

# “Men’s Strength Is **Not** For Hurting Others”

## Men Against Sexual Abuse Posters

<p><b>SHOW YOUR STRENGTH</b> BY TAKING PART IN STOPPING SEXUAL ABUSE FROM NOW ONWARDS</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when she says "NO", I AGREE with her.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when I want to have sex and she doesn't, WE DON'T HAVE SEX.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when I want to have sex and she doesn't, I DON'T FORCE HER.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when I am drunk, I DEFINITELY BACK OFF.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>
<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when she changes her mind and decides not to have sex, I AGREE WITH HER.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when I'm not sure what she wants, I ASK HER.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So I don't take advantage of her when SHE'S DRUNK.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when I pay for dinner, I DON'T EXPECT ANY RETURN FROM HER.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p>  <p><b>So REAL MEN DO NOT SEXUALLY ABUSE WOMEN</b></p> <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>
<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when she isn't ready, I DON'T PUSH IT.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when I want to have sex with her, I ask her; if she REFUSES, I AGREE.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So when I want to have sex and he doesn't, I AGREE WITH HIM.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So REAL MEN DO NOT COMMIT GANG RAPE.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>	<p><b>MEN'S STRENGTH IS NOT FOR HURTING OTHERS</b></p> <p>So BE BRAVE TO SAY "NO!" to gang rape.</p>  <p><b>MEN DEFINITELY CAN STOP SEXUAL ABUSE</b></p>

**“Men’s Strength Is Not  
For Hurting Others”- Men  
Against Sexual Abuse Posters**



## INTRODUCTION

### **What are the "Men Against Sexual Abuse" posters?**

These posters are designed for working with groups of young people on issues to do with sexual relationships and sexual violence. The posters display strong messages about young men seeking agreement before having sex with their partners and not forcing sex on partners who do not freely agree to it.

### **The Success of "Men Against Rape" posters in the USA**

In February 2001 an American organisation 'Men Can Stop Rape' (MCSR) launched the original My Strength Is Not for Hurting poster advertising campaign, which was intended to prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence amongst youth. The primary target audience was young men students in grades 9 to 12 in public high schools in Washington, DC. Secondary target audiences were young women students and school teachers. The main goals were:

- To educate young men about their role as allies with women in preventing sexual violence between boy and girlfriends.
- To promote positive, nonviolent models of men's strength.
- To empower youth to take action to end sexual violence, promote healthy relationships based on equality and respect, and create safer school communities.

The main message, which was that men can be strong without being violent, was communicated to young men and women through advertisements positioned on buses and in bus shelters, posters placed in high schools, magazines distributed in classrooms, and in-school workshops conducted by MCSR staff.

Findings from baseline and follow-up surveys of the students showed that the posters were successful in changing young people's thinking about sexual violence:

- More than **80%** of students surveyed found the poster media campaign important and relevant to their lives.
- **82%** of students reported that the media campaign gave them new skills to have good sexual relationships.
- **83%** of students stated that the media campaign made them more confident that they could play a role in preventing sexual violence.

The posters and activities connected to them have now been used in twenty different countries.

### **Developing “Men Against Sexual Abuse” posters in Cambodia**

Young men and women students involved with a local NGO ‘People’s Health Development Association’ worked with GTZ PWR to create slogans for posters in Khmer. The same young people acted for the photo shoot. New posters were put together from the photos and slogans and piloted with two groups of school children aged 15-18 in two provinces.

### **Why use the “Men Against Sexual Abuse” posters?**

Young people who took part in Toolkit focus group discussions<sup>1</sup> said that they were concerned about sexual violence being committed against girls and women. When we asked how we could take action to prevent sexual violence – most respondents mentioned lots of things girls should do to avoid risk. There were hardly any suggestions for ways that boys or men could take action to reduce or prevent sexual violence.

When we asked what boys and young men should or could do to take action against sexual violence most people could not think of what to suggest. One young man did however say: “Men have got to change; we have got to take responsibility!”

