



young men can take action

One Man Can show his strength and take a stand



**ACTION SHEET:
YOUTH**

In the hallway of a university residence, a young man, urged on by his friends, gropes a classmate despite her efforts to push him away. Others around them are uncomfortable but uncertain what to do. They pretend not to notice.

In a suburb in Cape Town a girl is sexually molested by her uncle who often visits. She never tells anyone because the uncle has told her he will kill her if she does. As she grows older she does not want anything to do with men. She fears all men, even her colleagues, and says she does not trust them.

At a youth camp in Hermanus, a boy rapes another. Other boys see this happen; they don't know what to do. They don't tell the people in charge.

A woman goes to a party with a man from their youth group. They have fun and a good time together. He tells her he wants her to go home with him. She does not want to. He respects her wish and drops her off. They make plans to hang out the next day.

Every day in South Africa young men and women as well as boys and girls face alarmingly high levels of domestic and sexual violence. This violence happens at schools, on university campuses, in night-clubs, at home and in our communities - and it has devastating consequences.

Many young men are concerned about these high levels of rape and other forms of dating violence. They want it to stop. However, far too many young men and boys continue to believe that “a person has to have sex to show love” and that “girls have no right to refuse sex with their boyfriends”. Some even still believe that “girls like sexually violent guys and that girls enjoy being raped.”

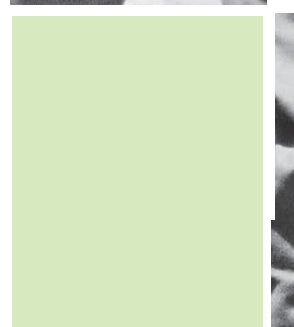
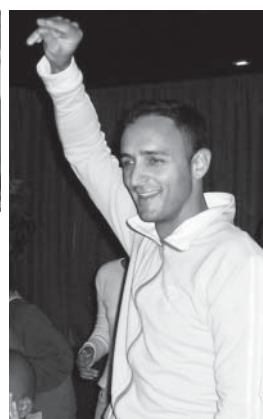
Research conducted by Sonke Gender Justice for the One Man Can Campaign in Cape Town showed us that young men are also being raped and that we need to address this urgently.

In 1976, youth across the country took the lead in bringing down the Apartheid regime. The same courage and determination that youth showed then is needed now to end rape and domestic violence.

Young men have a particularly important role to play

As young men, we have a particular responsibility to challenge the violence that some men do to women and girls we know and care about—our sisters, friends, classmates and neighbours.

So what can we do?





You can take action: show your strength, take a stand

1. Examine your own beliefs and actions: We live in a society where women are often blamed for men's violence. Society makes all sorts of excuses for men's violence. We are told men can't control themselves when they are angry or aroused. That's an insult to men. We're not animals. We are human beings with the ability to choose how we respond. It's never okay to rape, harass or abuse a woman.

2. Learn how to support a survivor: Take the time to learn how to support a survivor of rape or domestic violence. Read the "how to support a survivor" fact sheet in this Toolkit. Know where your nearest police station and rape crisis centre are - and remember she has the right to be treated with respect and to receive immediate medical care, including medicines to prevent HIV infection. Make sure she gets the services she needs and keep the pressure on the police to take action.

3. It's also in men's interests to stop domestic violence and rape: When some men get away with violence, all of us men are seen as suspicious and as potential rapists and abusers. And often women we care deeply about are devastated by violence committed against them. It's in our interests to end violence - for ourselves and for the women in our lives.

4. Take action to demand justice: The schools or universities we attend have policies and procedures that are supposed to prevent dating violence. As South Africans, our constitution gives us the right to live without violence. If our school governing bodies, teachers, administrators or local police are not doing everything they can to prevent dating violence, we have the right to demand that they do. We can write petitions and newspaper articles, organise marches, and even conduct sit-ins in their offices until they take action. See the DVD in this Toolkit for examples of activism in Khayelitsha.

5. Develop visible messages: We can educate people around us by forming a group to develop messages that we can put up on the walls on campus, at school, the spaza shop, after-school centre or church hall. If you're an artist or graphic designer, you can develop a poster series. If you're a graffiti artist, spray messages up on your walls or paint a mural depicting people stopping the violence.

6. Write articles for your local paper: Make your opinions known. Newspapers are often interested in men's perspectives on violence against women. Write an article to your campus, high school or local newspapers about ending violence against women and children. Make it personal and write about your own story and why you are taking a stand. Be brief and to the point.



7. Involve your sports club, prevent violence: Speak to your coach and tell him or her that you think they have a role to play in addressing rape and dating violence. Give them a copy of the brochure for coaches in this One Man Can Toolkit. Speak to the sports stars at your school and in your community about the important role they can play. Remind them that lots of people look up to them and follow the example they set. Invite them to participate in your activities.

8. Use the performing arts: Develop and perform theatre, dance and songs to educate others about rape and domestic violence and to encourage them to stand up against violence against women and children. Creative approaches can show the effects of violence on the victim as well as what happens to the perpetrator. Provide an example in your drama, song or dance of a community that has decided to take action. The DVD in this Toolkit shows an example of a youth group using ambush theatre at a train station in Tembisa. Check the DVD out for ideas and inspiration.

9. Use student leadership organisations: Work with your student leadership organisations to use the influence they have with other students. You can also use your existing student structures to reach large audiences

10. Find non-violent ways to take action: In our research many men and boys could not identify non-violent ways of challenging a perpetrator. Many men thought the best thing to do was to beat them up. When the perpetrator is your friend or classmate, you probably won't want to do this - and if violence is your only option, you'll probably just keep quiet. Instead of using violence, find a moment to talk one-on-one with him, tell him you think his violence is a problem and that you think he should stop hurting others. Tell him he may end up in jail if he doesn't stop. Remind him that there's no excuse for abuse.

11. See it and stop it: Challenge bullying, sexual harassment and anti-gay discrimination at school, on campus and in your communities. Don't participate in jokes and insults about gays and lesbians. Insulting gays and lesbians is not funny and it doesn't show that you're cool. It simply shows that you are insecure.

12. Work with other organisations that are doing work to end abuse and violence against women and children. Take part in activities that are marked in the national calendar by the government, for example in the 16 days of Activism against violence against women and children from November 25th to December 10th.

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



This document is part of the One Man Can Action Toolkit, an initiative of Sonke Gender Justice and the Provincial Government of the Western Cape. For more, see www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan

