Tips for engaging men on their use of family violence

Central to any engagement is the safety of those experiencing the violence. It’s important not to engage with a man on his use of family violence in a way that increases the risk to a man’s ex/partner or kids.

Don’t engage in an accusatory manner (oppositional, challenging, judging him, telling him his behaviour is bad or arguing with him) as it can make him disengage, resist, shame or anger him, increasing the risk of him choosing to use violence toward his ex/partner. Also, don’t bring attention to anything his ex/partner has said, as that could put them at further risk.

**TIP 01 SAFETY**

**JUSTIFICATION:** I just lost it. I snapped

**RESPONSE:** Can you describe what “snapped” looks like?

**MINIMISING:** I only pushed her.

**RESPONSE:** What was that like for her?

**BLAMING:** She pushed my buttons

**RESPONSE:** Can you tell me about what was happening for you?

**EXCUSING:** I was feeling so frustrated

**RESPONSE:** How did she experience it, what was she feeling?

**TIP 02 IDENTIFY INVITATIONS TO COLLUDE**

Identifying invitations to collude is critical to responding safely. When responding to a man’s attempts to minimise, excuse or justify their use of violence, it is important to encourage them to re-evaluate their behaviour and self-exploration.

**TIP 03 OPEN THE CONVERSATION**

People are often resistant to opening up about certain incidents, but they may allude to them. Being curious and asking questions can help put his behaviour on the table.

**EXPERIENCE OF EX/PARTNERS AND KIDS**

Encourage empathy for how his partner/kids are experiencing his behaviour, rather than his intentions or identity.

**TIP 04 CHANGE AND SUPPORT**

Identifying what a desirable future looks like can help reflection around what needs to change.

A conversation won’t always get this far, but if there is a mutual understanding that his behaviour is a problem, this can be an opportunity to suggest ongoing support.

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For more information and referral on men's behaviour change programs contact No to Violence on 1300 766 491 or visit www.ntv.org.au