



develop a game plan to end abuse



**ACTION SHEET:
COACHES**

In the locker room, a rugby player tells his team mates that he “scored” last night. He says he had to keep pressuring her but finally she gave in.

At practice, two of the players use language that’s insulting towards women. The coach feels uncomfortable and guesses that other players do too. He wants to say something but isn’t sure just what to say.

At the club house two coaches argue about what to do with their star player who has been accused of assaulting his wife. One says they should suspend him, the other says he’s innocent until proven guilty.

Why must a coach encourage men and boys to take a stand against domestic and sexual violence?

Sport has always been at the forefront of social change. Playing sports has helped South Africa break down segregation and racism; it can bring people together and can provide inspiration.

Men and young men involved in sports have not traditionally thought about violence against women and girls as something they should address. But those men are often looked up to by others. Think of the influence the star soccer player has, or the captain of the rugby team.

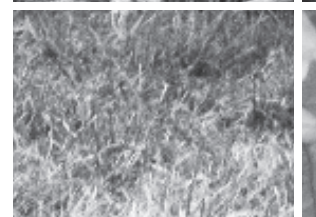
Today, you as a coach are being called upon to address a major societal problem: violence against women and children. Domestic and sexual violence is a significant problem affecting your athletes, as well as people in all walks of life.

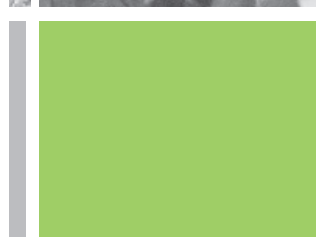
Every coach is in a position that allows him to directly influence the attitudes of his athletes and to help eliminate the disrespectful perceptions of women and girls that contribute to violence against women and girls.

Great coaches have always taught more than a game. They teach honour, perseverance, self-respect, discipline, teamwork and respect for others. These are all traits and skills that are just as important in life as they are on the field.

Your athletes listen to you; they’re used to following your instructions regarding preparation, technique and performance, and you can use their attention to teach them about life too. Winning at sports requires force, aggressiveness and even intimidation. Unfortunately, a lot of young men don’t realise that game strategies shouldn’t necessarily be used in real life.

By teaching your athletes that young women deserve to be treated with honour and respect and that violence does not equal strength or manliness, you will help your young men draw these important distinctions between games and life.





The One Man Can Action Kit includes a number of materials that will help you motivate other men to take a stand against domestic and sexual violence. You'll find a t-shirt, stickers and posters that you can put up in your office or at the club house. You'll also find a number of fact sheets that will give you ideas about how to take action, how to support a survivor and how to work with other community organisations.

What can coaches do to encourage boys and young men to be more active in ending violence against women and children?

1. Be clear from the outset about your expectations of the players

The first official day of practice is a special day. It is in that period of time prior to the opening game that you do much of your teaching. It is when you implement strategy, formulate goals, communicate expectations and lay the foundations for team chemistry. It's also the ideal time for you to define the playing field for your players regarding violence against women. Encourage them to talk to you and let them know what services are offered in dealing with violence.

2. Make your views clear

Define your views on what it means to be a man. Explain that while aggressiveness and intimidation have a place in sports, acting this way in real life toward girls crosses the line and will not be tolerated on your team

3. This season communicate that your players' goals go beyond the field

Make it clear to your players that this year they will also learn to treat women with honour and respect and understand that violence never equals strength. Explain to them that you will be supporting them to use their profile and status to encourage others to take a stand against violence and be more involved in preventing HIV infection.

4. Model discipline and integrity

Foster discipline and respect through positive constructive teaching – remember discipline and respect starts with the coach and rest of management. Through your actions, teach your players the importance of respect – for oneself and others, even when things are difficult and you are not winning.

5. Encourage players to support each other to remain non-violent

Remind them that teammates should speak up if they think someone is involved in a situation that's disrespectful to women or girls. Remind them that good friends support each other to stay out of trouble and to change. At practices and before games take a few minutes to remind to players that their behavior off the field affects the team as a whole.

6. Use teachable moments

As a coach, you're used to planning for potential game scenarios. Do the same and plan with your team how you're going to deal with violence against women.

Certain situations or behaviors that occur with your players will be out of your control to prevent, but they also provide you with the opportunity to talk to the rest of the team and correct the wrongs.

- **Teachable Moment: Deal with disrespectful locker room chatter and sexual boasting.** When you hear your players talking about a girl's sexual reputation, showing disrespectful attitudes towards women or talking about pressuring women to have sex, you have an opportunity to educate. Remind your players that manhood is not defined by having many sexual partners and that "No" means "no!" in any sexual situation EVERY TIME. That's what's right, and that's the law! Address the situation immediately.
- **Teachable Moment: Challenge victim blaming.** When men blame women for rape and domestic violence it lets the perpetrator off the hook. Use your position to challenge victim blaming. Make it clear to your players that no woman "asks" for sexual harassment or rape - no matter what they're wearing, how many drinks they've had or whether they express interest in you.
- **Teachable Moment: Challenge sexual harassment.** Explain that taunting women and girls is degrading and that girls should not be teased because of how they look or what they choose to wear. Mention that most girls do not welcome that type of attention and are probably fearful of defending themselves. Finally, let them know that the men you admire are those who treat women and girls with honour and respect.
- **Teachable Moment: Address any suspected violence committed by a team member.** By the time you hear about violence committed by one of your team members, it's likely that the whole team is talking about it. Your players are probably worried, angry or confused. Speak to the rest of the team about the seriousness of the allegations and how it relates to their own future conduct. Make it clear that allegations of rape are extremely serious and, if you are a school coach, explain that it is the school's responsibility to investigate the situation further and to alert the police. Tell them that athletes aren't above the law. First and foremost, they are members of society and role models.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE BE A COACH FOR LIFE

For information on where to get support, see the Directory of Service Providers in the One Man Can Action Kit, or see our website www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan

