

MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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Breaking Our Silence

Gloucester Men Speak Out Against Domestic Abuse

Transcript

Woman: He just tried to choke me!

911 Operator: Are you 894 Twin Sister Road?

Woman: Yes.

911 Operator: Okay. Is he still there?

Woman: Yes!

911 Operator: Okay. We're on the way. You need an ambulance?

Woman: No!

I come from Chelsea in a housing project. We had girls who were victim of rape, girls who were victim of sexual abuse, and one of my cousins killed his wife in a domestic violence.

When I was early married I came real close to belting my wife. And that moment I said: "This isn't right. No man should hit a women."

I've ridden with policeman in a lot of cities around the country, and every single city – from Boston, New York, L.A. – almost every call that we took was a domestic violence case.

I realized that the women were doing all the heavy lifting about these issues, and I started to go around and talk to men in Gloucester about whether we could do something about it. It was great to see how many men were just waiting for an invitation.

I think people who have inherited violent encounters from their parents, and their grandparents, and decided at some point in their lives that it was not something that should go on. We decided to take responsibility to stop that cycle ourselves.

It's a men's problem as much as a women's problem.

That's the biggest sign of a coward is anybody that hits a woman or hits a child.

I don't tolerate it in my own house. I don't tolerate it on the street. I don't tolerate it in the store. I don't tolerate it anywhere.

I don't think that it's right for men to feel like they could hurt women – or children, for that matter.

I see it as a whole community issue, and that men, as a group, need to stand up and be heard and not be silent.

Violence is really no longer cool. It's time for men to do their part.

We realized there was something concrete we could do. We decided to march in the cities 4th of July parade, which draws 25,000 people every year.

I think there's gonna be a mixture of reactions. You're gonna have people that are very positive, but I think you're gonna have some negative people too, and I think that's mostly out of fear, but that's positive too because it gets them thinking. At least they're thinking about it.

I think it shows a lot of people that it's not something that needs to be accepted. It's not just something that happens at home and it's between a husband and his wife. That's just an old outdated way of doing things.

For many minutes – the hard thing to decide to do what we're asking them to do – walk down their own streets to say that they believe in decency and the equality between men and women. Then go back to their work places, especially, and represent that point of view with their body energy and their language.

This is my first time ever doing this. I'm against violence of any sort. That's why I am here today.

This is my first time doing this parade. It's just important for me to support the women who've been abused and to show my support for the community.

I'm in support of getting help for men that are abusive, as well as supporting the women that are abused, and let them know that there is help for both parties. I ended up coming here to get my life together and in the process I want to give back to the community. This is one subject that has been in my life before.

I consider everybody quite brave that's come out for today.

I think the flow will give some hope to a lot of women who get slapped around and think that they have nowhere to go but back to the guy that pounds on them.

We don't have to be big and strong and dominate to be masculine and to be a man. It's not necessary.

It was very moving to see the reaction of the people in the crowd, and as I said, it wasn't like they were just applauding for a nice float. It was something very sincere.

I saw a lot of men drop in their eyes, which was kind of scary to me.

Well, it was a powerful thing seeing people light up in the crowd. They'd read the truck and you could see it dawning on them, and some women particularly were just vibrant. You could feel it. There was such energy in the crowd.

Thank god somebody's standing up for what's important. Some old grandmothers, and you can tell this has maybe devastated their family, and they would just give you this look and you knew it was touching them way deep inside.

This is what cares to women, and let them know that people do care.

Any time I hear about domestic violence, I get sick to my stomach. I mean I've got four wonderful kids and a beautiful wife. I don't know how anyone can touch anyone at all. It just makes me sick. I was moved by the amount of men that were involved. Great job.

I am totally against what happens sometimes in domestic violence. I work in a school and always tell the kids about, you know, behaving and not abusing other kids.

It's about time that men stood up to say that it's okay to talk things out with their spouses instead of getting violent, and it's okay to be a man and to support something like this.

It is a growing problem which some people use as an excuse as a hush thing, because if it's within the family, just keep it with the family, people say. But I don't believe so.

They don't do this in Idaho. And by god they're going to.

It is necessary, and I think it should be made worldwide, not only in America but I think even in Third World countries need this kind of education.

This really feels good. This really feels good. It's so simple. It's such a simple thing to do but it's wonderful.

This has had a really positive impact, and we're learning a lot. We know that it's not just about physical violence but about many kinds of emotional abuse, and we know that it's not only wrong to abuse, but if we do it, we get weaker.

Just like anything else in life, you need to talk about these things at home first. Knowledge is the key to everything.

All of us have struggled with these issues. One doesn't just struggle with these professionally. One struggles with them personally.

I think the most powerful way for me is purely by example. I personally try to do it on job sites that I'm on. I'm in construction. I stand for no ethnic jokes, racist jokes, sexism and any of that stuff. It's interesting because we get new subs that come on to the job, the workers will say: "Hey you guys, don't start that stuff or you'll be in trouble." So it gets passed on.

Well, I think all fathers, grandfathers can start telling their boys: “Look it, you know, it’s one think to be cool. It’s another thing to be violent.”

Have you seen both sides? I know that we really gotta start with individual men. I started with myself and we wanna work with other individual men – talking, working with men one at a time.

Text on Screen: Four years after the first march, 485 men from Gloucester, MA signed a billboard speaking out against domestic abuse. The numbers are growing.

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