



WHITEHORSE

Respect Starts Here Discussion Guide



In 2025, Respect Victoria and Safe and Equal are working together to support local community engagement with the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Whitehorse City Council has been funded under Respect Victoria's 16 Days of Activism grassroots initiative.



SAFE + EQUAL

Standing strong
against family
violence



‘Respect starts here’ discussion guide: A companion resource to the video campaign

Introduction

This discussion guide accompanies the video *Respect Starts Here*, developed by Whitehorse City Council in partnership with local organisations. The guide is designed to support meaningful conversations about respect, equality, and preventing gender-based violence in our community.

The guide can be used at any time of the year, including but not limited to, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign (25 November – 10 December).

About the 16 Days of Activism Campaign

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign calling for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and all forms of gender-based violence.

The campaign highlights that:

- Everyone deserves to be safe, equal and respected.
- Not all disrespect leads to violence, but all violence against women begins with disrespect.
- Each of us has a role to play in promoting respect – wherever we live, learn, work and play.

This discussion guide draws on the themes of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, while also being suitable for broader community engagement throughout the year.

About the Video: “Respect Starts Here”

Respect Starts Here features local voices sharing what respect means to them – at home, at work, and in the community. Through the reflections of three men from diverse backgrounds, alongside contributions from local organisations supporting the community, the video highlights how small, everyday actions can promote equality and prevent gender-based violence.

The video explores the idea that respect is more than being polite or saying the right words. It is about:

- Treating everyone equally and ensuring their voice matters.
- Listening and communicating with kindness.
- Standing up when something doesn’t feel right.
- Speaking up in a supportive and constructive way when a friend or colleague says or does something that could be hurtful.
- Supporting each other to feel safe to be ourselves.



The video is based on and aligned with Respect Victoria's *What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be?* campaign and has been developed locally to reflect the diversity and strengths of our community in Whitehorse. It encourages ongoing dialogue about how we can build safer, more respectful environments for everyone.

Facilitating a Discussion

Purpose

The video is designed to prompt reflection and conversation about respect, equality, and healthy masculinity in everyday life. Facilitated discussions provide opportunities to:

- Reflect on what respect means to them personally.
- Explore how attitudes, language, and everyday actions can promote equality and prevent harm.
- Highlight positive examples of healthy masculinity and respectful behaviour.
- Strengthen connections between people and organisations working toward gender equality in the local community.

Creating a Safe and Respectful Space

Before showing the video, set the tone for a supportive conversation. Consider:

- Explaining that conversations about respect, gender roles, or family relationships can sometimes bring up strong emotions or personal experiences
- Setting shared ground rules (listening without interrupting, respecting differing viewpoints, maintaining confidentiality)
- Acknowledging that everyone has different experiences and perspectives, and that these are valid
- Letting participants know where they can find support if needed (e.g. Safe Steps, The Orange Door, 1800RESPECT, Mensline Australia, or other local support services)

Even though the video focuses on men and masculinity, the conversation is relevant to everyone because respect starts with all of us.

Tips for Facilitating Discussion

- Tailor questions to suit the group's age, background or familiarity with the topics.
- Ask open-ended questions and allow space for participants to reflect and share.
- Demonstrate attentive listening, empathy, and thoughtful responses.
- While there are no single 'right' answers, gently challenge comments that reinforce harmful stereotypes or gendered assumptions.



Suggested Format

A suggested approach for running a session:

1. Introduce the topic: Briefly outline why respect and equality matter in your local context, and how this connects to building safe, inclusive communities.
2. Show the video: (approx. 3 minutes)
3. Invite reflections: Ask participants what stood out to them, including any particular messages, phrases or stories.
4. Discuss together: Use some of the suggested discussion questions (provided in the next section).
5. Close the session: Summarise key points, share local resources and encourage participants to continue the conversation beyond the session.

Suggested Discussion Questions

Adapt these depending on your audience (e.g. multicultural communities, men's groups, workplaces, young people).

1. Personal Reflection

- What does respect mean to you personally?
- Was there a message or story in the video that particularly resonated with you?
- How do you show respect in your daily life – at home, at work or in your community?
- Can you think of a time when you saw someone model respect in a way that inspired you?

2. Understanding Gender and Respect

- How do traditional gender roles or expectations influence the way we treat each other?
- What does healthy masculinity look like to you?
- Why do you think it can sometimes be difficult to talk about gender equality or respect?
- How can men and women work together to build more equal and respectful relationships?

3. Community and Culture

- How does your culture or community define respect?
- What are some positive examples of respect and equality you see in your community?
- Are there traditions or attitudes that might unintentionally reinforce inequality? How could these be approached in a respectful way?



4. Taking Action

- What are some small, everyday actions that promote respect and equality?
- If someone says or does something disrespectful how could you respond without escalating into conflict?
- What could your workplace, club or community group do to support more respectful relationships?
- What's one thing you'll take away from this discussion that you could put into practice?

Where to Get Further Help / Resources

Conversations about respect, healthy masculinity, and gender equality can sometimes bring up personal experiences or emotions. It's important to know where participants can seek support if they need it.

Key Support Services

- **Safe Steps** – Victoria's 24/7 family violence response centre.
☎ 1800 015 188
- **The Orange Door** – Supports adults, children, and young people experiencing family violence.
☎ 1800 354 322
- **1800RESPECT** – National counselling, information, and support service for people experiencing family violence.
☎ 1800 737 732
- **Mensline Australia** – 24/7 support, services and information for men.
☎ 1300 789 978

Additional Specialist Support

- **W/Respect** – LGBTQIA+ family violence support.
☎ 1800 542 847
- **InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence** – Supports women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
☎ 1800 755 988
- **Boorndawan William Aboriginal Healing Service** – Specialist Aboriginal family violence service.
☎ 9212 0200
- **Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault** – Free counselling and support for people who have experienced sexual assault.
☎ 9870 7330
- **Kids Helpline** – 24/7 support for young people aged 5–25.
☎ 1800 551 800
- **Child Protection Services** – Protecting children and young people from harm.
☎ 1300 369 536



Encourage participants to use these resources if the discussion brings up questions, personal experiences, or if they want to take further action in their community.

Acknowledgements

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- AMES
- FVREE
- healthAbility
- Migrant Information Centre
- Women's Health East





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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