

Some Keys to Successful Work to Engage Men and Boys

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1. Women's programs & organizations can play a key role in successful work with men and boys. (But it shouldn't be just their responsibility.)
2. Challenge inequality and the abuse of power. But also reach out to men with empathy and compassion. Finding that balance of challenge and compassion is one of our biggest challenges.
3. Some of men's hostility is based on fear. Remember, what men often say out loud in groups of men doesn't accurately reflect their feelings but is about performing for other men. Part of our job, then, is to navigate through men's fear and have an authentic discussion with them. Do this with well chosen messages. Do this using male role models and male voices.
4. We need to reach diverse ages and a diverse population. One size does *not* fit all.
5. Describe violence as a choice that some men make. There is no excuse.
6. Use positive messages and talk about responsibility for change, not collective blame or collective guilt. (At the same time, individuals must be held responsible for abusive behavior.) Bring an element of hope into all our work and our messages.
7. You can't do it all! See your role as a catalyst to get others involved. Trust others, let them make mistakes. Create broad partnerships that speak with a united voice. Make this a mainstream issue.
9. If we want men to learn respect, we must reach out to them with respect. We might not respect the actions and ideas of some men, but if we don't learn to respect them as a human being we'll have a hard time getting through to them. The more we can distinguish the person from their behavior, the more successful we will be.
10. Work hard to create safety! People feeling safe are people who can have an open and flexible mind, who can listen, learn and change.