

# RAISING ETHICAL SONS

## HINTS & TIPS

These are hints and tips to help you navigate the harder parts of having open and honest conversations with your son about respectful relationships.



Working to end sexual assault and domestic violence



**Talking to your son about respect towards women will not always be easy, but by starting the conversation you can leave a lasting impression.**

Giving your son the chance to talk to you about these issues will make it easier for him to navigate gender stereotypes and respectful relationships.

**Try not to talk at your son**, which may make your son feel preached at or attacked. By having a two-way and interactive conversation, this will allow your son to explore the ideas you are talking about in a way that is safe and non-threatening.

**Don't encourage your son to act one way, but then act another way yourself.** You need to be an example and show him what respectful relationships look like, especially with your partner and other women.

**Don't get angry or aggressive, even if your son has said or admitted to doing something you know is wrong.** Stay calm. Make sure he knows that even if what he has done is wrong, you still love him and you still believe he can do better.

You want him to be empathetic and respectful to others, so you need to show your son what this looks like in your relationship with him.

**Don't have just one conversation about respectful relationships with your son.** Talking about these issues regularly is more effective.

**Don't talk about respectful relationships only after your son has said or done something you are concerned about.** You should use these conversations to prevent violence, not just respond to it.

**Be aware of your own behaviour and biases.** How do you support gender equality, or recognise and stand against unhelpful male stereotypes?

If you feel worried that your son will see any mistakes you make as hypocritical, don't worry. This is totally normal and many fathers feel this way.

You do not need to be perfect or an expert. The example you provide for your son – by taking violence against women and gender equality seriously, and by talking to him about respectful relationships openly – is a great step towards setting a positive example for your son to follow.

You can learn more about gender inequality in our '**Understanding Gender Stereotypes**' factsheet.

**Make conversations about respectful relationships and gender equality a normal, everyday thing with your son.** This is how you can have a long-term impact on your son's idea of what it means to be a man and have positive relationships with others.

## SOURCES

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