

5 HARD QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

(and others) ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

1

How comfortable am I thinking and talking about sexual and gender-based violence?

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention, intervention, and response starts somewhere and with someone, and that someone can be you!

We cannot challenge the issue of sexual and gender-based violence without being able to think about it and then talk with others about it. Learning like this is another step in developing familiarity with and growing your comfort in being able to address it, and **every step matters more than you might know.**

Explore this robust resource from the Government of Canada to help “*expand your understanding of gender-based violence.*” Take note especially of the second resource where you can “*learn how to talk about gender based violence with your loved ones and think about [it] through an intersectional lens.*”

2

Where do I see myself, those around me, and those I care about in relation to sexual and gender-based violence?

It can be challenging to think about yourself and your own community in relation to SGBV, but it is essential that we **engage in self-reflection** as it can impact how we show up for ourselves and for others when it might matter most.

Check out this TED Talk about *women’s underestimated experiences* with (and by a leader in awareness about) sexual and gender-based violence, this one about and (by a leader in) *men’s role in sexual and gender-based violence prevention*, and this one about (and by a leader in) *LGBTQ sexual assault response*, and examine this rich repository of resources that examines *SGBV perpetrated against Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.*

3

What do I do to challenge the permissibility of sexual and gender-based violence?

We all have power within our own communities! We can use this power to challenge SGBV in many different ways - both big and small. Whether it is making a confused or disappointed face when someone says something that isn’t cool, critically engaging with popular media and messaging, through to participating in a protest -- every large and little effort matters.

Right to Be offers these *great guides* (and other resources!) like this one, offering tips on “*how to intervene safely when you witness disrespect or harassment.*”

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CONTINUED...

4

What do I do that might communicate that I am complicit with sexual and gender-based violence?

If someone tells a joke about SGBV, do you challenge it or laugh awkwardly to 'be polite'? The ways we respond to moments like these can have a big impact on the people around us, often when we don't necessarily think it will or does.

Though many understand silence as neutral, when it comes to SGBV, saying and doing nothing often does harm. Read about *silence, complicity, and sexual harassment* as explored by a UCalgary professor.

5

In what areas should I extend and expand my awareness?

Learning is ongoing – we can always gain new bits of information and awareness that help grow our understanding of SGBV. Constant learning allows us to help engage in SGBV prevention, safely intervene when we are aware of someone's harm doing, offer supportive responses to people harmed by others, and to share resources where we can.

Check out the ongoing education offered by UCalgary's *Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Support Office* and by the Cumming School of Medicine and Alberta Health Services' *Sexual Violence Educator*. We're here to help!