



# S is for society



## Sexual violence is 100% preventable—and everyone can play a role in that prevention.

Social norms are the values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people. These norms are based on what's widely considered to be appropriate and provide unwritten guidelines for how people are expected to behave in society.

Some social norms can lead people to believe it's acceptable to behave in harmful ways. **Social norms that support sexual violence and gender inequity are a risk factor for sexual violence**, or something that makes sexual violence more likely to occur.

Changing social norms can help foster safer, more equitable communities. We can create a society free from sexual violence by refusing to conform to harmful norms and instead supporting positive ones.



We can work to build societies free from sexual violence by shifting social norms.



## CHANGE NEGATIVE SOCIAL NORMS

Harmful social norms can be reinforced over the years, making them more difficult to challenge. But this doesn't mean they're impossible to change. We can shift harmful norms by focusing on our own communities—our homes, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces, and the online spaces where we spend time. When we see others around us normalizing violence and gender inequality or behaving in ways that support those norms, we can challenge those ideas and call out those behaviors.



## PROMOTE POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS

Our society is made up of individuals, each of whom contribute to the development and perpetuation of social norms. As individuals, we can help promote healthy, positive norms about masculinity, gender, and violence by modeling those norms and spreading them through our social networks. We can start by practicing empathy and respect for those around us.