



National Sexual Violence  
Resource Center

# Safety and Prevention

Sexual violence can be prevented. Even though harmful and inequitable histories and systems exist that normalize and condone sexual violence, things are changing. Many people are working to erase the silence and shame that keep sexual violence hidden and are working in their communities to create positive social norms and policies that promote equity and safety. You don't have to work in the field of sexual assault prevention to make a difference. We can all help prevent sexual violence by modeling and promoting healthy and positive relationships that are based on respect, safety, and equality.

We all have the ability to positively influence others. You can help the people you care about question their harmful beliefs by speaking up if a friend makes jokes or comments about sexual assault or modeling consent with friends and family. Taking action in some way, shape, or form helps to change the thoughts and behaviors of a community.

What does this look like in real life? Here's an example: A friend of your family is over for dinner, and is making jokes or comments about a high-profile case of sexual assault. Their comments make it seem like it's the victim's fault. In this situation, you could:

- Share the information you know about sexual violence and say that it is never the victim's fault.
- Ask respectful questions about the person's attitude. Why do they feel that way? Maybe having a discussion could change their attitude or belief.
- Tell them those comments are not appreciated in your home (or in your presence) and you would like them to stop.

These small actions can create a big change. For more tips on how you can step up and create change, see our [Engaging Bystanders to Prevent Sexual Violence Packet](#).

