

Karen Wanjico
Horizon Human Services
12/1/04

Preventing Violence

While doing research on preventing violence against women, I saw an ad for a web site that guarantees to stop rape. The product, *Repulse*, is a capsule for sale. The advertisement recommends that potential victims clip the capsule to their shirt, coat, or underwear. Upon attack, squeeze the capsule. Release an odor. Guaranteed to send the attacker running! I laughed at the thought of a woman, like the one in the picture, being attacked and reaching for a capsule. But my laugh was a nervous laugh. I recognize that someday, the woman in trouble might be me. The ad discloses something fundamentally wrong with our culture. Why must women live in fear of attack? Women are half of the human race. Why are so many raped, beaten, and hurt by men? These men have mothers, sisters, and aunts. Why isn't society outraged for every woman that is beaten up? Why must women take the responsibility for not getting attacked? What will end violence against women?

The solution takes more than women asking to be treated right. It takes more than education. The solution is complex; it reaches to the core of who we are and how we act. Here is what the research suggests about ending violence against women. First, let women and men stop blaming one another. Stop blaming the victim for what happens. No one deserves to be beaten, raped, intimidated, tortured, or insulted. Let's decide here and now to never blame her for what happens because of what she wears, or who she had sex with last time. Or anything else she did... or did not do.

Let's not blame men. Millions of men do not rape. Millions are never violent. Millions care, and millions treat women right! Men *must* be included in the solution. Second, let's admit that violence and rape are choices that some men make. Let's teach our children to make good choices. Let's show them that violence is never ok. Let us teach them how to show respect and

Karen Wanjico
Horizon Human Services
12/1/04

solve problems peacefully. Let us teach children, by how we live, that women are equal with men. Let us show our sons how to treat women with equality and empathy. Let us show our daughters to not become involved with guys that intimidate, control, or abuse. Third, let us look inward and challenge our belief systems and gender stereotypes that contribute to violence. Let us admit that women are not property, that males do not have divine rights. Let us teach boys about getting consent. Let us teach daughters that life is not about obeying men. Let us teach girls how to express their needs without feeling embarrassed or ashamed. Let our daughters and sons know that all people deserve respect. Let us not stand by silently when a boy is harassed for being too girly (as if being a girl was a bad thing). Let us celebrate boys that are gentle and girls that are athletic. Let us choose today to value every person. Ending violence against women is not impossible, but it will require choices and actions Prevention is up to everyone.