### **We agree with him. Important points are:**

- Most sexual offences are committed by men and boys against girls and women. Women can take all the precautions they like but unless men and boys take action and responsibility to change their behaviour, very little will change.
- We should challenge the general acceptance that women’s and girls’ lives should be limited and controlled by this threat of sexual violence and that they should therefore be the ones responsible for taking action against sexual violence by trying to avoid men’s violence.
- Many men and boys grow up thinking that they must live up to expectations of being a ‘real man’ – being tough and strong and being able to fight are often highly valued qualities. Many men believe they have the right in relationships with women to take what they want - including sex - without considering the opinions or rights of their partner. Research into ‘gang rape’ in Cambodia showed that for many men, they saw this activity as a common event, important for bonding with their friends. Gang rape is an opportunity to show other men how masculine, tough and strong they can be.
- Many men are afraid they will be teased and looked down on if they show a gentler or more compassionate or considerate side in their relationships with women.

<sup>1</sup> In 2008 GTZ PWR and the MoWA carried out focus group discussions with young people across Cambodia to find out what issues connected to violence concerned them. The findings from this research became the foundation of this Toolkit. For more information see the Toolkit Introduction page 7.

- Many wives and husbands, girl- and boy-friends do not talk together about their sexual relationships. Both sides feel shy to talk and men can easily make wrong assumptions about how women feel. Traditionally, women are expected to not know anything about sex and to not express themselves sexually. These traditional attitudes can make it hard for young men and women to communicate together and ensure that sex is always agreed by both sides and is safe for both partners.

### What do the posters tell us?

- **Men can be strong without being violent.** Men want to be strong. They want their men-friends to believe they are strong. They want women to see them as strong. The posters provide an alternative, positive idea of what a real man's 'strength' can be. This kind of strength is not violence and it is not forcing someone else to give the man what he wants.
- **Men can take responsibility for their sexual behaviour and its consequences. Men can resist peer group pressure. Men can support each other to stand up honourably against sexual violence.**
- **Sex is only acceptable if the woman and man together freely agree to do it.**

In the posters the men only have sex when their partner wants sex as well. They do not force or cajole their partners for sex. They do not take advantage of situations such as their own or their girlfriend's drunkenness. They pay attention to and notice their girlfriend's feelings and reactions. They ask her if they are not sure what she wants.

- **A real man's strength is his honour.** The real men's strength of the posters is strength in having an honourable character and a capacity to have loving relationships and show respect to other human beings. These 'real men' are non-violent, empathic, interested in caring longer-term relationships and able to communicate – listen and talk – with their partners. The men treat the women as equal partners who they care for, not as bodies to be used sexually whenever possible.

### The methods of the posters

- The original US posters used an 'audience-centered' approach to advertising.
- The posters show modern urban young men and women. Young people who see the posters will think the young people in the posters are 'like me'
- 'Audience-centered' advertisements sell a product by using something already liked or desired by the target audience to persuade the audience to buy the product. In these posters the desirable quality of men's 'strength' is used to persuade the audience to 'buy' (agree to) non-violent sexual behaviour.
- The posters do not address the young men who look at them as "you". Instead they talk about "I" and "we." The posters are not like an older person 'talking down' to younger people and telling them how they should

behave. Instead the posters invite the young men looking at the poster to join in with the young men in the poster and behave like them. The posters suggest that the young men reading the poster could make a personal choice like the men in the posters who tell us what decisions they make about sex with their girlfriends. Research in Cambodia<sup>2</sup> shows that peer pressure strongly affects young men's sexual behaviour and the decisions young men take. Much sexual violence comes from peer pressure. These posters reverse typical peer pressure to use it to persuade young men *not* to use sexual violence.

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<sup>2</sup> For example i) 'As If they Were Watching My Body' World Vision. Graham Fordham. 2006 and ii) 'Paupers and Princes: Youth attitudes towards gangs, violence, rape, drugs and theft. GAD. 2003

## **Session 1: "Men's Strength Is Not For Hurting Others"**

### **What is it?**

This session introduces participants to posters representing young men who are proud to use their power as boys and men to stop sexual violence against girls and women. Participants then use role-plays to find ways to turn a situation of sexual abuse into a positive situation.

