



**White Ribbon
Ireland**

Men Ending Gender-Based Violence



What men can do to be allies in combating domestic, sexual and gender-based violence? 3 STEPS

Step in – Step up – Step back

“**Step in**” to the wider conversation about DSGBV in a non-adversarial way. Try to listen and learn while you engage in conversations;

“**Step up**” by disavowing violence and harmful masculinities and adopting positive behaviours and role models;

“**Step back**” by reflecting on their own privilege and showing empathy by listening to the concerns of women and girls in particular.

It is very important that men **engage in conversations about domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV) as allies and supporters**, as their participation and perspective can be an invaluable tool in effecting **positive cultural change** leading to a reduction in DSGBV prevalence. Men engaging in **healthy masculinity** can give positive contributions in any conversation, being **role models for good personal relationships**, and eventually making life better for themselves and their communities.

We need to acknowledge that conversations about DSGBV are sometimes difficult, as it can be a very sensitive topic with a chance of generating strong emotions. The willingness to engage in them, however, is a **show of courage and leadership** for everyone involved, be it bystanders, victims/survivors, or their allies.

Here are some things to remember that can make the experience more pleasant and successful for everyone involved



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An Ghníomhairacht um Fhoiréigean Baile,
Genéasach agus Inseanbhunaithe
The Domestic, Sexual and
Gender-Based Violence Agency

If you are a witness of DSGBV and need emotional support, talk to your GP to explore support options.

If in a crisis you can call Samaritans
116 123



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1

It can happen to anyone.

According to CSO statistics for 2022, 52% of women and 28% of men in Ireland have experienced sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. They are people we routinely encounter in our communities. We need to be mindful that this could be the case with the person in front of us at any time and be prepared to engage in conversations in a sensitive manner.

It is very important to keep an open mind and refrain from being judgmental, as chances are high, we don't have enough details about other people's experience to fully understand it or give advice. It is especially important to avoid engaging in victim blaming, as there is no justification for violence, ever. On the contrary, showing empathy and understanding can go a long way in making people who experienced DSGBV feel supported.

Empathy, not judgment.

2

3

Listen, it is not necessary to talk.

These conversations are not small talk, there is no need for back and forth, and we do not always know how to respond, or what to say, whenever someone discloses to us a difficult experience. It is perfectly fine if we don't, the important thing is that we listen, and try to understand. Repeating back what we just heard in our own words makes the other person feel heard. That can be another way of showing support and allyship.

Lack of information, understanding of the situation, or unconscious bias can lead us to say something inappropriate or triggering for the person we are talking to. Even with the best intentions, misunderstandings happen, it is normal. This is not the time to argue, no matter how confident we are in our own opinions, especially if the other person is getting emotional because of our words. We can agree to disagree and give the other person some space.

Sometimes we get an unexpected reaction.

4

5

Celebrate success, no matter how small.

At the end of a positive conversation, taking the time to thank the person we have been talking to for their time and willingness to engage, and acknowledging what was good and positive in the experience can build rapport, mutual trust, and make future conversations easier. Being vulnerable and honest with each other is a brave act, and that is enough reason to celebrate.



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