



Raising **RESPECTFUL SONS**

TOOLBOX FOR DADS

Welcome to Raising Respectful Sons, the White Ribbon Toolbox for Dads. Having a respectful relationship and modelling it to your kids, is the long-term answer to violence towards women.

If you could be the kind of dad you wanna be, what would you do? Teaching respect means seeing people as equals, communicating effectively, explaining consent regarding any sexual activity and making sure individuals take responsibility for their actions.

We want respectful relationships, not violence towards women. If your son treats women with respect, and if your daughter treats men the same way,

and both expect others to treat them with respect, all your children will have safe, strong and happy relationships.

Here are some ideas to help you develop your child's respect for others.

There are some strategies to use with your sons, and others for daughters. Be assured that if you do some of these things, you are making a difference.



YES

to WALKING the talk

Think how much your children get to see and hear you in action. They're constantly learning from you, and your behaviour is the strongest influence on them so check that you're showing them how you expect them to act and talk. This is what your kids will soak up and how they'll treat siblings, friends, class mates and future partners.

Show respect to your partner as an equal.

Communicate respectfully, especially when in conflict or stressed; take responsibility for your actions; and check that others agree to shared activities.

Check out how you can be respectful.

Download the White Ribbon Toolbox: Tips on how to build respectful relationships available at whiteribbon.org.nz

Ensure you treat your kids respectfully.

Children, especially teenagers, are very aware if you have double standards, such as saying one thing and doing another, or having different expectations for sons and daughters.

Be consistent and credible.

You don't have to be perfect but do have to take responsibility for your actions and put things right. That's a great thing to demonstrate to your kids.

Have a respectful relationship.

Being respectful to the other parent, or your partner, is the best way to show your son how to treat women, and show your daughter what to expect from men.

Keep an eye out for what they learn from peers.

If need be, use this to discuss what showing others respect looks like.

Build up your sons' and daughters' self-esteem.

Reinforce that they are all worthy of other's respect. This will reduce their risk of being victims of other's violence.

Define being attractive as how they treat others.

Rather than for their physical beauty or prowess.

Show your support for school and community initiatives.

Your children will learn that respect needs to be actively promoted and others don't have the same opportunities for respectful experiences.



YES

to PLAYING a part

The best thing you can do is be actively involved in raising your kids. Their emotional development is much stronger when you offer security, support and closeness, and are nurturing, warm and sensitive. This is especially true for fathers.

Get actively involved in raising them.

They'll be more confident and have richer connections with peers. They'll be less aggressive, more supportive, have positive relationships with friends and siblings, greater empathy and stronger morals and values.

Being actively involved is better for you too.

You'll have better mental health with greater meaning, reduced stress and more positive emotions.

Get involved as early as possible.

Stay active throughout their lives, adjusting for their different needs at different stages of their development.

If you separate, do this as respectfully as possible.

This will minimise the impact on your kids. Stay involved with your kids as much as you can during these times.

Show dad and mum sharing roles.

Your children will then be more likely to seek out equitable relationships for themselves. Sons will respect their partners as equals and daughters will seek partners who treat them as an equal.

Take care of yourself.

Seek medical help early when you need it, and keep healthy so you can enjoy your kids, and their kids, for as long as possible.



YES

to KNOWING where they're at

UNDER

5

Start developing respectful behaviour early and it will make it much easier later on. But as your child grows, adjust to their stage of development. Here are some useful strategies to develop respectful behaviour at different stages. Everyone develops at their own rate, so tailor these strategies to your child.

Love them unconditionally.

Always be clear that your love is unconditional.

Teach them words for emotions.

Coach them, especially sons, to use these to express their feelings.

Show them how to express.

Teach them to express their anger, fear or hurt feelings, without taking it out on others.

Teach them how to solve problems.

Particularly in social situations. Show them that compromising and sharing is healthy.

Help them be their own person.

Encourage them to develop their own personality.

Talk about what respect looks and feels like.

Ask them how it feels when they're treated respectfully, or not.

Explain equality.

That while males and females are different and sometimes do different things, both have equal value. Demonstrate this around your home and in the way you treat your sons and daughters.

Public vs private.

Help them understand there's a difference between public and private behaviours, and that some, such as touching their genitals, is private.

Continually reinforce.

Keep reinforcing any behaviour that shows respect for others.

Teach them that they can say no.

They can say no to unwanted touching and have a right to be respected. Don't force them to hug or kiss any one, and build their acceptance when others say no.

Encourage them to ask questions.

Let them ask about sexuality and relationships, and respond honestly and in a way that's appropriate to their development.