### **Why use it?**

- To explore what consensual sexual relationships are like and how men would behave in a consensual relationship (as opposed to a coercive relationship)
- To draw the attention of both young men and young women to men's responsibility for challenging the general social acceptance of the sexual abuse of women.
- To consider a positive idea of men's 'strength' as an honourable alternative to violence and force.
- To practice finding ways to support young men who want to resist peer pressure to join in with or accept other men's use of sexual violence against women.

### **Resources needed**

- Posters. The posters can be printed to a large size from the disc attached to the Toolkit. Alternatively handout A5 size cards copied from the prints included in the Toolkit.
- Resource sheet 1 for facilitators 'Poster messages and meanings'. You could also have copies to hand out to participants at the end of the session.

### **Time**

90-120 minutes

### **Facilitators' notes**

- Use these poster sessions after participants have attended sessions from –
  - Chapter one on increasing self awareness, positive relationships and open communication with others
  - Chapter two on gender inequality
  - Chapter four on the difference between consensual sex and abusive sex.
- Two of the posters (numbers 15 and 16) are about gang rape. They could be connected to session 15 on gang rape in the Toolkit chapter 4.
- Clarify in your own mind what the main messages of the Posters are and what issues those messages raise.
  - It can be helpful to show the posters to colleagues and friends to start a discussion about their meaning and purpose and to explore different people's reactions to them before you facilitate the session. This 'practice'

Session 1:  
“Men’s Strength Is Not For Hurting Others”

will deepen your understanding of the posters and help prepare you for different kinds of ideas and reactions from participants.

- Read the introduction to this ‘ “Men’s strength is not for hurting others”- Men’s Against Sexual Abuse Posters’ tool (above).
- Read the Resource sheet for facilitators on the poster messages and meanings.
- If you use the two posters on gang rape (numbers 15 and 16?) then read the Toolkit Chapter 4 Session 15 on gang rape to get some more ideas about this very serious form of sexual abuse. Research<sup>3</sup> has shown that many young men think there is nothing wrong with many men raping one girl especially if she is a sex worker. Session 15 will help you with these issues.
- Facilitating the role-play
  - If you are not used to facilitating role-plays then you must practice this first before trying it with your participants.
  - Read the section about role-plays in the Toolkit Introduction, section 6.3, page 15

### How to use it

1. Stick a set of the posters on the wall.
  - Use at least four different posters with different kinds of messages.
  - Make sure the posters are not too crowded together – give people space to look at each one separately.
2. Ask participants to spend 15 minutes looking at the posters.
  - They should consider what their own personal reactions to each poster are: what is the poster about, what do they think about that poster’s message and how does it relate to real life.
  - OR
  - Split participants into pairs and hand out (or let each pair choose) several different cards with different kinds of messages to look at and discuss the same issues as are mentioned above.
3. Invite participants back to the big group.
  - Ask what people understand from the posters. Invite everyone to share their ideas on what the posters are about, how they feel about that message and how it relates to real life.
  - Help participants clarify and go deeper by asking prompt questions. Facilitators should have a clear idea already about the main points of the messages from their own earlier preparation for this session. Check the main issues are explored and prompt participants if necessary.
  - Note the main ideas on flipchart as the discussion continues

<sup>3</sup> Paupers and Princelings: Youth attitudes towards gangs, violence, rape, drugs and theft. GAD 2003

4. Summarise the main ideas. These should include:
  - The idea that men's strength does not have to be the kind of strength gained through physical violence or force. This kind of strength is often just cruelty.
  - The idea that men pressurise each other in order to prove they are strong to each other. One way to resist this social pressure is to have a different idea of what is strong and hang out with friends who share that idea.
  - The other kind of strength men can be proud of is connected to behaving honourably, recognising that women are equal in value to themselves and having grown up relationships in which you pay attention to how your girlfriend feels and talk with each other about your sexual relationship.
  - Sex is only acceptable if both partners freely agree.
  - Also men and women need to be sure that sex is safe in terms of their health (STIs and HIV); not getting pregnant, and their feelings – how committed is each to the other for the future, how would having sex before marriage affect the woman's reputation and how would she cope with this). These ideas are not stated by the posters. However it might be important to ask participants to think about how to assess if it's okay to have sex or not.
  
