



## 16 Days of Activism

### Day 2

#OurActionsMatter - Be an Ally

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Everyone can be an ally. An ally is a person of one social identity group who stands up in support of members of another group. He or she is typically a member of a dominant group standing beside members of a group being discriminated against or treated unjustly. It is important for allies to recognize that they may not have the life experience of the members of the group they are supporting, and so they may not be able to speak on behalf of the group, but they can definitely help. The concept of being an ally is also important for individuals who come from the same group that is being discriminated against or treated unjustly. For example, women may not automatically act as allies to other women if they are influenced by the dominant group – men – and align themselves with that power base. Women may need to be reminded to offer support to other women, and to avoid victim-blaming and other negative reactions to women who have experienced trauma.

The term “ally” isn’t a noun. It isn’t an identity, label, or something to claim. Instead, you are an ally when you take action, make a stand, or do something to make a difference by standing up against oppression and marginalization. You become an ally when someone else recognizes you as one.

There are a number of ways that you can be an ally. While it may seem like it requires heroic acts, being an ally largely means stepping up in small ways that can make a big difference.

Ten ways to become an ally:

1. **Listening:** be open to learning from the experiences of others. Listen to survivors and read their stories. Follow #HearMeToo.
2. **Believing:** support survivors and those affected by violence. Let them know that you believe and support them.

3. **Speaking out:** add your voice to call out violence. Do not be a bystander and watch violence happen. Learn how to be an advocate. Write to your government officials and demand that perpetrators be held accountable. Join walks relating to eradicating gender-based violence and support the MMIW movement. Use your social media platforms to get the message out – gender-based violence is unacceptable in any form. Inform your friends and community about the facts. Let people know why they should become involved.

4. **Intervening:** find a safe way to help when you see acts of gender-based violence. Know when to call law enforcement.

5. **Acting:** give your time to organizations, such as Zonta International, working to end violence.

6. **Knowing:** know the facts and your rights. Learn the law. Research the staggering statistics in your community.

- Thirty-three percent of sex trafficking cases and 16% of labor trafficking cases involve children.
- 20% of undergraduate women have been victims of rape or attempted rape during their freshman year.
- College freshmen and sophomore women appear to be at greater risk of being victims of sexual assault than are upperclassmen. 84% of the women who reported sexually coercive experiences experienced the incident during their first four semesters on campus.
- More than half of raped college women tell no one of their victimization. The perpetrators are not punished and will likely rape again.
- 80% of sexual assault and rape victims are under the age of 30.
- 44% of sexual assault and rape victims are under the age of 18.
- 75% of murder-suicides involve intimate partner violence.
- Homicide committed by current or former IP is the leading cause of death of pregnant women in U.S.
- An analysis of every mass shooting between 2009 – 2016 found that 54% were committed by intimate partners or family.
- In the U.S. women are 16 times more likely to be killed by guns than in other developed countries.
- It is happening all around you. One in three women and girls around the world experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

7. **Sharing:** share your story and the facts. Let others know how you are taking action. Share your photos and actions on [zontainternational.org](http://zontainternational.org), and your social media platforms.

8. **Learning:** learn the correct language to use. The words and the language we use can perpetuate or break gender stereotypes. You can fight gender bias using gender-inclusive language that places both women and men on an equal level.

9. **Mobilizing men and boys:** Men and boys of all ages and walks of life must take a stand against violence against women and girls or we will not succeed in eradicating violence and achieving equality. Call on all the boys and men in your life to stand with you and women and girls, to end violence against women and all gender inequality. From joining the HeForShe movement to



Be an ally.

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 Women and Gender  
Equality Canada Femmes et Égalité  
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Canada

being advocates within their communities, men need to take steps in ending toxic masculinity.

10. **Supporting:** by supporting one another and standing together, we are stronger; we are heard. Support local women's groups who advocate and act against gender-based violence and advocate for equality. Support the women in your life at every opportunity.