Encourage their empathy for others.

Say things like "that must feel good" or "I wouldn't like that if it happened to me".

Use real-life situations.

Even movie or TV plots can help have many short discussions about what is respectful behaviour.



YES

to KNOWING where they're at

FROM

5-10

As your children grow up remember that everyone develops at their own rate, so tailor these strategies to your child.

Them vs their behaviour.

Be clear that you always love them, even though you might not always like their behaviour.

Coach them to express.

Help them manage their emotions in healthy ways. For sons, this means expressing all feelings, including fear and sadness, and for daughters, it includes expressing anger.

Build their assertiveness.

Guide their communication skills and confidence to say what they want, without putting others down or being aggressive.

Teach them how to negotiate.

Show them how to share and accept compromise. Emphasise the value of everyone 'winning'.

Talk about respect as healthy behaviour.

Ask them to define what respect means and how they know if they're acting respectfully or not. Talk about what respect means in electronic communication.

Demonstrate equality.

Show that males and females are equally valuable.

Reinforce rights to decisions.

Show that both males and females can do what they want, regardless of traditional gender roles. Demonstrate this flexibility yourself, along with tolerance for people who are different.

Reinforce rights to respect.

Show that they have a right to be respected when they say no to any unwanted touching. Be clear it is their choice about who they hug or kiss.

Respond honestly.

Answer truthfully to their questions about sexuality and relationships and give accurate information.

Allow for choices.

Where possible, give them choices that have safe consequences and respect their decisions.



Coach them in problem-solving.

Help them understand the causes of situations, and how to develop possible resolutions, and how to weigh up consequences.

Continually reinforce.

Keep reinforcing any behaviour that shows respect for others.

Make space for questions.

Ensure there is space for them to ask questions and have many short conversations. Include the emotions and ethics of relationships along with the biology.

Discuss respectful sexual relationships.

Encourage your child to ask questions and find out the answer together.

Encourage values.

While being clear about what your values are and what you expect from them, support them to develop their own values by asking "what do you think should happen?" or "if you could make it better what would you do?".

Develop your daughter's confidence.

Help her communicate her wishes by saying, "Tell me what you want to happen" or "How could you explain what you want to others?".

Develop your son's empathy.

Ask things like "How would you feel if that happened to you" or "How do you think that feels when you treat them like that?".

Discuss reality.

Expect that at some time your child will see pornography, possibly by mistake or because they're curious. Avoid overreacting and take the opportunity to emphasise that porn is unrealistic, and sometimes violent.

Encourage them to be themselves.

Help give them ways to manage peer pressure.



YES

to KNOWING where they're at

FROM

10-15

Try to talk about respect as a behaviour. Describe the things they can do to show respect by breaking it down. Link it with how good it makes them feel when respected, and how they can give this same benefit to others.

Address the behaviour, not the person.

Continually reinforce that you love them and are available to them, even though you might find some of their behaviour challenging.

Show understanding.

Help your teenage kids understand that adolescence is a time of intense, constantly changing emotions and give them words and strategies to express themselves.

Coach them to communicate.

Show them how to use assertive communication to manage new social situations and relationships.

Talk about respectful electronic communication.

Suggest they consider the 'pros' and 'cons' of different behaviour.

Draw on their strengths.

Remind them to use their social skills and strengths to initiate relationships and how to talk and flirt during a date. Be clear it is about getting a personal, comfortable connection with the other person, rather than having sex.

Give them clear examples.

Talk about what is acceptable dating behaviour and develop their skills and confidence to manage risky situations.

Reinforce equality.

Explain that males and females are equally valuable and demonstrate this in your expectations of sons and daughters.

Expect mistakes and help learn from these.

Support them to apply their problem-solving skills to understand new social dynamics and use their negotiation skills to manage new social situations.

Foster their interests.

Help them explore what makes people different and gain an appreciation of others' strengths.



Make opportunities to talk.

Have frequent, honest and realistic discussions of sexuality and relationships. These can be in response to TV or movie plots, so it isn't too personal.

Talk about respect.

Help them to understand what's acceptable in new relationships, such as dating. Ask them how their friends show respect and how they want to be treated by a partner.

Support them to be themselves.

Encourage them to explore who they want to be, while setting boundaries that give them some responsibility. Talk about managing peer pressure.

Build values.

Be clear about how you expect them to behave while encouraging them to develop their own values and demonstrate these in their actions.

Listen more than lecture.

Avoid judging them. Ask some questions but avoid 'grilling' them. Best to have many short conversations. Challenge them to see things from the point of view of others to build empathy.