5. Ask the group to think of some real life situations when a young man is pressurising a young woman or young men are pressurising young women.
  - Maybe some participants have already mentioned real life experiences that relate to the posters in step 3 so you could use that experience for the following exercise.
  - Some other examples of real life situations are i) some boys from one class had watched pornography and then teased girls in their class about their bodies and sex (sexual harassment); ii) a young man is annoyed when his girlfriend changes her mind about having sex with him when they have the opportunity to be alone together when his family all go to their relatives for the day leaving him alone in the house. He will try to pressurise her to have sex with him.
  
6. Ask for some participants to act out the real life situation as a role-play.
  - There must be a girl and a boy. Have some other people who can act as the boy's friends and as the girl's friends too.
  - Help the actors imagine being the person they are acting by asking them the names of the character they are acting, to describe the situation they are in and how they feel in a few words.
  - Remind people that this is acting and not real life. What they do as actors is not what they do as real people.
  - Ask the pairs and friends to act for a few minutes until they are in the middle of scene where the boy is pressurising the girl (or the boys are pressurising the girls).

Session 1:  
"Men's Strength Is Not For Hurting Others"

- Ask the actors to freeze. They should keep their body gestures and facial expressions still like a statue (however if the discussion goes on a long time they can relax out of their pose for a minute occasionally if it is uncomfortable and then return to it).
- Whilst they are frozen
  - Ask the girl what she feels and what she wants. Explain she must answer as if she is still the girl being pressurised not her real self.
  - Ask the boy what he is doing and why and what he feels. He must answer as if he is still the boy in the role-play not his real self.
  - Ask the girl's friends what they think and ask the boy's friends what they think.
  - Ask what a 'real man' from the posters would do in this situation.
  - Ask the girl what she would like instead of this pressurising from her boyfriend.
  - Ask what the boy would need in order for him to stop pressurising the girl and to act like the 'real men' in the posters? Would he need to know more about how the girl feels? Would he need support from his friends? What kind of support? Would he need them to encourage him and show disapproval of action which abuses a girl, or...? Would he need some ideas from the audience or the girl about what to do and say with the girl instead of pressurising her?
  - Ask the girl and her friends how they would feel if the boy and his friends changed their behaviour.
- Ask the group to continue the role-play with the boy changing his behaviour, no longer pressurising. You can 'freeze' the role play again and ask questions again so that the actors find ways that are satisfying and realistic to resolve the situation positively.
- At the end of the role-play help the actors return to normal by throwing off their roles and reminding them of their real names and identities.

### Meanings Behind The Messages

#### What do the posters tell us?

- Men can be strong without being violent.
- Men can take responsibility for their sexual behaviour and its consequences – they can behave honourably.
- Sex is only acceptable if the woman and man together freely agree to it. Sex that happens as a result of forcing or pressurising is illegal. It exploits and abuses the victim.
- Real men's strength is their honour.

#### Poster 1

##### ***Show your strength by taking part in stopping sexual abuse from now onwards.***

This poster calls on men to prove their strength by daring to stop sexual abuse. Real men show their strength by daring to challenge the sexual abuse of women. The poster aims to motivate men to change society by taking action by changing their own behaviour and supporting other men to change their behaviour. It motivates men to take that action immediately.

#### Poster 2

##### ***So when she says 'No', I agree with her.***

Everyone – women and men, wives and husbands, sex workers and clients, girl- and boy-friends - have a right to choose whether to have sex or not. Real men don't dominate their partner's decision on either having sex or not. Real men use their strength to respect women's decisions.

#### Poster 3

##### ***So when I want to have sex and she doesn't, we don't have sex.***

Having sex is done with consent from both sides - no one can make the decision for the other. Real men only have sex with a truly willing partner.

#### Poster 4

##### ***So when I want to have sex and she doesn't, I don't force her.***

Having sex with someone is about choice – the woman's as well as the man's. Real men have sex with partners who want to have sex – they never use force. Being a 'real man' means being able to manage my own desire so that I never hurt or exploit another human being to get sexual satisfaction.

