



Ten Simple Prevention Steps

Everyone has a role to play in preventing sexual violence within our communities. To cultivate change we all need to play our part. Below are 10 easy ways you can practice prevention in your daily life.

1 Support victims/survivors in your life

Chances are you already know at least one victim/survivor, whether you are aware of it or not. The best thing you can do is simply believe someone when they tell you they have been sexually assaulted. Your role is to listen and provide the support they ask for. Visit [MNCASA's website](#) for more helpful tips on ways to support victims/survivors.

2 Know and practice consent

Consent is as simple as getting and giving permission to do something. It is important to get consent before physically interacting with others. You can easily ask someone if it is ok to hug them before just doing so. If they say no, then don't do it. We can teach the children in our lives that they do not need to hug or kiss others if they do not want to. Using consent gives everyone power over their own bodies and space. [Consent Tea](#) is a short video which gives great examples of consent.

3 Be an active bystander

Another way you can prevent sexual violence, and other forms of violence, is by being an active bystander. Being an active bystander means you are looking out for those around you and will intervene on situations that look suspicious, uncomfortable, or even potentially unsafe. There are many ways to intervene, [NoMore](#) and [It'sOnUs](#) offer [scenarios](#) with different intervention strategies and bystander tips. Remember it is just as important that you stay safe too. If you are interested in hosting an active bystander training reach out to MNCASA at prevention@mncasa.org.

4 Be aware of language

Jokes and phrases that make light of sexual violence contribute to a culture where sexual harassment, assault, and abuse aren't taken seriously. What you say matters and sends messages. If you or a friend make a sexist joke those around you who hear it take that as your belief. You can call out this inappropriate behavior by simply saying "that's not funny."

5 Be accountable and apologize

We are all going to make mistakes and potentially cause harm at some point in our lives. What matters is we own our actions, recognize when we are wrong or cause harm, genuinely apologize for the mistake, and change our actions moving forward. None of us will be perfect, but we can always strive to do better.

6 Talk to your legislator

Your voice has power and legislators want to hear from you. If contacting your local legislators is new to you, check out [Back to Basics Policy 101](#) resource package or [Meeting with Your Legislators for Beginners](#) to get you started. Remember you also have local community officials who want to hear from you. Other opportunities are to revise policies at your workplace, within schools, and other local establishments. Find out what policies exist around sexual violence in these settings. You can influence change on multiple policy levels!

7 Pick what you watch and consume

You can let your money talk when it comes to media. Media is a powerful tool. There are countless movies, T.V. shows, and music videos where sexual violence is portrayed and women are objectified. Choose and fund media that matches your values, sends healthy messages, and doesn't use gender violence as a lazy plot device. When sexual violence or abusive relationships are portrayed in media, use those scenes to start conversations. Check out the film [Miss Representation](#) for more information on harmful media representation.

8 Don't make excuses

Within our culture there are harmful norms that create and excuse sexual violence. Gender norms are one example of harmful norms. When we build ideas of what "real men" and "real women" are supposed to be we create strict boxes that are harmful for everyone. The film [Tough Guise](#) breaks down harmful messages of masculinity boys and young men receive from culture and media. Another harmful norm in our culture is [victim blaming](#). Sexual violence is never the victim/survivors fault, the only one responsible for sexual violence is the one who caused the harm. Our communities uphold these norms, whether they mean to or not, and we have the power to shift them.

9 Talk about it

Talking about sexual violence can be hard, but from the discomfort comes culture change. Try having conversation with those you trust and with the children in your life, you can even use this 10 tips resource as a starting point. We cannot prevent sexual violence alone, we need our whole community on board.

10 Build connections

Mobilize the people you know to support organizations and events in your community that are working to end sexual harassment, assault, and abuse. Get familiar with your community resources and find your local anti-sexual violence advocacy center [here](#). Then you can team up and take action, like by hosting a lunch and learn on sexual harassment prevention within a workplace. Use your knowledge and connections to make your community a safer and healthier place for everyone who lives there.