

Tips Tuesday

Tips Tuesday # 1: Don't tolerate jokes about sexual assault

“You know she’s playing hard to get when you’re chasing her down an alleyway.”

If you ask almost anyone, they’ll agree that sexual assault and abuse are not ok. It’s a horrific crime that hurts children, women, men, families and communities. It’s used in war as a weapon to degrade and humiliate. The thought of it happening to a friend, partner or family member is enough to lead someone to threaten to kill another. Yet... there are an endless number of rape jokes on movies, the internet, Facebook, television shows, on stand-up stages and in classrooms. What’s so funny about sexual abuse and assault? Is it ever ok to joke about sexual assault? Are people who object to this genre of humour lacking a funny bone?

It doesn’t really matter that the person who is telling the joke is a ‘really good guy’, that he would never actually sexually assault anyone. Considering the prevalence rate of sexual violence, chances are someone who has been impacted by this crime will be in the vicinity of the jokester

The message that sexual assault is laughable, making light of the fears, anxiety and for many, the reality of being sexually assaulted decreases the likelihood that a person will feel that their own experience will be taken seriously.

Laughing at these jokes also helps a person who has been assaulted to easily identify those individuals who are not safe to talk to about their own experiences, for fear of minimization and perhaps disbelief.

By not taking sexual abuse and assault seriously, it supports the widespread denial of the existence of sexual violence in each one of our communities.

Being the only one to not laugh at a joke can be hard. It can feel like you have no sense of humour, or can’t take a joke. The truth is, it makes you a safe person for someone to talk to about sexual assault. It teaches the people you are with that you don’t think sexual assault is funny and neither should they.

Tips Tuesday # 2

Tip: Recognize the Power of Language

The language that we use to talk about women, men, children sex, sexual abuse and sexual assault all help to shape our ideas and expectations around these issues. Using language that degrades and objectifies women contributes to gender inequality, which is strongly connected with an increased incidence of sexual violence.

The language that we use to talk about men, women, children, sex, sexual abuse and sexual assault all help to shape our ideas and expectations around these issues. Using language that degrades and objectifies women contributes to gender inequality, which is strongly connected with an increased incidence of sexual violence. Phrases like ‘she’s my b—ch’ and ‘don’t be a pu—y’ place women in a markedly lower position.

Slang such as “That test raped me” or “We raped the other team” trivializes sexual assault. To clarify, sexual assault (rape) is not:

Losing in a sporting event Failing an exam A surprise A debate or argument

Examples from Public Figures:

Quote from Johnny Depp comparing a photo shoot to a sexual assault:

‘You just feel like you’re being raped somehow,’ he said. ‘Raped... It feels like a kind of weird... just weird, man.’

Quote from Kristen Stewart (from the Twilight Movies) comparing the experience of being photographed by the Paparazzi to a sexual assault:

‘I feel like I’m looking at someone being raped. A lot of the time I can’t handle it. I never expected that this would be my life,’ she said.

‘What you don’t see are the cameras shoved in my face and the bizarre intrusive questions being asked, or the people falling over themselves, screaming and taunting to get a reaction.

Quote from Rainn Wilson (Dwight from the tv series the Office) around the issue of sexual violence:

“If I were ever date raped I would want it to be to ‘Whole Lotta Love’ by Led Zeppelin,”

Tips Tuesday # 3:

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Tip: Tip: Challenge the notion of women as “objects of men’s desires”

“Turning a human being into a thing is almost always the first step towards justifying violence towards that person.” – Jean Kilbourne

Tips Tuesday # 4:

Tip: Teach and Practice Healthy Relationships

Each person’s relationships and sexuality should make them feel better about themselves and add quality to their life.

Tips Tuesday # 5:

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Tip: Mentor teenage and college-aged boys and young men about what masculinity is

Ask what hasn't been so good about our culture of masculinity in the past. How can we build a more inclusive form of masculinity that embraces all types of guys: from jocks to theater kids to queer folks to everyday you-and-me? These conversations can encourage a non-violent form of masculinity for the future.

Tips Tuesday # 6:

Tip: Get Involved

It may seem simple but it is so important for people in the community to get involved in the cause of ending sexual violence.

Become part of the community to end sexual violence.

Support organizations that work to stop sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Start or attend movements in your community.