#### Poster 5

##### ***So when I am drunk, I definitely back off.***

Real men do not use being drunk as an excuse for not being in control of themselves and so forcing their partner to have sex. Drinking alcohol is okay but abusing someone because you are drunk is not. Real men have fun but do not lose control of their minds and bodies.

# Resource Sheet

Men Against Sexual Abuse  
Posters

## Poster 6

***So when she changes her mind and decides not to have sex, I agree with her.***

Real men know that people can change their minds. Your girlfriend might agree to have sex and then later on decide she doesn't want. Real men know the choice is hers and her body belongs to her. Real men like to have sex with a partner who wants to have sex too. Real men show respect to their partner's feelings and decisions.

## Poster 7

***So when I'm not sure what she wants, I ask her.***

Sometimes we are not sure what our partner wants. We may be confused by her behaviour. Sometimes it looks as if she wants sex, but in fact she just wants to be close. Real men dare to talk about sex with their partners about how they feel and what they want. Real men want to know what their partner wants and don't want to make wrong assumptions. Real men ask their partner what she wants.

## Poster 8

***So I don't take advantage of her when she's is drunk.***

Being drunk doesn't mean that your partner agrees to have sex with you. If someone is very drunk then they are easy to persuade and force. They might even be unconscious. Not being able to say "No" to sex is not the same as saying 'Yes'. Real men do not exploit this opportunity to have sex. Real men want to have sex with freely willing partners.

## Poster 9

***So when I pay for dinner, I don't expect any return from her.***

Real men know that paying for going out or buying their girlfriend a gift is not an indirect way of buying sex. When women accept gifts from their boyfriends they are not agreeing a contract that she must provide sex in return for the money spent on her. Having sex or not is a matter of choice for the woman. She has not given up her freedom of choice by accepting a man's gift. Real men find out what their partner really wants and how she feels and only have sex when they both want. Real men pay to go out and buy gifts to have fun together and to show their love.

## Poster 10

***So real men do not sexually abuse women.***

Real men never use women as a sexual tool or treat women as an object to gain sexual satisfaction regardless of the woman's needs, feelings and thoughts. Real men don't think that the more women they conquer against the women's will the more powerful and stronger they are as men. Real men want sexual partners who enjoy their company, agree to sex and choose freely to be with them.

## Resource Sheet

Men Against Sexual Abuse

Posters

### Poster 11

#### ***So when she isn't ready, I don't push it.***

Real men know that good sex is about understanding each other in order to have an equal sexual relationship. This couple only has sex when the woman is ready and happy to have sex. Real men don't push their partners to have sex just because he wants to have sex when she does not.

### Poster 12

#### ***So when I want to have sex with her, I ask her; if she refuses, I agree.***

Real men know it's good for young women and men to communicate with one another about their sexual relationship. It's good not to guess or assume what your partner wants is what you want. Girlfriends and wives are separate human beings with their own thoughts and feelings. Real men find out what those thoughts and feelings are by communicating. They pay attention to her body language and listen to what she says and ask her what she thinks and feels and wants. Real men talk about their own needs, thoughts and feelings clearly too.

### Poster 13

#### ***So when I want to have sex and he doesn't, I agree with him.***

Some men prefer to have sexual relationships with other men. Real men never use their strength to hurt others. A real man always looks for consent from his partner whether the partner is a man or a woman. No one likes to be forced to have sex – whether you are a man or a woman.

### Poster 14

#### ***So real men do not commit gang rape.***

Real men know that gang rape is abusive and harmful. They know that forcing alone sex worker to have sex with many men does not prove their strength and masculinity. Sex workers have the right – like all human beings – to decide who they have sex with. Real men know they cannot take what is not freely given and then disguise the cruelty with a payment and pretend gang rape is acceptable. Real men know that sex workers are human beings with rights and feelings. Real men will not be pressurised by other men's expectations if those expectations mean hurting someone else.

### Poster 15

#### ***So be brave to say 'No!' to gang rape.***

Some men can feel pressurised by friends to join in with gang rape. This message is used to inspire and motivate men in such a situation to learn to say "No!" to this pressure. Like-minded men who dare to refuse to exploit and hurt sex workers can support each other. Real men can be strong by daring to stand up together for what is right.