

Generation Respect

Ways to talk with other adults
about raising respectful children
and young people



Australian Government

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
LET'S STOP IT
AT THE START

How we can all work together to raise respectful children and young people

We can all help the adults around us to be positive role models for our children and young people by having open and ongoing conversations about respect with each other.

When adults—parents, family members, friends, teachers, coaches, employers, work colleagues and other community role models—work together as a team to promote respect, we set a positive example for our young people.

This guide shares practical tips to help you build the confidence to start conversations with other adults about raising a respectful generation of young people.

This includes talking to each other about respect and disrespect when we see it.

If we all come together as a community and find our collective voice, we can build a better future for our children and young people, free from disrespect.



We create the world young people grow up in

Case Study—Nara

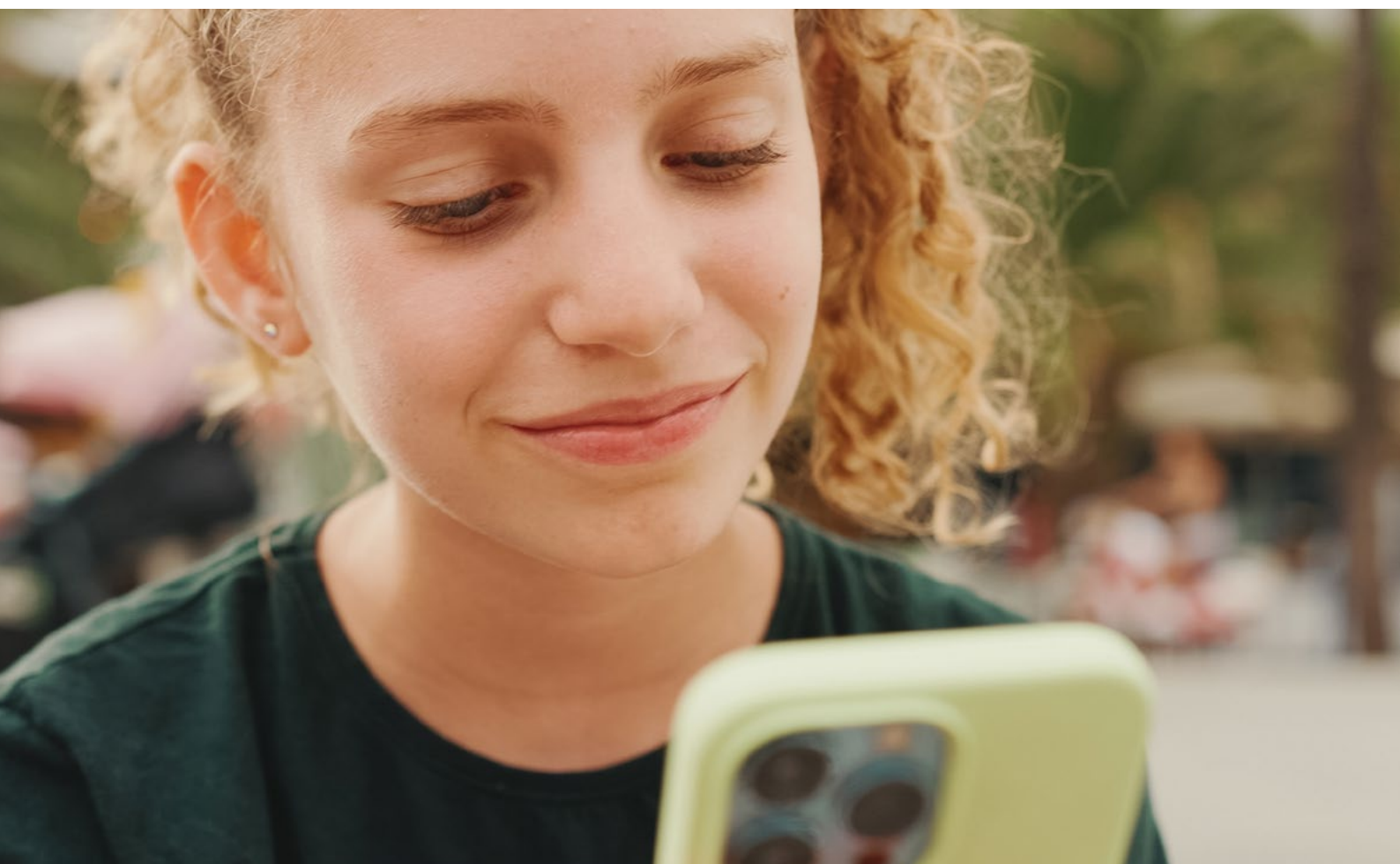
Fourteen year old Nara cares about basketball above all else. She wants to feel valued for her basketball skills, and be treated with respect, regardless of her gender.

