

THE RESPECT CHECKLIST

A practical checklist to help parents and family members identify some important aspects of respect to talk about with children.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
LET'S STOP IT
AT THE START

INTRODUCTION

THE ISSUE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Most Australians agree violence against women is wrong.

We know that:

- › On average, one woman is killed every week at the hands of a current or former partner¹.
- › One in three women has been a victim of physical or sexual violence, since the age of 15, from someone known to them².
- › One in six women has experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner³.
- › One in four Australian women has been emotionally abused⁴.
- › One in four young people is prepared to excuse violence from a partner⁵.

THIS CYCLE OF VIOLENCE STARTS WITH DISRESPECT

Not all disrespect towards women results in violence. But all violence against women starts with disrespectful behaviour.

Disrespect starts with the beliefs and attitudes we develop from a young age.

Our children form their beliefs from the world around them – what they hear, see and talk about. And from the stories, people and experiences that are an integral part of their childhood.

We just want what's best for them. Though sometimes, without meaning to, we ignore disrespectful behaviour, prefer not to get involved or make excuses to protect our children.

Making fun of girls because of their appearance, or using gender as an insult (for example, 'don't throw like a girl'); these are forms of disrespect that may seem harmless at first in young people.

Without realising it, we can sometimes say and do things that make young people think disrespectful and aggressive behaviours are acceptable.

We might be surprised to recognise some of the most common ways we excuse disrespectful and aggressive behaviour. These include:

- › playing down disrespectful behaviour
- › accepting aggression as just part of being a boy
- › blaming girls who are treated with disrespect.

We teach boys this behaviour towards girls is 'just what boys do'. We teach girls to accept it, and tell them 'it's ok, he probably did it because he likes you'.

Gradually, boys and girls start to believe that disrespect is just a normal part of growing up.

TOGETHER WE CAN HELP STOP THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As parents, family members, teachers, coaches, employers and role models, we can have a positive influence on young people and set the standard for what is and what's not acceptable, right from the start.

We can be more aware of the excuses we make, and how they can have a lasting impact.

We can start having conversations about respect with boys and girls.

We can 'stop it at the start' and help prevent violence against women.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

This checklist shows a range of views from girls and boys about respect. It will give you a picture of what your son or daughter might believe, and how they could react to disrespectful behaviour.

Think about each statement and fill in the checklist based on what you know about your son or daughter. Your answers will help you to better understand your child's views and will give you a place to start talking.

References:

¹ Australian Institute of Criminology, (2015). *Homicide in Australia: 2010–11 to 2011–12: National Homicide Monitoring Program annual report*

^{2,3,4} Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2012). *Personal Safety Survey*

⁵ VicHealth, (2013). *Young Australian's Attitudes towards Violence Against Women report (the summary Youth Report)*.

I THINK MY DAUGHTER KNOWS ...



she has a right to be treated with respect by boys ☐ Yes ☐ No

that it's not her fault when a boy insults, shouts at her or becomes aggressive ☐ Yes ☐ No

it's wrong for boys to take, view or share pictures of girls without their permission ☐ Yes ☐ No

it's important for adults to speak out against boys who are aggressive towards girls ☐ Yes ☐ No

who she could talk to, or where to go for help if a boy is aggressive towards her ☐ Yes ☐ No

it's okay to stand up for herself ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered 'no' to any of the above statements, these are topics that are important to discuss with your daughter.

I THINK MY DAUGHTER WOULD SAY ...



it's normal for boys to make fun of her ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

she's sometimes afraid of boys ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

she'd find it hard to stand up for a female friend who was harassed by a boy ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

she wouldn't tell an adult or know where to get help if she was harassed by a boy ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

being aggressive towards girls is just part of being a boy ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

telling an adult about a boy's disrespectful or aggressive behaviour towards a girl only makes the situation worse ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

If you answered 'always' or 'sometimes' to any of the above statements, these are the issues that are important to discuss with your daughter.

THINGS TO HIGHLIGHT IN CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR DAUGHTER

- › The importance of respect between people, no matter what their age, gender or background.
- › Having the confidence to speak out against disrespectful attitudes and behaviours.
- › That male intimidation, humiliation or aggression towards females is never their fault, and should not be tolerated.
- › The need to respect personal privacy and boundaries in relationships.

I THINK MY SON KNOWS ...



girls have the same right to be treated with respect as boys ☐ Yes ☐ No

insulting a girl isn't acceptable ☐ Yes ☐ No

shouting at a girl is threatening behaviour ☐ Yes ☐ No

a boy isn't entitled to harass or control a girl ☐ Yes ☐ No

taking, viewing or sharing pictures of a girl without her permission is wrong ☐ Yes ☐ No

it's important for adults to speak out against boys who are aggressive towards girls ☐ Yes ☐ No

who he could talk to, or where to go for help if he sees a boy being aggressive towards a girl ☐ Yes ☐ No

it's not okay to pressure girls into any kind of sexual activity ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered 'no' to any of the above statements, these are topics that are important to discuss with your son.

I THINK MY SON WOULD SAY ...



insulting a girl is just a bit of fun ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

girls are weak ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

he'd stand up for a girl who was being harassed by a boy ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

he would join a male friend who was harassing a girl ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

he wouldn't know who to talk to, or where to go for help if he saw a girl being harassed by a boy ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

teasing, embarrassing or intimidating a girl in front of others is just part of being a boy ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

boys should take charge in their relationships with girls ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

If you answered 'always' or 'sometimes' to any of the above statements, these are topics that are important to discuss with your son.

THINGS TO HIGHLIGHT IN CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR SON

- › The importance of respect between people, no matter what their age, gender or background.
- › The importance of speaking out against disrespectful attitudes and behaviours.
- › That male intimidation, humiliation or aggression towards females is never okay.
- › The need to respect personal privacy and boundaries in relationships.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NEXT

Start a conversation with your children about any of these issues you think are important. You may find that your son or daughter has healthy and positive attitudes, and the conversation is more about making sure they know how to be respectful, and understand right from wrong. Other issues might need more discussion.

RESPECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS is a useful tool for parents who want to talk about respect with their children. It helps parents prepare to discuss sensitive issues and offers advice for having open and honest discussions.

Other useful tools:

RESPECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS

Advice and tips for discussing sensitive issues and having open discussions with your children.

UNDERSTANDING OUR EXCUSES THE EXCUSE INTERPRETER

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



Learn more at respect.gov.au



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Australian Government

A joint Australian, state and territory government initiative.