

# CALLING IT OUT!

## A guide to calling out gender inequality

Calling out gender bias and inequality is essential to ensure everyone feels Connected Protected and Respected every day. This document outlines some strategies from Respect Victoria that you can use to call out this behaviour from others.

### What is Gender Bias?

**Gender bias** is the tendency to favour one **gender** over another. It can be unconscious, or implicit, which occurs when someone unconsciously attributes certain attitudes to another person or group of people. We also call this **stereotyping**. It can also be explicit when someone knowingly acts or speaks in a way that shows a bias towards one gender over another or attributes certain attitudes to another person or group of people based on gender.

### What is Gender Equality and why is it important?

The Victorian Government (2019) says:

*Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Everyone is affected by gender inequality - women, men, trans and gender diverse people, children and families. It impacts people of all ages and backgrounds.*

*We need gender equality urgently. Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls. It's essential for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equality is a human right. Everyone benefits from gender equality.*

### Calling it out

Supporting everyone to feel Connected Protected and Respected means calling out gender bias, sexism and discrimination when we see it. If you don't feel safe or confident to call it out, make sure you always talk to an adult you trust such as a Coordinator, Teacher, Principal or member of the Wellbeing Team.

### Some tips from Respect Victoria (2020) on calling it out

The term **bystander** describes a person who is present or witnesses an event or incident but is not actively involved in it. An **UPSTANDER**, is an active bystander who takes action to support and stand up for others.

#### How to be an active bystander or upstander

Learning to recognise the signs when someone is experiencing sexism and discrimination and stepping in to help prevent the situation from escalating are important. Some simple steps to becoming an active bystander include:

- Tuning in (being aware of your surroundings – have you noticed someone doing or saying things that are aggressive or making someone uncomfortable?)
- Interpreting the problem (do I recognise someone needs help?)
- Feeling compelled to act (seeing yourself as being part of the solution to help – considering the difference that your actions could make by being an active bystander)
- Knowing what to do (consider what you would do and when you would do it)
- Intervening safely (taking action but being sure to keep yourself and those around you safe).

## Ways to call it out and show respect for women and girls:

What to do when you hear or see sexist, disrespectful or sexually harassing behaviour

1. Don't laugh at sexist jokes – gender stereotypes harm all of us.
2. Give a disapproving look to show a behaviour or statement is not okay. Shake your head or roll your eyes.
3. Leave a pointed and uncomfortable silence.
4. Make a light-hearted comment: "What century are you living in?"
5. Check in with the person affected: "I heard what he/she just said – are you okay?"
6. Privately let them know the behaviour is not okay: "The joke you made yesterday was not funny, and actually not okay."
7. Calmly disagree and state that the comment is wrong or unacceptable: "I know you probably didn't mean it, but I found what you said to be offensive."
8. Speak up and educate by explaining why you disagree: "Actually, evidence shows the vast majority of women do not make up false claims of sexual assault" (You could use the Key Facts from Respect Victoria).
9. Challenge the logic: "That's not my experience." or "What makes you think that?"
10. Stand up for the person affected: "Michelle was saying something, and you cut her off again."
11. Make eye contact with the person affected - let them know you're an ally.
12. Show your emotion: "It actually makes me sad/ uncomfortable when you say that."
13. Support others when they call it out: "I agree, that's not funny." You could also physically reposition yourself closer to the victim as a show of support.
14. Appeal to their better self: "Come on, you're better than that."
15. Report the behaviour to a Coordinator or Teacher or Student Leader.
16. Disrupt or distract the situation to redirect focus from the incident to something else.

## What should be called out?

In order to call out sexism and disrespect towards women, people must first be able to recognise it. Here are a few everyday examples of sexism, disrespect and harassment that should be 'called out':

- Using 'like a girl' as an insult: "Stop whingeing, you sound like a girl!"
- Sexist jokes: "I'd give her an 8 out of 10!"
- The stereotype that men and boys don't cry
- Comments that transgender women are "not real women"
- Sitting back while female friends/family clean the kitchen or do domestic work
- Stereotypes about skills: "You need a guy's brain for this"
- Belittling women and girls: "You don't need to go to university, you can marry a rich husband."
- Comments made about a person's suitability for a role based on their gender: "I think it's weird for a guy to be a child care worker" or "Women don't make good politicians"
- Leering or staring
- Sharing inappropriate images with friends
- When someone puts a female student or family member down
- Cat-calling / wolf-whistling
- Comments about women being "too emotional"
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes: "I know just what you need to release some stress!"



## References

Victorian Government. (2019). *Gender equality: what is it and why do we need it?*. <https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-what-it-and-why-do-we-need-it>

Respect Victoria. (2019). *How to be an Active Bystander*. <https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/campaigns/respect-each-other-call-it-out-covid-19>

Respect Victoria. (2020). *16 Days of Activism toolkit: Respect Women: Call It Out*. <https://mcusercontent.com/4d5ba0ca0ab63c0d872fb9a83/files/63406960-bbf3-4e7a-88bf-3b028eb7f19b/Toolkit.pdf>