



16 ways to ‘call it out’

Visit: www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/16-days-of-activism

You can respond to sexism, harassment, and disrespect towards women in different ways. It will depend on the situation and how confident you feel. The main ways are to:

- > **Diffuse** Make light-hearted comments or give disapproving looks
- > **Check in** See if the person on the receiving end is okay
- > **Call it out** Say that the statement or behaviour is offensive and explain why it is harmful

Suggestions

1. Don't laugh at sexist jokes.
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 just said – are you okay?"
6. Privately let them know the behaviour is not okay: "The joke you made in yesterday's meeting 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".
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."
14. Appeal to their better self: "Come on, you're better than that."
15. Report the behaviour to management, or via incident reporting systems if available.
16. Disrupt or distract the situation to redirect focus from the incident to something else.

Here are a few everyday examples of sexism, disrespect, and harassment that you can 'call out':

- Using 'like a girl' as an insult: "Stop whingeing, you sound like a girl!"
- Sexist jokes at the pub: "I wouldn't kick her out of bed"
- The stereotype that men and boys don't cry
- Comments that transgender women are "not real women"
- Sitting back while female colleagues clean the work kitchen or get the coffees
- Stereotypes about skills: "I need a bloke's brain for this"
- Belittling women: "Given what your husband does, do you really need to work?"
- 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 childcare worker"
- Leering or staring
- Sharing inappropriate images with co-workers
- Fathers being congratulated for doing basic parenting tasks: "Great job babysitting the kids!"
- Sexism and racism disguised as a compliment: "She's pretty... I guess, for a [insert nationality] girl"
- When your mate puts his partner down
- Catcalling / wolf-whistling
- Comments about women being "too emotional"
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes: "I know just what you need to release some stress!"

SAFE+EQUAL

Information from Respect Women: 'Call It Out' 16 Days toolkit produced by Safe and Equal, Victoria 2022.

<https://safeandequal.org.au/16-days-of-activism/>

See VicHealth's <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/bystander> for more information about bystander action.

Other enquiries please contact: Community Engagement and Development Department, Whitehorse City Council.

CDEnquiries@whitehorse.vic.gov.au