually assaulted, compared to 18% of non-TGQN females and 4% of non-TGQN males.<sup>6</sup>

Before reaching the age of 18, **1.5 million men** are first forced to penetrate. Men can be victimized; this is why it concerns all of us, not just women.<sup>7</sup>

As many as **93% of abused children** under age 18 know their abuser.<sup>8</sup>

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# The Basics

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient, such as: attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, or forcing a person to perform sexual acts.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is the systematic use of physical, verbal, emotional, digital, financial, and sexual abuse to gain power and control over another person.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment in a workplace or other professional or social situation involves making unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks or forwarding pictures and/or literature that are sexually graphic in nature.

## DATING VIOLENCE

Dating violence is a pattern of assaultive and controlling behaviors that one person uses against another in order to gain or maintain power and control in the relationship. The abuser intentionally behaves in ways that cause fear, degradation and humiliation to control the other person. Forms of abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological.

## ALLY

An ally is someone who has made a personal commitment to fighting oppression and prejudice and whose commitment is reflected in a willingness to:

1. Educate oneself about different identities and experiences.
2. Challenge one's own discomfort and prejudices.
3. Learn and practice the skills of being an ally.
4. Take action to create interpersonal, societal, and institutional change.

## ACTIVE BYSTANDER

A *bystander* is a person who observes a conflict or unacceptable behavior. It might be something serious or minor, one-time or repeated, but the *bystander* knows that the behavior is destructive or likely to make a bad situation worse. An *active bystander* takes steps that can make a positive difference.

# As a Father Figure

Being a father figure is hard work. Your boys will learn how to be a man from you. How are you going to teach them? This section will give you discussion prompts to have with your boys to spark conversation, give you play-by-play scenarios as well as general tips on how to help you through this. When things get tough (and they will), remember, your boys will grow up to be the men you taught them to be. So, just be yourself, and you'll do great! We are not telling you how to raise your boys, just providing general tips on how to help them grow into good men.



## DISCUSSION POINTS:

- What *consent* is/means/looks like:
  - » It's real simple, consent is "yes"; and anything else isn't. Both people must agree to whatever is next.
  - » Check NSVRC.org for more ways to talk to boys about consent.
- Respectful behavior toward others, specifically women:
  - » Describe demeaning jokes and behavior, how they're not okay, and that we should speak out against them as well as valuing women's voices/opinions.
- Be a role model for healthy relationships.
  - » Teach your sons what it means to believe in gender equality and model healthy relationships.
- What respectful sexual relationships look like if your boys are going to be sexually active:
  - » Tell your sons they should feel comfortable with the decision.
  - » Tell your sons to be honest with themselves and their partner. If they're not ready for a sexual relationship, that's okay, and their partner should respect their decision.
  - » Let them know that if someone won't take no for an answer and repeatedly pressures your sons verbally, emotionally or physically, that can be a sign of abuse.
  - » Let your sons know they have control over their own body, and no one else has the right to tell them what to do with it.
  - » Help your sons to feel safe talking to you about respectful sexual relationships whenever they have questions or concerns.

SCENARIO 1:

# When your boys come to you, crying...



DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE:

**“Man up! Why are you crying?  
Toughen up and act like a man.”**

DO SAY THINGS LIKE:

**“Hey, what’s wrong, Buddy?  
Why are you crying?”**

**“Whoa, what’s up, Little Man? Need a hug?”**

**“Hey there. Come here, and let’s talk it out.”**

See the difference there? When you read that, you can sense different tones in the scenarios. This teaches our boys that it’s okay to express their feelings and emotions.

## SCENARIO 2:

# When your boys want to sing in choir and act in theatre...



## DON'T DO THINGS LIKE:

- Force them to do something different
- Belittle them for not doing stereotypically “manly” activities like sports

## DO THINGS LIKE:

- Support their decisions no matter what they are

Your boys will have passions all their own, be that sports, music, theatre, or anything else they choose. The key thing to remember is that those passions are theirs, and our job as father figures is to be supportive no matter what, not to force them into something they don't want to do.