Objectives might include improvements on communication, Relationship skills, promotion of equitable gender norms and rights, equipping bi-standers to speak out and act to prevent violence, and challenging the social norms and individual beliefs at the root of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence

Use your voting voice and awareness to influence legislative decision making. Express your opinions to your legislators. Vote to support legislators who are working to improve laws about sexual assault. Challenge public figures who perpetuate negative stereotypes and contribute to oppression.

Tips Tuesday # 7:

Tip: Have the courage to look inward

Question your own attitudes. Don't be defensive when something you do or say ends up hurting someone else. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work toward changing them.

Tips Tuesday # 8

Tip: Talk to the children in your life

In early childhood children learn problem-solving, emotional management, and social skills that form the basis of their relationship later in life, and it is also the time when children form views on gender roles, relationships and the acceptability of aggression and violence. Children learn much of this from the people around them, so it is essential that positive parenting and home environments free from violence (WHO, 2007)

Child sexual abuse violates a child's physical and emotional boundaries. Therefore, children need a sense of healthy boundaries and body ownership in order for them to know the difference between "okay" and "not okay" touches.

In order for children to understand child sexual abuse, they need the following:

Sense of Body Ownership

- Teach your children to respect their body and the bodies of others.
- Ask your children for their permission to give them a hug, kiss, etc.
- As a parent, model your own right to say no and to decide what is right for your body.
- Give your children the facts about their whole body and the names for their private parts, and include the mouth as a private part.

Sense of Healthy Boundaries

- Model healthy boundaries by asserting your own privacy and giving your children the opportunity to let you know when they would like privacy.
- Tell your child that his or her body and private parts are private.
- Talk to your child about how "okay" touches feel different from "not okay" touches.
- Believe, normalize and validate when your child tells you how he or she is feeling.

Also talk to your child about how child sexual abuse might make a child feel. Talk about the wide range of feelings that can result from abuse.

- Ask your child to think about how a child might feel if he or she was touched on his or her private parts for no good reason by someone he or she knows (confused, sad, scared, angry, worried, etc.)
- Also tell your child that a touch to a child's private parts may feel "good" to his or her body. If this happens it does not mean the touch is the child's fault, or that the touch is okay. It is normal for our body's to react in a way to touches that we have no control over.

It is also important to teach your child that when child sexual abuse happens, it is usually done by someone the child knows.

- Start by asking your child who he or she thinks usually sexually abuses kids.

- Let your child know that it is usually done by someone the child knows. Make a list with your child of all the different kinds of people that kids know (i.e. aunts, uncles, moms, dads, grandmas, grandpas, babysitters, etc.)
- Let your child know that any of these people could sexually abuse a child.

Tips Tuesday # 9

Tip: Hold Accountable Individuals Who Offend

Legal reform and strengthening criminal justice responses: The power of laws to act as a deterrent relies on their enforcement; if potential offenders perceive that their violent act will be reported and they will be prosecuted, that perception might deter them. There is little evidence however regarding the deterrent effect of criminal justice system responses to intimate partner violence and sexual violence, and reporting and conviction rates continue to be minimal, particularly for sexual violence.

The criminal justice system must include clear laws and policies with effective enforcement; training for police, prosecutors and judges; appropriate sentences; input from individuals affected by sexual assault and sexual abuse, and coordinated interagency responses for individuals affected.

Support comprehensive treatment for people who offend.

Tips Tuesday # 10

Tip: Keep talking about sex and consent with teens as they start having serious relationships

Yeah, they'll tell you they know it all, but continuing the conversation about healthy consent, respecting our partners, and healthy sexuality shows them how important these themes are to you.

Tips Tuesday # 11

Tip: Be Aware of Messages in the Media

It is common for people to express concern about the amount of sex and sexuality portrayed in the media. Modern culture is full of messages that promote sexual assault and sexual abuse. On one hand, men are often portrayed as warriors or aggressors. The stereotypical male hero tends to be strong, unemotional, and sexually dominant.

On the other hand, women are often portrayed as sexual objects or victims. Studies have shown that these types of messages may predispose men to violence against women. Pay attention to how gender

is portrayed in movies, TV shows, video games, and other media.

Spend some time reflecting on how these depictions have impacted your own life. Engage your friends and family members in discussions about these messages.

Tips Tuesday # 12

Tip: Teach children that their behaviors affect others.

Ask them to observe how people respond when other people make noise or litter, and ask them what they think will happen as a result. Will someone else have to clean up the litter? Will someone be scared? Explain to kids how the choices they make affect others and talk about when are good times to be loud, and what are good spaces to be messy.

