

### Ground Rules for Discussion

1. Listen. Share time. Respect others' opinions. Everyone has a unique perspective and contribution to make to our learning. Respect and listen to what others have to say, how they say it and the experiences they bring to the group. Ask yourself if the way you are speaking or acting towards this person is the way you would like to be treated.
2. Non-judgmental. There is a great deal of diversity, knowledge and wisdom in this group. The only way we can learn about each other is through open, non-judgmental and peaceful communication. Only one person can speak at a time.
3. No put-downs. Discussion and debate are great. Hurtful words are not. Words or ideas that put down a person or group don't help us learn from each other. Sometimes people mix up opinions with facts. You can disagree with a person without name-calling or insults. You can start your sentence with the word "I"- for example, "I don't agree with that point..." or "I think that...".
4. Respect confidentiality. If you want to tell the class something that is confidential (not to be told to anyone outside the class), say so before you speak.
5. Respect the ground rules. You are an equal, valuable member of this group. You have a responsibility to point out to the class if these ground rules are broken. Raise your hand immediately if you think the ground rules have been broken.
6. Outside class, find someone to talk to. Learning about violence can remind us of violence that we or someone we know has experienced. If you or someone you know has suffered violence, please talk to a friend, teacher or adult who you trust so you can get the support you need. If you still don't get the support you need, tell another person. It isn't your fault.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *About the White Ribbon Campaign*

### **What is the White Ribbon Campaign?**

The WRC is the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women. In almost fifty countries, campaigns are led by both men and women, even though the focus is on educating men and boys. In some countries, it is a general public education effort on ending violence against women.

### **How did the WRC get started?**

In 1991, a handful of men in Canada decided we had a responsibility to urge men to speak out against violence against women. Wearing a white ribbon would be a symbol of men's opposition to violence against women. After only six weeks preparation, 100,000 men across Canada wore a white ribbon. Many others were drawn into discussion and debate.

### **Goals and Focus**

#### **What does it mean to wear a white ribbon?**

Wearing a white ribbon is a personal pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. Wearing a white ribbon is a way of saying, "Our future has no violence against women."

#### **What is the goal of the WRC and how do you accomplish these objectives?**

We are an educational organization that encourages reflection and discussion that leads to personal and collective action among men and boys.

As a decentralized campaign, our focus varies from country-to-country. In Canada our focus is on boys and young men. We produce educational resources for schools, and TV and radio ads to promote healthy and equal relationships and to encourage boys to think about the choices they make when it comes to the use of violence.

We produce resources for use in workplaces, places of worship, and communities. We promote more active involvement by fathers. We encourage local fundraising to support local women's groups. We maintain a website with a range of resources. We network with WR campaigns around the world.

#### **When is the focus of the Campaign?**

In many countries, it is from November 25 (the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women) to December 10. In Canada it is until December 6, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. In other countries, White Ribbon events come at other times of the year.



### **Basic Philosophy**

#### **What forms of violence against women concern you?**

The most widespread problems are physical violence against wives and girlfriends (from hitting right up to murder) and sexual violence (usually committed by a boyfriend, husband, trusted adult, or family member.) There is also emotional abuse — sexual harassment at work or on the street, stalking, jokes that demean women, and controlling behaviour. In some countries there is genital mutilation of girls and trafficking of girls and young women into prostitution.

#### **What about other forms of violence?**

Although ending men's violence against women is our focus, we are concerned about all forms of violence. We are deeply concerned about violence against children. We are concerned about violence among men on the playground, in the sports arena, in relationships, and in war. And we are concerned by acts of violence by women against men or against men, although these are not as extensive nor as frequently lethal as men's violence against women.

Unlike violence by some women against men, that committed by some men against women has long been socially acceptable and is deeply rooted in beliefs of men's superiority and of men's right to control the lives of "their" women.

#### **Does this mean you think that men are bad? Are you anti-male?**

We do not think that men are naturally violent and we don't think that men are bad. In many countries, the majority of men are not physically violent. Researchers tell us many past cultures had little or no violence.

At the same time, we do think that some men have learned to express their anger or insecurity through violence. Far too many men have come to believe that violence against a woman, child or another man is an acceptable way to control another person, especially an intimate partner.

By remaining silent about these things, we allow other men to poison our work, schools and homes.

The good news is that more and more men and boys want to make a difference. Caring men are tired of the sexism that hurts the women around them.

We're not anti-male because we were started by men who care about the lives of men and boys.

#### **Do you have opinions on other issues of the day?**

Our goal is for all men and boys to get involved in a campaign devoted to creating a future without violence against women.

Within the WRC there is a great diversity of opinion on many important issues, including ones relating to moral, religious and political beliefs. These issues are important, but they shouldn't prevent men from working together to stop domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. And so we agree to hold diverse opinions. We include men from across the political spectrum from left to right, of all religions, ethnic and racial groups, and backgrounds.

### **White Ribbon Campaigns**

#### **Does everyone have to wear a white ribbon?**

Some campaigns use cloth ribbons or small white ribbon pins shaped into our distinctive logo. Others have the white ribbon logo printed on T-shirts or hats. Some use cloth or plastic wristbands. And some only use the logo on posters, pamphlets, or in TV ads.