### SCENARIO 3:

**Your boys have yet to date someone and it's their senior year of high school...**



### DON'T DO THINGS LIKE:

- **Pressure them into finding a partner**
- **Tell them they're not a man because they're not on the prowl or trying to hook up**

### DO THINGS LIKE:

- **Support/respect their decision not to date yet**
- **Have an open conversation about what qualities they find attractive in a partner**

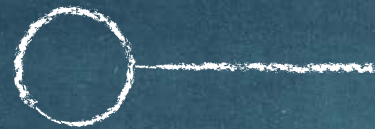
If they haven't found anyone to date or hook up with, that's their decision. Stop forcing them into the Man Box.<sup>1</sup> Respect should be the first priority we teach, not encouraging them to prove manliness by having a partner.

# As a Coach

Think back to your favorite coach. Now think about why this person is your favorite coach. Nine times out of ten it's because that coach made you a better person somehow. He pushed you to be the best you could be, in and out of the sport. That's the impact coaches have. Here are some tips and tricks that'll help you begin to shift the focus from only winning and toward building your athletes' character and helping them become the great men you know they can be.



*Hold yourself & your team accountable when it comes to respect on and off the field.*



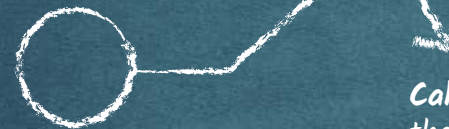
*When you hear statements like, "Man up" or "Don't be a sissy."*

*Call it out: Explain that those statements have nothing to do with athletics and have no place on the field or in life.*



*Some boys on your team start whistling at a girl passing by.*

*Explain to them that athletics is about more than just winning. It's also about building character and respect.*



*When people question that you're not focusing on winning.*

*Call it out: Explain to them that catcalling is a form of harassment and that you will not tolerate this behavior.*



*You overhear degrading locker room talk.*

*Call it out: Correct the language and behavior, explaining why it's wrong.*

# Time out

If you hear catcalling, stop it immediately, discuss it, then ask the athletes if they would want their mothers, sisters, or girlfriend treated this way.

If you're going to make a lasting impact on your athletes, you need to establish three things:

1. Consistency
2. Firm boundaries & expectations
3. Consequences for negative behavior

Call out degrading locker room talk. Let them know that locker room talk doesn't equate to innocent fun, is wrong and sometimes damaging, and will not be tolerated.

If one of you or one of your assistant coaches uses a statement like "Man up" or "Don't be a sissy," call it out. Speak to that coach immediately so everyone can hear, and be clear that being manly does not equate to toughness and being feminine doesn't equate to weakness.

## MORE RESOURCES:

- [CoachesCorner.org](https://CoachesCorner.org)



# As a Friend

Picture this: You're sitting with your guys and one of them cracks a demeaning joke about women. Everyone is laughing and you put on a smile to fit in but you don't think it's that funny. In fact, you think it might be a little too much. You don't want to be different, so you play along. STOP! We've all been there, and we need guys like you to stand up against hurtful jokes. Do or say something! If you feel that way, it's likely another guy in your group feels that way too.



## Ways to Become a Better Friend, Ally, and Active Bystander:

- Tell your friends they're not being funny if they're making demeaning jokes or using disrespectful words to describe someone.
- If your buddy is too drunk one night and won't take "no" for an answer, pull him aside and tell him he's being aggressive, that no means no, and that he needs to go home.
- If your friend group is catcalling, stand up for the victim, tell your friends to knock it off, and let them know that you won't tolerate it.
- If your friend is showing others a picture that was sexted to him, tell him that it was meant for just him and to respect that person's privacy.
- Listen to women and treat them as equals, not objects for men's pleasure. It's okay to have women that are friends.
- Have open, honest conversations with your friends about what consent, sexual assault and harassment, and healthy relationships look like.
- Anticipate and prepare for the ridicule you may receive from your friends. Be confident and consistent when taking a stand.