Discuss risky situations.

Help develop their safe choices together. Reinforce them when this works out, support them to live with consequences, as well as learning from experience.

Intervene if they are in harmful relationships.

This includes with peer groups that act disrespectfully. Emphasise that you're concerned for them and they deserve better; challenge them to live by their own values.

Continually reinforce.

Keep reinforcing any behaviour that shows respect and shows that they understand how it is for others.

Teach being a good friend.

Require them to look out for the safety of friends.

Talk alcohol and drugs.

Explicitly discuss the effects of alcohol and drug use on decision-making, including about sexual relationships, and develop safety strategies.

Expect that your teenager will see pornography.

Discuss how the behaviour displayed is unrealistic and not like real dating relationships. Highlight how pornography often shows non-consensual sex and degrades women.

Emphasise choice.

Always present sexual relationships as their choice and that they don't need to be forced to do anything, even by peer pressure. Suggest ways they can manage situations.

Develop critiquing.

Build your teenager's ability to critically review all media, including porn, by asking "What's actually happening? What's the power relationships here?" and "How would you feel if this happened to you or someone who care for?".



YES

to KNOWING where they're at

FROM

15-18

Raising respectful sons never stops. As they become teenagers, talk about respect and sex in an open way, and they will too.

Address their behaviour, while respecting them.

Continually reinforce your love and support for them, even though they might make decisions you don't agree with.

Reinforce when your teenager takes responsibility.

Reinforce when they show good decision-making, personal awareness, and empathy for others.

Demonstrate respect by listening to them.

Ask them to also listen to your views.

Take turns talking.

Keep having frequent, honest and realistic discussions about real-life dating, sexuality and relationship issues.

Ask them what respect means for electronic communication.

Remind them they are worthy of respect and that they know how to treat others. If necessary, suggest that they consider how different behaviour fits with their values or personal goals.

Listen.

Ask their opinion and listen to and respect their views. If need be, remind them of the skills they can use.

Help if they are in harmful relationships.

If they have friends who act disrespectfully, be direct about what you see and support them to decide for themselves. Reinforce that you are concerned and that they're worthy of respect.

Be explicit about consent.

Explain that any sexual behaviour is to be consensual – everyone has to agree to everything that is happening, and needs to be able to give their consent (so not too drunk or intimidated). Discuss how they can ask partners, or say no themselves.



Reinforce when they communicate clearly.

Reinforce when they effectively negotiate respectful solutions to relationship issues.

Continue to discuss pornography.

Compare the relationships it shows with what your child wants in their relationships.

Give them realistic choices to make.

Reinforce effective decision-making and learning from past decisions. Offer support when there are negative consequences.

Support them to be themselves.

Explain what you expect of them and why, while giving them room to live by their own values. Keep talking about how they manage peer pressure.

Continue to discuss alcohol and drug.

Talk about their impacts on sexual violence and their safety strategies.

Continue to encourage them to be a good friend.

Help them ensure their friends are safe.

Continually reinforce their behaviour.

Reinforce when they show respect for others, especially those who are different.



YES

to HAVING those talks

You are the biggest influence on your child developing respectful behaviour. They learn by observing your actions and listening to what you say.

Children and teenagers want to learn.

If you don't talk about respect they'll pick up ideas from others their age and from the media, including pornography.

They crave more information.

Children and teenagers typically want more sex education than they are given. This includes how to have respectful relationships, so they'll appreciate learning from you.

Respect is passed on.

Increasing respectful behaviour in the next generation will reduce violence towards women. It will give your sons and daughters happier, healthier and more peaceful lives. They will be more likely to raise your grandchildren to be respectful, giving a better future for everyone. You can make a difference right now.

Learning from others is not ideal.

If they learn from others, ideas are more likely to be about disrespecting others. To counter them you need to deliberately develop their respectful behaviour.

This resource was developed from information in:

- State of American Fathers, 2016, From www.men-care.org/soaf
- Open and Honest: A Parent's guide to talking with your child about sex and sexuality, New Zealand Family Planning, from <http://www.familyplanning.org.nz/search?term=open%20and%20honest>
- A parent's handbook: How to talk to your children about developing healthy relationships from www.loveisnotabuse.com
- An overview of adolescent sexual development, National Sexual Violence Resource Center, from <http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/youth-healthy-adolescent-sexual-development-resources>
- 33 Tips for Communicating with Your Teen, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, from <http://www.wcsap.org/33-tips-communicating-your-teen-0>
- A parent's guide to teen dating violence 10 questions to start the conversation, from www.loveisnotabuse.com