Tips Tuesday # 13

Tip: Avoid providing personal safety tips to potential victims on how to prevent being sexually assaulted

In essence this is why we started doing Tips Tuesday and offering ways to re-think prevention. Issuing personal safety tips on preventing a sexual assault places the responsibility for prevention on the wrong person. Responsibility to end sexual violence should reside with the offenders as they are the ones committing the crime of sexual violence in the first place. By placing the responsibility of prevention where it belongs - with offenders of this crime we then hold accountable these individuals for their choices and actions to sexually assault someone in the first place. Instead of offering safety tips to the public, we believe prevention starts by challenging the myths; by educating yourself on the laws of consent; by engaging and practicing healthy relationships and by treating people equally.

Tips Tuesday # 14

Tip: Build teens' self esteem.

In middle school, bullying shifts to specifically target identity, and self-esteem starts to plummet around age 13. By age 17, 78% of girls report hating their bodies. Remark to them regularly about their talents, their skills, their kindness, as well as their appearance. Even if they shrug you off with a, "Dad! I know!" it's always good to hear the things that make you great.

Tips Tuesday # 15

Tip: Continue having "sex talks" with middle schoolers, but start incorporating information about consent.

Ask questions like, "How do you know whether your partner is ready to kiss you?" and "How do you think you can tell if a girl (or boy) is interested in you?" This is a great time to explain enthusiastic consent, about asking permission to kiss or touch a partner. Explain that only "yes" means "yes".

Tips Tuesday # 16

Tip: Challenge your own views

Even the most experienced workers in the field of sexual abuse and assault must constantly keep their own biases, values and beliefs in check. Each one of us were raised in communities that teach inaccurate perspectives on not only sexual abuse and assault but on different groups of people. It is impossible to remove yourself from your own experiences and beliefs when supporting others, but it is essential that you pay attention to judgments and assumptions that arise. Make note of them and take the time to debrief with a trusted peer or supervisor. These are opportunities to reflect on your own views and the way that they may impact your work with others.

Tips Tuesday # 17

Tip: Be tolerant and accepting of all races, abilities, religions, sexual orientations and genders and teach these values to your children and family.

By having tolerance and acceptance of all races, abilities, religions, sexual orientations and genders and helping to educate your family and social circle we can help to create equality and help stop the ideas and myths that lead to sexual violence.

Recently popular R&B artists Macklemore & Ryan Lewis along with Mary Lambert released a single titled Same Love which promotes equality and equal rights and treatment for people in same sex relationships. Having popular entertainers sing about this type of positive message goes a long way in helping to end the discrimination and sexual and domestic violence we continue to see.

To view the song with lyrics on YouTube please visit the link below.

Please stay tuned every Tuesday for more tips on re-thinking prevention of sexual violence.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcNOapwgw6I>

Tips Tuesday # 18

Tip: Help kids interpret what they see on the playground and with friends.

Ask what they could do or could have done differently to help.

Tips Tuesday # 19

Tip: Challenge the Myths

There are many myths surrounding the crimes of sexual abuse and sexual assault. These myths are misinformed and provide information about sexual abuse and assault that is simply wrong! Learn the myths and challenge them. Become educated and informed!

Tips Tuesday # 20

Tip: Celebrate and promote equality and acceptance of ALL communities.

See pictures from Calgary's Pride Parade 2013

http://i.huffpost.com/gadgets/slideshows/315184/slide_315184_2862403_free.jpg

Tips Tuesday # 21

Tip: Recognize all individuals for who and what they are. Look past the stereotypes that have come to define certain communities and see people for their gifts and talents.

This tip is in response to agroupon that I received inviting people to purchase tickets to watch "lingerie football" - a football sports league for women. What makes me sad about this league is that over the past 50+ years the conversations that have come out surrounding women in sports is that "watching women play professional sports is not as exciting/intense/entertaining as men's sports and thus not merited in watching". So to increase viewership of female sports, the belief is that the women athletes need to showcase their bodies and need to be almost naked.

Had we had different conversations in the past on the talents/skills/athleticism of women in sports, then perhaps clothing or lack thereof would not factor into viewership.

Let's continue the conversations around equality and equal opportunity and focus less on past stereotypes to make a positive difference for our children - boys and girls in our communities.

Tips Tuesday # 22

Tip: Surrounding the crime of sexual violence, it is important to challenge the myths, to not take them as truth and to do your research and seek out factual information on this crime.

