Organizing Men to Stop Men's Violence Against Women

*A Possible Five-Step Plan**

by Ben Atherton-Zeman: Maynard, MA USA. Please copy and distribute as you see fit.

1. ***Consciousness-Raising:*** **Organize an event –** get **names** and **contact information** of the men who attend by passing around a sign-up sheet. Note: this event doesn't have to be specifically aimed at men. For example, many men respond well to a survivor speaker.

2. ***Initial Action:*** **Ask** those men to do a **specific task**. Many men say they haven't spoken against violence against women because they feel like they haven't been asked, and they're not sure what to do or what is their place. Men tend to like feeling useful and liked to be asked for help, but it's easier if that help is specific. Instead of "Please join our movement," try "Please sign this Men's Pledge that we'll publish in the local newspaper" (see the Men's Resource Center in Amherst, MA for good examples – (www.mensresourcecenter.org). Or ask them publicly sign the **White Ribbon Campaign** (www.whiteribbon.com). Ask them hang up flyers from Men Can Stop Rape's **Men of Strength** Campaign (www.mencanstoprape.org). Where appropriate, ask them to participate in **Take Back the Night** marches (any Internet search will give examples – some marches are women-only and that should be respected). Where appropriate, ask them to participate in **community service** or **fundraising events** (walk-a-thons) for a local domestic violence program and/or rape crisis center. Or cooking food, etc. for such an event. Ask them to wear a **button** or putting a **bumper sticker** on their car (example at www.strongmendontbully.com) in **events** for **Sexual Assault Awareness Month** (April) and/or **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** (October)

3. ***Take a class:*** After the initial action, **ask** the men who agree to the specific task to **commit to a longer training** on issues of violence prevention. Many men won't, but some will. The training can be an ongoing advocate's training, a class for credit or simply several group meetings (ask for a specific time commitment). A good model for such a class is on the Family Violence Prevention Fund's website – www.endabuse.org, or at the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape's website, www.menagainstsexualviolence.org.

4. ***Mentoring:*** After the training, **identify** one or a few potential leaders in that group. Make a **relationship** with them – **mentor** them. Invite them to **conferences** where they can meet other leaders in the movement and network with them. Encourage them to not only take leadership **publicly**, but be accountable **privately** to their own sexism – warn them that in this movement, they may very well be challenged on their sexism and it will help if they are not defensive. Urge them to be **accountable to the women** in this movement who have done this work longer than they have. Have them sign up for the **Men Against Violence Yahoo Group** – www.yahoogroups.com and select "menagainstviolence." Have them form or join a group such as the National Organization for Men Against Sexism, Boston chapter (www.nomasboston.org).

5. ***Leadership:*** **Encourage** those men (or that man) to **organize an event**! and then the cycle will hopefully continue. This cycle can take place over a semester if you're in a college, over a year, or whatever works best. A good organizer's manual is available at the White Ribbon Campaign website – again, www.whiteribbon.com. If they like, they can form a group such as a chapter of the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (www.nomas.org), or a Men of Strength (MOST) group (www.mencanstoprape.org).

* With thanks to Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman's model of social identity development. Of course, all men are different, so this may not work for some groups of men. If you try this cycle and it doesn't work, please let me know – if you find that other techniques work better, or more ideas for #2, please let me know that, too. Ben Atherton-Zeman, benazeman@hotmail.com, 978-897-3619. Good luck! ☺

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