Her main focus is scoring a three pointer in her game on Saturday, and that she isn't treated differently because she is a girl. Sometimes there's more focus on whether her shorts are too short, or how she plays 'for a girl'. At times, even Nara's friends tease her online, sending her videos of sportswomen 'failing' on the court, or making comments like 'women just aren't any good at sports.'

The world Nara grows up in is created by the adults she looks up to. We have a lot to do with whether she feels like she is valued for the right reasons, and whether she is treated with respect as she grows up. This is because gender norms, respect, and disrespect, are things that we learn, and something that we all have the power to teach.

How we behave, how we treat others and what we accept from those around us all have a big impact on adults and young people.

It may sound like a lot of responsibility to take on, but small actions really do make a big difference. We all have the power to create the world Nara and other children want to live in.



How can I make a difference?

Our words and actions impact those around us. Sometimes we may hear another adult say something that doesn't sit right with us, or we may see children and young people behave in a way that isn't okay.

It can feel easier to just let it go, but staying silent sends a message that this behaviour is sometimes okay.

But the good news is we can all come together to make a positive change for Nara and all children and young people.

Below are some ideas of small steps we can all take, that will move us closer to a culture free from disrespect:

- 1. Think carefully about the language we use.** When we make excuses for disrespect targeted at young women and girls, by saying things like 'he just did it because he likes her' and 'she's probably overreacting', we could be implying that disrespect towards girls is a normal part of life. This includes the content we like, comment or share online.
- 2. Role model respectful behaviour.** Young people learn how to behave from us—the adults that influence them. When we and other influential adults in our young people's lives actively role model respect towards women and girls, we're setting a positive example for the young people around us—and the broader community.
- 3. Start a proactive conversation about respect for women and girls** with the young people in your life by having open, honest conversations about respect.
- 4. Address disrespectful behaviour when you see it.** If we call it out when we see it, instead of making excuses or staying silent, we're sending a clear message to those around us about what is and is not acceptable. We can also block or report harmful content online when we encounter it.
- 5. Chat with another adult you trust about raising respectful children and young people.** Other adults around us can act as a much needed support net or source of advice. Keep reading for tips on how to start a conversation with other adults in your community.

Where you can start

Having a conversation with family members, friends and other adults about raising respectful children and young people can seem daunting, but here are a few ideas to help you get started.

- Ask a parent you admire about how they are teaching their children about respectful relationships.
- Talk about what children and young people are being exposed to on social media and online platforms and how to help them develop the skills they need to have healthy, respectful interactions online and in the real world.
- Share how you've raised these subjects with your children, and how they responded.
- Share a time you witnessed disrespectful behaviour from a young person, how you responded, and how you felt about it.
- Talk about how phrases that you sometimes hear from adults like, 'he did it because he likes you' or 'don't cry like a girl' reinforce negative stereotypes and shape children's behaviour and attitudes.
- Share a time you overheard another adult excuse disrespectful behaviour by saying phrases like 'boys will be boys' or 'it takes two to tango' and what you said in response.
- Ask a fellow parent about books/articles/documentaries they know of about understanding the experiences of men and boys, and how to raise respectful boys.
- Ask other adults about whether they have ever felt pressured to act in a way they disagreed with to be considered a 'real man' or 'real woman', and what strategies can be used in these situations.
- Start a conversation at the sports club about how adults can get involved in respectful relationships or running violence prevention activities.

How to make positive impacts in social situations

When we see disrespect in social situations, addressing it can feel awkward or scary, and we might think it's easier to just let it go. But it's a great opportunity to spark up a conversation about respect, and share our experiences with other adults.

It might seem overwhelming—we might think other parents will judge us, or that speaking out might start unwanted conflict—but we often focus on the potential worst case scenario, instead of the positive outcomes that speaking out can inspire.

We need to look at these situations differently, and remember that our friends, family and other parents may be just as unsure about the situation as us.

By speaking up and starting a conversation about respect, we can set a positive example for those around us.

Below are some common situations where starting a conversation about respect may seem overwhelming, and examples of how to look at the situations differently.

While scrolling through social media with another parent, you see a photo of one of your child's friends posted online. The girl in the photo is wearing a short skirt. The mother you are with says, 'That girl is asking for trouble—I would never let my daughter out of the house wearing that'. A young boy nearby hears the comment, and looks over.

You might think: 'Hmm, I don't know if I should say something. I don't want to create conflict.'

Instead, consider: Having a conversation about this issue can help us understand each other better. This mum may not understand that her words may teach young boys that there are circumstances where disrespecting girls is okay. By speaking up, you can help her understand that we should be raising boys to treat girls respectfully, no matter what they're wearing.

Conversation starter: I don't think any girl is ever 'asking for it'. Girls and women deserve respect no matter what they're wearing.

Tip: Stay calm and non-judgmental. Remember, it's not about causing conflict, it's about setting the standard for how people should be treated.

