

# USING MEDIA EDUCATION TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Media (TV shows, advertisements, online games, social media, music videos, etc.) are the dominant storytellers in modern society. As such, they play an influential role in shaping how we see ourselves and each other. While MEF does not believe that media directly cause violence, we do believe that the narratives created by media affect our attitudes toward gender, sex, and relationships. They also normalize violence. Messages that equate manhood with dominance and violence and that portray girls and women as objects pervade the culture. And these messages intersect with gender and power dynamics that frequently play out in domestic violent situations. Media messages are constructions, and learning how to deconstruct them is key—both to understanding the cultural forces contributing to domestic violence and working to prevent it.

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**1** **Show *Tough Guise 2*, *Killing Us Softly 4*, *The Bro Code*, *Flirting With Danger*, *Wrestling With Manhood*, or another MEF film in a class, during a PTA meeting, at a teen workshop, at your local library, or to another group that's important to you.** Discuss the ways that media normalize violence and reinforce, as well as construct, stereotypical ideas about gender and relationships. Use the discussion questions and exercises in the study guides to help you. You can read descriptions and watch previews of all MEF films on the topic of gender-based violence here: <http://violenceprevention.mediaed.org>.

**2** **Use social media to raise awareness about gender stereotypes in specific advertising campaigns or television shows.** You can also use social media to spread the word about boycotts of companies that use or support dangerous messages about relationships. Join forces with other individuals, groups and organizations that care about this issue and turn it into a social media campaign! Get some ideas and direction here: <http://www.ncadv.org/get-involved/takeastandmain/via-social-media>.



STORIES ABOUT WOMEN  
BEING ATTACKED BY STRANGERS  
ARE **OVER-REPRESENTED**  
IN THE MEDIA.

**1 IN 3 WOMEN AND 1 IN 4 MEN**  
ARE VICTIMS OF SOME FORM  
OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY AN  
INTIMATE PARTNER WITHIN  
THEIR LIFETIME.

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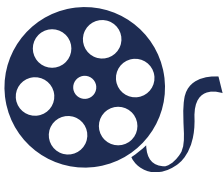
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**3 Sign a petition or create your own email- or letter-writing campaign to oppose offensive media messages and pressure companies to change.** About-Face (<http://www.about-face.org>) hosts petitions and offers other ideas and resources for taking action. Specifically, see this guide to creating your own letter or petition: <https://www.about-face.org/educate-yourself/for-adult-advocates/help-your-girls/write-a-complaint-letter/>.



**4** Here's another idea from About-Face ([www.about-face.org](http://www.about-face.org)): **Write a message on magazine subscription cards, and send it back to the company at their own expense!**

**5** **Write a letter to the editor of your local paper** expressing concerns about the media portrayal of girls and women, and explain the links to dating and domestic violence.



**6** **Screen an MEF film in your community and use it as a springboard to take a collective stand against domestic violence.** i.e. Screen *Tough Guise 2* in coordination with a march to raise awareness about men's violence against women. Or partner with a local DVSA organization to host a screening of *Flirting With Danger* and host a conversation about consent.

**7** **Work with your local domestic violence shelter or prevention agency to hold a poster-making party, and then display the posters in your community.** Ask the participants to consider the connections between media and domestic violence in their creations. Always put a hotline number on the posters to inform people of where to go for more information.

**8** **Ask your local community access TV station to show an MEF film or series of films and promote the showings through your local press.** To learn more about how to get permission to have films shown on community access TV, write to [info@mediaed.org](mailto:info@mediaed.org).



**9** **Create and promote your own content (such as blogs, Facebook posts, etc.) that questions media messages about gender, violence, and relationships.** Consider becoming a Feministing community blogger at [feministing.com](http://feministing.com) or join the Adbusters culture jammer network at [adbusters.com](http://adbusters.com).