

Tips for engaging men on their use of family violence

TIP 01 SAFETY



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.

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.



We were having a normal argument.. **it just got a bit out of hand.** Really, **she has blown this out of proportion.**

MINIMISING

BLAMING

What do you mean by out of hand?

I just snapped.

JUSTIFYING

What did that look like? If I was there what would I have seen you do?

TIP 04

EXPERIENCE OF EX/PARTNERS AND KIDS

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



I threw a glass at the wall. I wasn't aiming at her, wasn't trying to hit her, **I'm not like that. It was just frustration.**

EXCUSING

It sounds like Sam was frustrated too.. how did she then experience you smashing the glass? How was she feeling?

...ahh, pretty scared. She was still freaked out this morning when I tried to explain.

Where were the kids when this happened?

They were asleep, **they didn't see anything.** I'd never do that in front of them.

MINIMISING

What would have been like for them to hear that? Or see mum scared of dad this morning?

Yeah... it's not good.



TIP 05

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.

I'm hearing you want a loving family, but I'm also hearing how your behaviour is damaging this; harming Sam and the kids. What needs to change do you think?

I don't know.. I have to do something though.

Would you be interested in getting some support to help you make these changes?

What kind of support is there?