

DISCUSSION AND ACTION GUIDE:

We have outlined 14 principles of our work. It is a draft and comments and/or suggestions are welcome.

The Gloucester Model: 14 Underlying Principles

1. **The silence has to end.** It is clear that if male culture tolerates abuse, or condones it with a silent response, the abuse will continue at current rates. But, if we end our silence and make it clear where we live and work that abuse is unacceptable, we will see a dramatic shift in male norms, broader support for victims and the agencies that serve them, and a drop in the rate of abuse.

2. **Location, location, location!** Organizing men to speak out locally will be more effective than working just at a regional or national level. If men speak out in their community, the broader sense of connection or pride in that community creates a boundary in which the message begins to reverberate.

3. **What's in a name?** Giving a local name, such as Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse, to the effort has great value. This allows the group to have an ongoing presence in the community.

The larger group does not have to hold meetings. A steering committee can provide the momentum and continuity needed. As one of the founders expressed it "Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse is not so much an organization as an attitude. Our goal is to express this attitude and then represent it where we work and where we live."

4. **The men are there.** We have learned that many men are just waiting for a vehicle to express themselves positively on these issues. The Gloucester experience shows that men of all backgrounds are grateful for the opportunity to help out. Many have told us they feel deeply honored by the community's response.

5. **No names without contact information.** While gathering men's names, or men for events, it is critical to obtain addresses, phone numbers and/or emails for future contact, for fundraising, etc.

6. **Speaking out as "We".** Speaking out as "We" will be more effective than speaking in an accusatory way toward abusers, and it honors the fact that we all have work to do. "We have no excuse for abuse" is better than "There is no excuse for your abuse." Speaking in this way has 2 benefits: First, it helps all of us men become more aware of our own issues of temper, anger, and control.. Second, it does not push abusive men further into the hopeless corner they are already in.

7. **Domestic Abuse-not just Domestic Violence .** After noticing how many of us could say we have nothing to do with the problem because we aren't physically violent toward women, we realized we could relate much more closely to these issues when they include not just physical violence but all forms of abuse. When we include namecalling, insults, mockery, manipulative silence, etc. many more of us see how we may be part of the problem.

8. **Each community in its own way.** Actions so far include parades, community festivals, signature ads in newspapers, White Ribbon signature campaigns, men's fundraisers for women's agencies, poster campaigns, men holding rallies to put bumperstickers on their cars and trucks with press coverage, and obtaining billboard space for messages. Other ideas are bound to emerge.

9. **No One Time Messages.** If the ending of silence is to be effective in a community it will need to be sustained. Holding a single event may support the work of the local women's agency in important ways, but it is unlikely to impact the male norms in the community. Big events need to be followed up – bumper stickers and posters are one way to keep the message alive and have been very effective. Local access cable tv shows can also be used to follow up on events, and often cable stations will run shows multiple times.

10. **Diversity.** The men speaking out in a community must reflect its particular ethnic, racial and economic diversity. Pro-feminist men can give needed support to women's agencies and victims of abuse; but only a mix of all the men in a community can impact the male culture. This diverse mix has to be consciously built.

11. **Conversation.** In this work, conversation among men is better than mailings. Men talking with each other about abuse is valuable in itself, and it gives other men permission to do the same.

12. **Many men prefer action to discussion.** After a few men are involved, it's best to choose an activity that men can participate in. Men talk with each other while doing the activity, rather than attending meetings to talk about issues of masculinity and domestic violence. In addition to larger public events, men have come forward to build a large playhouse for the children at a shelter, to move agency offices from one location to another, to help survivors move, to raise money for women's agencies, etc.

13. **Keep it simple.** What is needed most from men is not complicated: The initial request for participation can be simple—"Can you join with the rest of us in saying "men cannot be strong by abusing women and children.?" Can you agree with us that "Strong Men Don't Bully?"

14. **Celebration.** Although the issues are very serious this work can be done in an upbeat way. We can convey a strong and clear message against abuse, and at the same time celebrate our coming together to express our capacity to be caring and loving.

A SAMPLE DOCUMENT:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FEEDS ON SILENCE

WE WANT YOU TO JOIN 60 OTHER (GLOUCESTER) MEN ON FATHER'S DAY. WE ARE ALL GOING TO MEET AT THE HIGH SCHOOL AND ATTACH BUMPER STICKERS AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE TO OUR CARS AND TRUCKS - MAKING A PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT IS LONG OVERDUE.

Our women friends have been running 24 hour hotlines, safe houses, legal advocacy teams and education and support groups- all to deal with the results of widespread domestic abuse. And we men have been silent bystanders! Come help celebrate the end of our silence. No speeches are required. No grimness required. The simple fact of all of us men taking this step together will offer a powerful message. We can make it clear in our community that we men cannot make ourselves stronger by dominating and weakening women and children.

We have a great mix of men who have agreed to join in. Most of us have never been involved in public action such as this, but we know now that it is time to stand up.

So far the following men have joined in:

Name	name	name	name
Name	name	name	name
Name	name	name	name

We have the following choices for bumper stickers:

- *Domestic Violence Feeds on Silence.*
- *Another Man Against Violence Against Women*
- *Strong Men Don't Bully*

Contact # _____ to add your name to the list.