## MORE RESOURCES

- [MenCanStopRape.org](http://MenCanStopRape.org)
- [ACallToMen.org](http://ACallToMen.org)
- [MenStoppingViolence.org](http://MenStoppingViolence.org)

**THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO YOUR FRIENDS  
IF YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE:**

**“What would you do if someone said/did that to your sister or mom? Exactly, she’s a person. Don’t degrade her.”**

**“Hey, not cool, man. That’s not funny.”**

**“Dude...Would you be friends with someone like you?”**

**[Sarcastically, after friend shows you a sexual picture he received]**

**“Oh yeah, man, you’re sooo cool.”**

**“Grow up, *dude*.”**

**“Why can’t she wear what she wants?  
It’s not like she wore it to make you happy...”**

**“You don’t even know her.  
How can you call her that?”**



# As a Good Man

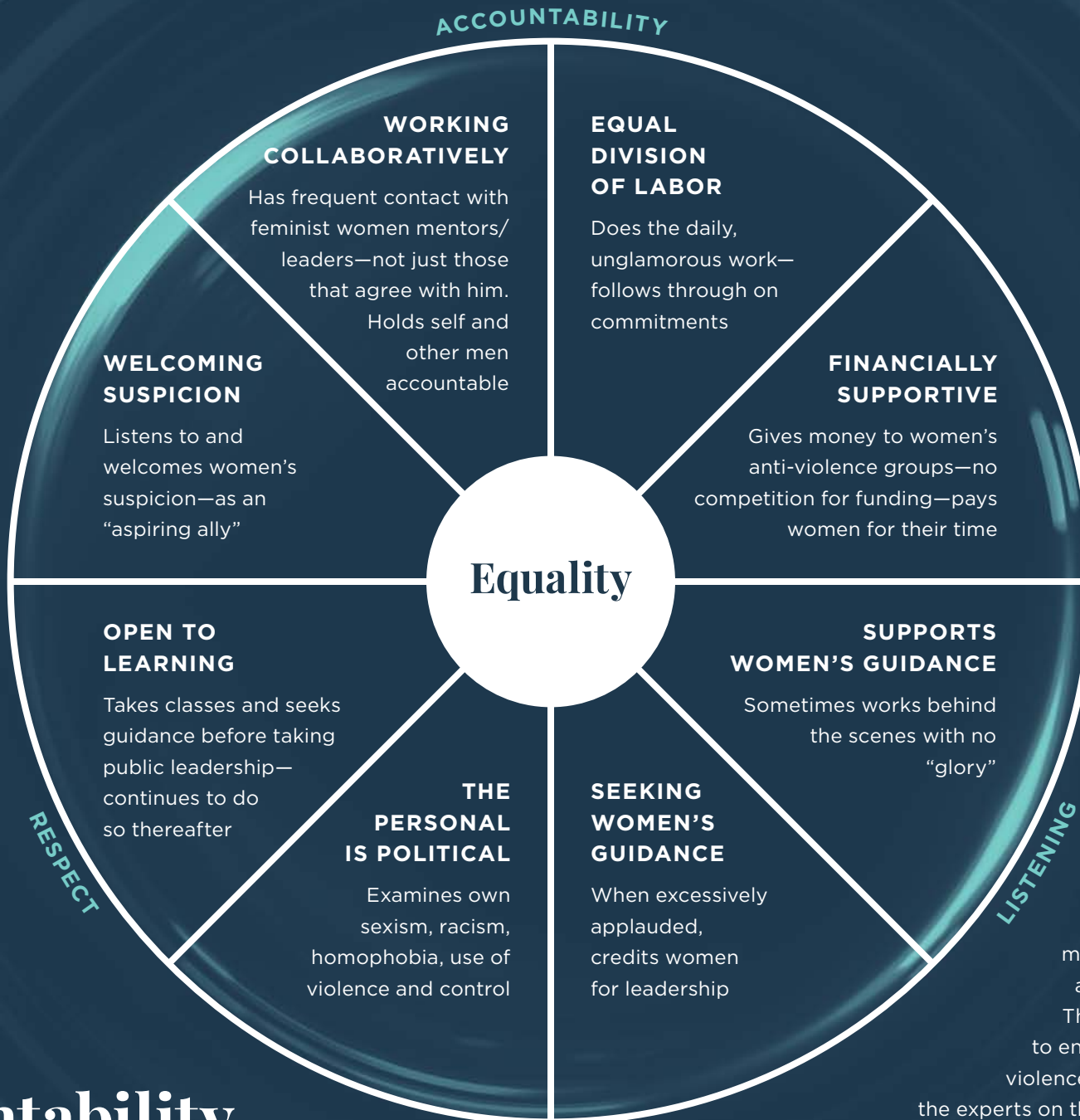
No longer will we laugh at the demeaning jokes, no longer will we view women as less than, no longer will we be silent. We each have a role to play in ending the violence, but you need to make a conscious choice each and every single day to be an ally. It is time for us to prioritize issues like domestic violence and sexual assault in our lives while also breaking down the social construct of what “traditional” masculinity is. Once we do this, then, and only then, will we see a reduction of the number of people hurt. Are you up to the task?