You are invited over to a gathering with a few other families. A few of the boys are playing video games and one of the girls wants to join in. The boys laugh and say 'Girls can't be gamers' and 'make me a sandwich instead'. The other parents seem to be ignoring their argument.

You might think: 'If I say something, I might just make their argument worse. If I cause a scene, the other parents might not invite me next time.'

Instead, consider: If you don't say something, the kids might think this sexist behaviour is okay. The other parents might not have heard, understood what the reference to 'make me a sandwich' means (i.e. it is shorthand for saying that women belong in the kitchen), or might feel unsure how to address the situation themselves.

Conversation starter: I think we should step in and let them know that's a really sexist and inappropriate comment—girls can do anything boys can.

Tip: Other adults may also feel unsure or scared to speak up when they see disrespectful behaviour. If you speak up, you can set a positive example for everyone.

You become aware that one of your son's friends has started a social media chat and invited people they met online into the chat. You see demeaning and hostile comments about girls. You raise it with the friend's parents and they respond, 'That's just boys mucking around...'

You might think: 'They're going to think I'm judging them as a parent. I'm not perfect myself, and they might use it as a reason to judge my parenting.'

Instead, consider: These parents might not understand what disrespectful words being used online such as 'simp', 'beta' and 'negging' mean and the harmful impact they can have.

Conversation starter: No, that's not on—we need to let them know treating girls like that is not okay. Let's have a chat with them together, and talk about how having or sharing intimate images of someone under 18 is illegal.

Tip: Acknowledge that parenting is hard, but that we will all benefit from creating a culture where disrespectful behaviour is not tolerated. By working together, and calling out disrespect when we see it, we can create a better future for our children. Learn more about sharing photos online at: [Consent for sharing photos and videos—eSafety](#)

You are at a poolside get-together with your extended family. One of the boys has been continually pestering a girl and flicking the strap on her swimming top. She is upset, and asks the boy to leave her alone.

You might think: 'If I call this out as disrespectful behaviour, my family might think I'm a hypocrite—they know I did silly things like this when I was young.'

Instead, consider: We all make mistakes, and nobody is perfect. You learnt that this behaviour isn't acceptable, but if you stay silent, this boy may continue to think this kind of behaviour's okay. By addressing this now, you're helping him grow up to be a kind and respectful adult.

Conversation starter: We all did silly things as kids, but he's gone too far and she's clearly upset. I'll pull him aside for a quick chat.

Tip: The best time to address disrespectful behaviour is when it happens. Calmly responding or casually asking the person if you can have a quick chat is a good way to start.



Top tips for talking about respect

Below are some useful tips to keep in mind, when talking about respect with other adults in your life.

- 1. Be open minded:** and remember that we all have different experiences, and different language that we use to address disrespectful behavior.
- 2. Be empathetic:** Don't be judgemental. It's important to listen to, and value others' opinions, regardless of your own ideas and opinions. Addressing disrespect can be tough, but we need to remember that we're all in this together.
- 3. Be honest:** Share your own experiences and point of view—even in situations where things may not have gone as planned. We don't always get it right, but we can learn from each other's experiences.
- 4. Keep it casual:** This will help make everyone feel comfortable to talk about respect. Encourage others to share their views and experiences—you could share your own personal story or ask questions to help guide the conversation.
- 5. Keep the dialogue open:** Talking about respect and disrespect doesn't need to be a 'big deal'—it can happen as part of our everyday conversations with those around us. The more we talk about respect, the easier it will get.



Resources

There are resources and tools available on the *Stop it at the Start* website, www.respect.gov.au, to help you learn more about the issue, the type of information young people are engaging with online and ways you can talk about it.

The Issue Explained

Understanding and talking about violence against women in Australia.

The Hidden Trends of Disrespect

A guide to help parents and carers understand the types of disrespectful and aggressive content young people may see and hear online.

The Conversation Guide

A guide to having conversations with young people about respect.

The Excuse Interpreter

Discover the hidden meanings behind the words we use to talk about disrespect between men and women.

Support Services

This page offers a range of support services that can be contacted if you need support or are at risk of experiencing violence.

Find out more

The Line

The Line encourages healthy and respectful relationships by challenging and changing attitudes and behaviours that support violence. The Line is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. It is delivered by Our Watch. www.theline.org.au

Student Wellbeing Hub

The Student Wellbeing Hub is a one-stop shop for information and resources on safe school strategies to assist teachers and school leaders, students, parents, specialist professionals supporting students and pre-service teachers. www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au

eSafety Commissioner

eSafety is Australia's independent regulator for online safety, educating Australians about online safety risks and helping to remove harmful content such as cyberbullying, cyber abuse, and intimate images or videos shared without consent. The eSafety site has many resources and tips for keeping children safe online. You can also report online harm at www.esafety.gov.au

Say It Out Loud

Say It Out Loud encourages members of LGBTQ+ communities to have healthy relationships, get help for unhealthy relationships and support their friends. www.sayitoutloud.org.au