

Ten Keys

To Engage Men and Boys in Promoting Gender Equality, Redefining Manhood, & Ending Gender-Based Violence

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1. Start where men and boys are coming from, but don't get stuck there. Take chances, be challenging, show respect for men by not kowtowing to stereotypes or sexist assumptions about men and boys.
2. Challenge the abuse of power and ideas that justify the social domination by men or the domination by men in individual relationships. At the same time, use well-chosen messages to navigate through the fear that lies at the heart of the experience of men and boys: that is, fear about not living up to the demands and expectations associated with masculinity. One way to do both of these is to use male role models and male voices. They can raise key issues, set a clear example, and make it safe for other males to speak out and get involved.
3. Women's programs and NGOs can play a key role in successful work with men. They help ensure accountability; they're also the experts on issues concerning violence against women.
4. One size does not fit all! We need diverse entry points, diverse efforts, and diverse approaches to reach a diverse population and different age groups.
5. When speaking about the use of violence by some men, describe the violence as a choice that these men make. Also, avoid language that reduces an individual man to this part of his actions. Hold these men accountable but also say we know they can be better men than that.
6. Compassion and understanding will be the best way to reach men, including (most) men who have used violence in their relationships. At the same time, their own past experiences can never be used as an excuse for their abusive or violent behavior.
7. Use positive messages and use language of responsibility, not collective blame or collective guilt. Avoid generalizing about "all men"!
8. Create broad partnerships with those across the social, political, and religious spectra to speak with a united voice. Work to make all this a mainstream issue.
9. Understand the most important role we can play is as catalysts: catalysts for other men, other organizations and institutions to get involved; catalysts for individual men and boys to rethink their assumptions about who they are as men.
10. To keep moving forward: assess our efforts, evaluate programs, measure men's attitudinal and behavioral changes.