# 10 Things Men Can Do to Prevent Gender Violence



- 1 Acknowledge and understand how sexism, male dominance, and male privilege have laid the foundation for all forms of violence against women.
- 2 Remember that our silence is affirming. When we choose not to speak out against men's violence, we are supporting it.
- 3 "Break out of the 'Man Box'"—challenge traditional images of manhood that stop us from actively taking a stand to end violence against women.
- 4 Accept and own our responsibility that violence against women will not end until men become part of the solution to end it. We must take an active role in creating a cultural and social shift that no longer tolerates violence against women.
- 5 Educate and re-educate our sons and other young men about our responsibility in ending men's violence against women.
- 6 If a brother, friend, classmate, or teammate is abusing his female partner or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general—don't look the other way. **DON'T REMAIN SILENT.**
- 7 Have the courage to look inward. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work toward changing them.
- 8 Attend programs, take courses, watch films, and read articles and books about multicultural masculinity, gender inequality, and the root causes of gender violence.
- 9 Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women.
- 10 Approach gender violence as a MEN'S issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. View men not as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers.

# Male Accountability Wheel



If you are really serious about being an ally, you must remember to listen and learn from women. They have been working to end domestic and sexual violence for years, and they're the experts on these issues. This wheel points out key aspects that are essential in becoming a true ally to women.  
Created by Ben Atherton-Zeman, [VoicesOfMen.org](http://VoicesOfMen.org)

## Citations

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- 5 Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”
- 6 David Cantor, Bonnie Fisher, Susan Chibnall, Reanna Townsend, et. al. Association of American Universities (AAU), Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (September 21, 2015).
- 7 The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS: 2010-2012 State Report. Atlanta, GA. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- 8 United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau. Child Maltreatment Survey, 2012 (2013).

## Resources

### AS A FATHER FIGURE

- [LovelsRespect.org](http://LovelsRespect.org)
- [Rainn.org](http://Rainn.org)
- [VoiceMaleMagazine.org](http://VoiceMaleMagazine.org)
- [FuturesWithoutViolence.org](http://FuturesWithoutViolence.org)

### AS A COACH

- [CoachesCorner.org](http://CoachesCorner.org)
- [TeachEarly.org](http://TeachEarly.org)
- [JacksonKatz.com](http://JacksonKatz.com)

### AS A FRIEND

- [MenCanStopRape.org](http://MenCanStopRape.org)
- [ACallToMen.org](http://ACallToMen.org)
- [MenStoppingViolence.org](http://MenStoppingViolence.org)

### HELP IS AVAILABLE

- Resilience: Advocates for Ending Violence 24-Hour Helpline: 800-848-5991, Español 866-728-2131
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, [TheHotline.org](http://TheHotline.org)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673), [Rainn.org](http://Rainn.org)

For more information on how to become involved as an ally, please contact our Prevention Team at 616-392-2829.

# RESILIENCE

ADVOCATES FOR ENDING VIOLENCE

A special thanks to Resilience: Advocates for Ending Violence and their dedication to engaging men as role models and leaders in violence prevention.

[resiliencemi.org](http://resiliencemi.org)