

# Purple Ribbon Campaign



## Nine Tips for Teachers on How to Help End Violence Against Women and Girls

### Duty to Report Violence and Abuse

Child abuse is physical harm, emotional harm, sexual harm, living with violence and being left without adequate supervision. Children have the right to live in a safe and secure environment. If you suspect child abuse, you have a duty to report to Children, Seniors and Social Development or call your local police.

### Educate Yourself

Become informed about violence and abuse against women and girls. In particular, the various forms of violence, prevalence, long-term effects, barriers to leaving a violent relationship, how to help someone who has been a victim, services available to victims, and what you can do if you yourself are a victim. The social and cultural roots of all forms of violence are founded in the many types of inequality which continue to exist and grow in our society. Violence and abuse are a reflection of, and are directed towards a continuation of a power imbalance between victim and abuser. Being actively informed about the issues can only strengthen your ability to teach your students about the severity and spectrum of violence experienced by women and girls.

### Openly Discuss Sexism and Violence

Do not be afraid to openly discuss sexism and violence against women and girls in the classroom. Create a safe environment where all students will feel comfortable participating in the discussion. It is important that students understand that violence and abuse against women and girls is rooted in inequality and results from power and control imbalances between individuals within society. Be sure to explain to students that violence against women and girls is any act of gender-based violence and abuse that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering.

### Examine Your Own Biases

Do not be afraid to look inward and examine your own attitudes, biases and behaviours toward women and girls. As one of the most influential agents of socialization, your words and actions can have a profound impact on students' attitudes and behaviours.

### Challenge Gender Role Stereotypes

Gender role stereotypes have the potential to harm women and girls throughout the duration of their life. Discuss with students the origins of gender role stereotypes, the repercussions women and girls face if they do not conform to certain gender role stereotypes, and the long-term negative impact gender role stereotyping can have on women and girls. Challenging and changing negative stereotypical attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls is a step in the right direction to help prevent violence.

### Challenge Violence Myths

Many myths exist in society today regarding violence and abuse against women and girls. Discussing the incidence of violence and abuse against women and girls, the severity of violence, the long-term effects, and the barriers to leaving a violent or abusive relationship will allow you to dispel certain societal myths. In order to effectively help prevent violence and abuse against women and girls, it is important that everyone has an accurate understanding of the issue.

### Challenge Derogatory Comments

Teach your students the importance of respecting the personal boundaries of women and girls. Teach your students that it is inappropriate to engage in derogatory conversations about women and girls or female sexuality. Do not tolerate any kind of sexist, racist, classist, ableist or heterosexist comments, jokes or insults amongst your students. Challenge **ALL** derogatory comments. Show leadership by example.

### Acknowledge Women's Herstory

Educate students about women's history and contributions to your community, your province, your country and around the world.

### Discuss Women's Equality Rights

A good starting point in the acknowledgment of women's equality is to discuss with your students the importance of the *Human Rights Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (specifically Section 15 and Section 28), and the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW).

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