#### **Who starts local and national campaigns?**

The White Ribbon Campaign is unique in that it is a decentralized effort that believes that people know best what will most effectively reach men and boys in their community, school, workplace, and country. In that sense, anyone who believes in the goals and philosophy of the WRC can start a campaign. We encourage White Ribbon supporters in each country or community to work together. In some countries there is an official White Ribbon organization.

#### **Can women get involved? Do they wear the ribbon?**

In Canada, the WRC is primarily a campaign of men, aimed at boys and young men. But we have women on our board and on our staff. Many local campaigns are encouraged by women's groups, many are led by men and women together, and women participate in many, if not most, activities.

In some countries, campuses, and communities, White Ribbon is led exclusively by men. In others, it is a joint effort or even one where women are leading.

Although the ribbon started as a symbol of men's opposition to violence against women, in many schools and communities both males and females wear the ribbon. We hope, though, that the focus remains on reaching men and boys with our message of respect.

#### **What are your relations with women's groups?**

We acknowledge the expertise and central role of women in

challenging violence against women. With tremendous heroism, they pioneered this work; they set up support programs for women and pushed for social awareness and legal change. We encourage our local groups to have an ongoing dialogue with women's groups in their community.

#### **Who runs the White Ribbon Campaign?**

In Canada we have an elected and volunteer Board of Directors as well as a small but dedicated staff. Around the world, the WRC is led by many different organizations. The heart and soul of the organization are concerned men and women like you.

#### **So what type of organization is it?**

It's an organization like no other. Not only does it include men and women from varying social and political perspectives, but it is an organization that has avoided becoming hierarchical or bureaucratic. We want to keep our emphasis on the community, on the schools and workplaces.

### **Money Matters**

#### **How do you raise money?**

In Canada, our funding comes from individual supporters, trade unions, corporations, religious institutions, foundations, and fundraising events. Specific projects are supported by the government.

#### **Does this take money away from women's groups?**

We support women's programs by encouraging men to give generously to them and by encouraging schools and others to raise money. We believe that by contributing to the reduction of violence against women, we are contributing to the overstretched resources of women's services. And we believe that as more men see this as an important issue, funding will increase to women's efforts.

#### **Do you give grants or financial support?**

Unfortunately, the WRC is not in the position to provide funding or grants for projects, organizations, or travel, or for establishing national or local White Ribbon Campaigns.

### **How can I help?**

We encourage you to support White Ribbon activities in your community. And we encourage you to help the WRC in Canada and around the world with your generous financial support.



For more information about the White Ribbon Campaign,  
please visit our website at [www.whiteribbon.ca](http://www.whiteribbon.ca)



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### Tips for Boys: Building Healthy, Equal Relationships

Whether you're just hanging out with friends or wondering what it would be like to go out with someone, there's a lot to learn about relationships. When people are in healthy relationships, they feel valued, respected, and like equals. Below are some tips to help you have healthy, equal relationships:

**What kind of person do you want to be?** Sometimes family, friends, and the media give negative messages about boys and girls. You can choose to look for positive messages that show girls and boys as equal, and don't show stereotypes that say that boys and girls must act a particular way.

**What kind of boyfriend do you want to be?** Both girls and boys like to be treated with respect. Ask for her opinion, listen to what she has to say, and take her seriously. This will show her respect.

**Be friends.** Friendship is important. Treat people that you go out with, with respect. In a healthy, equal relationship, everyone feels comfortable just being herself or himself.

**Communicate.** In a healthy relationship, people should feel comfortable enough to share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings.

**Ups and downs.** It's normal to feel hurt or angry sometimes, but in a healthy relationship, people don't yell or call each other names. Things can be worked out through talking and listening to each other.

**Do your thing.** Being in a relationship doesn't mean you have to be together all the time. It's important that you both have your own space and interests.

**It's no joke.** Listen to how people talk about girls. Speak up when you hear someone disrespecting girls. Tell them you don't think it's fair when they talk about girls like they're toys or like they are not as good as boys.

**Be aware.** Recognize the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. If a friend expects his girlfriend to agree with everything he says, talks bad about her, or keeps her away from friends, it's a warning sign. You can tell him that you don't think the way he treats his girlfriend is fair and that he can get help by calling the Kids Help Phone.

You can tell her that she doesn't deserve to be treated that way and that she can talk to an adult she trusts.

**Be a role model.** Younger boys, like your younger brother or kids at school, might look up to you. Show them what it means to be a boy who treats girls with respect, and as an equal.

**Be a leader.** Raise awareness in your school and in your community. Do a school project on violence. Arrange for a guest speaker to talk about healthy relationships, or put up posters in your school. Your teacher can help you find the resources you need. Start an anti-violence club in your school - it's a great way to meet people who are looking to be in healthy, equal

To find out more about healthy equal relationships and violence against women and girls, visit:  
[www.equalityrules.ca](http://www.equalityrules.ca) | [www.ontariowomensdirectoriate.gov.on.ca](http://www.ontariowomensdirectoriate.gov.on.ca)

For more help and advice call the Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or visit: [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)