

Family Violence: What Can Each of us do?



Call the police if you see or hear evidence of domestic violence.

- Speak out publicly against domestic violence.
- Encourage your neighbourhood watch or block association to become as concerned with watching out for domestic violence as with burglaries and other crimes.
- Reach out to support someone whom you believe is a victim of domestic violence.
- Support domestic violence counseling programs and shelters.

What can you say to a victim?

- “I’m afraid for your safety.”
- “I’m afraid for the safety of your children.”
- “It will only get worse.”
- “We’re here for you when you are ready or when you are able to leave.”
- “You deserve better than this.”

Preventing child abuse

Most abusive parents do not consciously set out to harm their children. Therefore, if efforts to assist troubled families are enhanced, parents at risk of abusing may be reached and helped before they resort to violence

Encourage your local school board to develop and implement child abuse prevention programs. Abused children tend to repeat the pattern of abuse, and prevention is one of the most effective instruments in arresting the cycle of violence.

Teach children how to recognize and say no to abusive or exploitative behaviour.

Ensure that children and adults know where they can obtain information and assistance to prevent an abusive or neglectful situation from developing.

Children who are well informed about inappropriate touching, who are taught to trust their feelings about situations and people, and who know where to get help if they require it, are less likely to be victimized by any type of assault.

What you can do at your school

- explore the Canadian Red Cross RespectEd Violence and Abuse Prevention Program at www.redcross.ca and ask your local office to provide presentations at your school about dating violence, child abuse prevention, anti-bullying, and reducing violence in sports
- encourage school administration to create professional development opportunities for school educators about family violence and reporting child abuse
- ask school counselors to place dating violence posters in the school and provide information sheets for students
- ask the school principal to insert a fact sheet about dating violence in the school newsletter for parents and guardians
- request your school develop a student-led “anti-violence and anti-bullying campaign”
- honour students who work to reduce violence and bullying
- make material about family violence available

Men can make a difference in preventing Family Violence

- Reinforce the fact that every man is responsible for his own actions
- Speak out against all forms of violence
- Offer positive support to the other men
- Adopt violence-free zones and attitudes at home, social gatherings and work
- Use your strength to help keep victims safe
- Challenge the limitations of unhealthy masculine stereotypes
- Be a positive role model for men, women, and children
- Organize educational events about family violence
- Volunteer to fundraise for family violence programs or organizations
- Reflect on personal relationships to see if they engage in abusive behaviour
- Support young men in developing healthy, nurturing relationships