

Conversation Starters

For officials, coaches and club leaders



Why This Matters

Domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) affects individuals, families, teams, clubs and communities — and prevention is always better than responding to a crisis. The more people talk about the issue, the more others will see that it is not acceptable behaviour and be prepared to talk about it and seek help.

Before You Start

→ **You don't need to be perfect**

It is better to begin than stay silent.
The more we talk about it, the easier it becomes.

→ **It's meant to feel uncomfortable**

Think of it like learning any new skill: research, practice, make mistakes, reflect and try again.

→ **Acknowledge you're not an expert**

You care about the issue and feel it's important to talk about it. This helps others feel safe to speak up.

→ **Men speaking up matters**

DFSV is not a "women's issue" — it is everyone's business, and men play an important role in challenging disrespect and abuse.

→ **If you don't know, say so**

"I'm not sure, but I can find out." Never make it up or guess.

Your Role as an Official

You are not expected to be a counsellor or investigator. Your role is to listen, support, help people feel safe, know the reporting process, and connect them to help.

A Simple Way to Open the Conversation

Your role also includes shaping culture. Sporting environments can use bystander action to challenge sexist language, harassment and other behaviours that create unsafe and unequal environments for women and girls.

Use everyday moments: a team meeting, travel time, a pre-game briefing, a sideline chat, or after hearing disrespectful comments online or in person.

"Because it's NO MORE Round/Day, I want to say this clearly: **disrespect, abuse and violence are not okay.**"

"This is not just a women's issue. **It's everyone's responsibility** to create a safe environment."

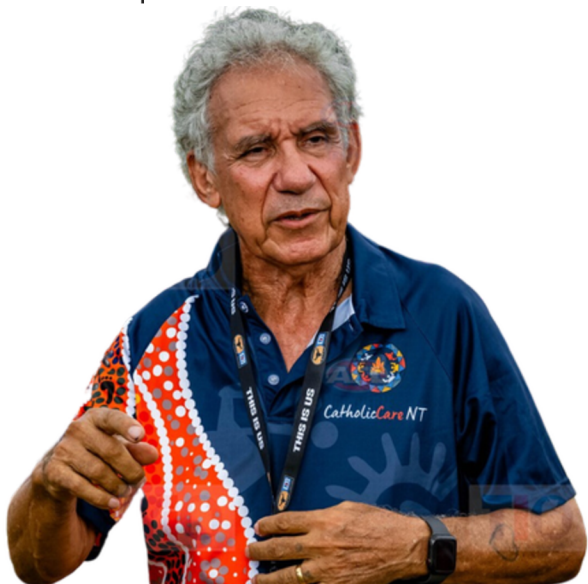
"If you ever want to talk about something you've seen, heard or experienced, **there are people and services that can help.**"

"I might not have every answer, but **I can help find the right support.**"

What to Talk About

Conversations that help people recognise disrespect, understand influences around them, and build respectful attitudes and behaviours are helpful. In sport, that can include:

- **Respect** in how players, officials, volunteers and parents speak to and about women and girls.
- The **link between sexist jokes, put-downs, controlling behaviour** and broader violence.
- **Online influences**, including harmful content that pressures boys and young men about gender, power and relationships.
- **Changing unhealthy expectations** placed on boys and men, not just helping them cope with them.
- **Stories of hope and positive leadership:** men rejecting sexist norms, teammates backing respectful behaviour.



Useful Prompts

What does **respect** look like in our team or at this event?

What kinds of **comments or jokes** should not be normal in sport?

How do **online influences** shape the way young people think about girls, women and relationships?

What should we do if we **hear something sexist** or see someone being belittled?

How can **men in our sport show leadership** on this issue?

If Someone Says Something Disrespectful

We recommend bystander action when it is safe to do so. Keep your response **calm, clear and proportionate**.

In the moment

- That's not respectful.
- I don't think that fits how we want to speak here.
- Am I the only one uncomfortable with that?
- Come on, you're better than that.

Following up after

- I want to follow up on what was said earlier. It didn't sit right with me.
- That might not have seemed like a big deal, but it can make people feel unwelcome.
- We want this to be a place where women and girls are respected and safe.

If Someone Discloses They Have Been Harmed or Abused

Start with a supportive first response. People should feel **believed, respected and in control** of what happens next.

Say

- "Thank you for telling me. That took courage."
- "I'm sorry this happened to you."
- "You're not to blame."
- "Are you safe right now?"
- "What would you like to do next?"

Do

- Listen with care and empathy.
- Ask gently if they need or want anything else from you.
- Offer options and support services.
- Make a factual note and follow reporting pathways in your sport if required.
- Be honest about what you can and cannot do.

Do Not

- Ask "why" questions that sound blaming (like "why don't you leave").
- Investigate on the spot.
- Promise outcomes you cannot guarantee.
- Share details beyond policy requirements or consent.

If Someone Discloses They Have Used Violence or Are at Risk of Being Abusive

- A practical line is: **"I'm glad you told me. I'm not exactly sure what to do, but I can help connect you with someone who can."**

If there is immediate danger or a serious crime, follow emergency or reporting processes straight away.

Keep in Mind

■ Doing nothing sends a message

Silence can unintentionally signal that disrespect is acceptable. Constructive bystander action helps shift team culture.

■ Conversations don't need to be perfect

Repetition, modelling respect and following up all help. Aim for progress, not perfection.

■ Change the norms, not just support individuals

For longer-term change, the goal is not just to support individuals through harmful norms, but to change the norms themselves.

■ Use hopeful, practical language

Call out harm clearly, but also share examples of respect, courage, change and better leadership.

Conversation Resources

The Conversation Guide

[Respect.gov.au/conversation-guide](https://respect.gov.au/conversation-guide)

Support Services

[NOMORE.org.au/get-help](https://nomore.org.au/get-help)

Support Services

If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic or family violence, help is available right now.



Call 000 — If you or someone else is in immediate danger

1800RESPECT

24/7 national counselling service for any Australian who has experienced or is at risk of family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au

Kids Helpline

Online and phone counselling for young people aged 5 to 25

1800 55 18 00

kidshelpline.com.au

13YARN

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support

13 92 76

13yarn.org.au

MensLine Australia

For men with concerns about mental health, relationships, anger management, family violence (using and experiencing), stress, and suicidal thoughts.

1300 78 99 78

mensline.org.au

Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline

For anyone from LGBTQI+ communities, or their friends and family

1800 899 855

catholicarent.org.au

Questions?

Contact the NO MORE team at 1800 899 855 or nomore@catholicarent.org.au