In response to the Men's Advocacy group who has set up a chapter in Calgary and who is spreading false information around the crime of sexual violence, it is important to learn the facts before you take their word as any sort of truth.

As a sexual assault centre we support ALL survivors of sexual abuse and sexual assault (male and female) and know that offenders are both male and female. But we also know that the vast majority of sexual assault offenders are male, and that these offenders perpetrate on boys and girls, as well as men and women <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.pdf>

In order to affect change we need EVERYONE to engage in the conversation, to learn the facts around this crime and work together positively and collaboratively (not through the spreading of harmful and misleading messages) with the goal of having communities free of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

Tips Tuesday #23

Tip: Don't give up on advocating for change and trying to make a difference in how we view the crimes of sexual abuse and sexual assault and for working towards changing how we view accountability for who is perpetrating these crimes and responsibility for prevention of them.

As a sexual assault centre that advocates for all survivors of sexual violence we know that many individuals who have been sexually abused or sexually assaulted by an offender can often be faced with judgment and are often blamed for their attack. Sadly sexual violence is one of the only crimes that comes with a stigma attached to it.

In light of a few organizations that have been dispelling myths around these crimes and perpetuating hate towards female advocates and feminist ideologies, as well as placing huge judgment on survivors, we know that it can sometimes feel like the work that we do goes unnoticed and that change is not happening.

We were so pleased with the outcome from the September 12, 2013 verdict (HEPBURN Trial) as the judge in the case thoroughly understood the crime of sexual violence, its impact on survivors and responsibility for prevention.

Please read the court decision document especially the judge's rational of his ruling on this crime, as it shows his validation and understanding of the crime of sexual violence. This ruling and the reasoning

behind it give hope to those of us who advocate for survivors of sexual violence and shows that the work we do does in fact help change the way people are viewing this crime.

To see the complete ruling please visit the link below:

http://www.albertacourts.ab.ca/jdb_new/public/qb/2003-NewTemplate/qb/Criminal/2013/2013abqb0520.pdf

Tips Tuesday #24

Tip: When it comes to engaging in a sexual act, if ever you are unsure about what your partner is wanting or thinking make sure to check in with them and ask, and if they are not okay with where things are going, then respect their decision and stop.

Consent to have sex occurs when both people really want and desire each other and enthusiastically agree with each and every sexual experience.

Let's continue to have conversations with our children, our friends, our partners and our circle of influence on what consent looks like and making sure to respect your partner's wishes.

Please see the global news story below featuring two of CCASA's male Sexual Assault Educators as they talk about sex, leadership and the culture of consent.

<http://www.calgarycasa.com/media-2/>

Please stay tuned every Tuesday for more tips on re-thinking prevention of sexual violence.

Tips Tuesday #25

Tip: Be aware that sexual harassment is a part of the violence continuum and that when it goes unchallenged it sends messages that the behaviour is okay and accepted by the community.

It is important to know that sexual harassment is not acceptable and when left unchallenged can escalate further.

Please see the link below for more information

<http://msmagazine.com/blog/2013/10/21/when-street-harassment-is-more-deadly-than-catcalls/>

Please stay tuned every Tuesday for more tips on re-thinking prevention of sexual violence.

Tips Tuesday # 26

Tip: Support agencies, initiatives and events that are working towards raising awareness of the crimes of sexual and domestic violence and striving to change attitudes and behaviours around these crimes.

Please see the brochure below outlining information on raising awareness of domestic and sexual violence for November Family Violence Prevention month.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=320962694711373&set=pb.123472751127036.-2207520000.1383078200.&type=3&theater>

Tips Tuesday # 27

Tip: Understand that material and content in what we read in magazines and see on TV can be very harmful and can have damaging effects on the perceptions people hold.

Media plays a major role in shaping our beliefs and how we view everything in life including issues such as sexual assault.

In a recent study it has been shown that many people were unable to tell the difference between comments made by convicted sexual assault offenders about women and sexual assault and comments found in Men's magazines about those same topics.

In both instances these comments were very harmful and show a direct correlation between the attitudes many people hold about sexual assault and the media that they are reading/viewing.

As a society we must be very cautious about the messages we receive in media, seek out education and get the correct facts around these issues.

To view more information on this study please see the article shown below:

<http://jezebel.com/5866602/can-you-tell-the-difference-between-a-mens-magazine-and-a-rapist>