



White Ribbon
Campaign

Backgrounder



It starts with you. It stays with him.

About the campaign

Men's behaviours and attitudes can have a long term impact on the boys in their lives. That's why the **It starts with you. It stays with him.** campaign was created – to encourage men to talk to the boys in their lives about the importance of healthy and equal relationships with women. The campaign helps men:

- **positively influence** their younger sons, grandsons, brothers, nephews, students, and community members;
- **engage young people** in meaningful dialogue about gender equality; and,
- **connect** with other men to find out what works when talking with the boys in their lives.

Why This Campaign?

We know that many men will never use physical or sexual violence against women and most men believe in equality between men and women. Men's violence against women and inequality towards women has its roots in the ways we have historically regarded women and men. Women were denied such basic rights as the right to vote, to pursue a career, to own property or to pursue higher education. Some countries still deny women these basic rights.

Even though laws and social policies have changed, inequities persist generation after generation because of the messages we give children about how we value women and men. Many boys and men are taught to hide their emotions. They have been taught that feelings make them weak and feminine. But feelings are a part of being human. When we try to suppress feelings, they often re-emerge in the form of aggression and violence.

Many boys grow up witnessing violence in the home or directly experiencing violence themselves. Although this leads some boys and men to refuse to use violence themselves, it has taught others that the use of force is normal in personal relations. The messages we receive as children stay with us as we become adults.

Sexism, gender inequality, violence against women, and homophobia are tied to how boys are socialized from a young age to accept strict views of masculinity. When boys and men step outside of expected masculine behaviour, they often experience demeaning and homophobic language and actions. It is important, then, to challenge homophobic comments and bullying among young men, to recognize and affirm sexual diversity, and to advocate for men and boys to freely express alternate and healthy forms of masculinity.



White Ribbon
Campaign

Backgrounder



Did You Know?

- Every minute of every day, a Canadian woman or child is being sexually assaulted.
- Half of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.
- A minimum of 1 million Canadian children have witnessed violence against their mothers by their father or father figures.
- 29% of female students have been the victims of unwanted sexual contact at their school over the past two years and 18% have experienced sexual assault.
- In Canada, in 1998, 82.6% of victims in reported cases of sexual assault were women; 98% of the accused were men.
- In 70% of sexual assault incidents, the victim knew the accused; 62 per cent were under the age of 18.
- Globally, violence is a major cause of death and disability for women aged 15 to 44 years.
- Increasing numbers of men feel greater ownership over the issue of men's violence against women.
- In Canada, 66% of men feel that men are not doing enough to address the problem of violence against women.
- 75% of Canadian men feel that it is important that men speak out about violence against women. (WRC/Pollara, 2005)
- Men's participation as fathers and mentors can be positive for the lives of women, men and children.
- Expanding the role of men's caring for children creates a broader vision of the human capacity of men in family life and society in general.
- For every girl who is tired of acting weak when she is strong, there is a boy tired of appearing strong when he feels vulnerable. (www.crimethinc.com)
- For every boy struggling not to let advertising dictate his desires, there is a girl facing the ad industry's attacks on her self-esteem. (www.crimethinc.com)



White Ribbon
Campaign

Backgrounder



About The White Ribbon Campaign

The White Ribbon Campaign is the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women. In over sixty countries, campaigns are led by both men and women, with a focus on educating men and boys.

The White Ribbon is a symbol of a man's pledge ***to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women.***

WRC Canada is a non-profit organization focused on challenging men to speak out; educating young people through direct youth engagement; raising public awareness about gender-based violence; working in partnership with women's organizations; and supporting campaigns around the globe to create a future with no violence against women.

WRC VISION

The White Ribbon Campaign is an organization dedicated to a future that has no violence against women and girls.

About Le Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions

COPA is a Francophone provincial training and consultation body striving to reduce children's and young people's vulnerability to assault and to break the cycle of violence. COPA's goals are to:

1. develop, consolidate, and disseminate child/youth assault prevention resources, based on child and youth advocacy; and, to
2. consolidate and support a Franco-Ontarian resource network in the field of child and youth violence prevention.

COPA works to expand the scope of this resource network, in particular to support the establishment of high quality assault prevention education programming in French in Ontario, as well as the creation of new tools and resources for assault prevention.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Humberto Carolo
Director of Programs
White Ribbon Campaign
Tel: 416-920-6684
Toll Free: 1-800-328-2228
hcarolo@whiteribbon.ca

Nyree St. Denis
Delta Media
Tel: 613-233-9191
Toll Free: 1-888-473-3582
Cell: 613-884-5645
Nyree@deltamedia.ca