



THE MULLET

The Mullet is a guide for men who want respectful relationships.

 **White Ribbon**
Australia

WHAT IS THE MULLET?

The Mullet isn't just a hair statement your favourite footy player rocks, it's also a statement about respect in relationships. The Mullet is our how-to guide for making sure you have respectful relationships. Inside you'll find info on what respect in relationships truly means; going behind the buzz term. We'll cover good communication, enthusiastic consensual sex, porn use, and even tech-based abuse.

Even if you think you've got respect in your relationship covered, take a read. You might find something you can fine tune or change completely. This guide isn't about judgement or blame, it's about making sure we're the best versions of ourselves, and that means respecting our partners

What kind of guy are you, and who do you want to be? When you picture your ideal you, are you someone who respects their partner? Do you respect your family? Do you respect yourself?

As a man, you can have a huge impact on not just your relationship with your partner, but the relationships of everyone around you. From your kids to your friends - when you treat your partner with respect, you set the tone for everybody else.

MOST MEN ARE RESPECTFUL. But violence at home often happens when men believe they should have more rights and power than women.

CHANGE YOUR MIND. You can choose to change how you treat women. Ask yourself, "If I was being the kind of man I'd really like to be, what would I do?"

BE RESPECTFUL. That's how you start. Your relationships with women will improve, you'll be happier and you can even influence your mates to have more respect.

WE DON'T SAY IT WILL BE EASY. But it is the most important step you can take to stop violence toward women.

WHAT IS RESPECT?

Below is a quick guide to respectful behaviour. The information below is also available as a social media tile, so feel free to share it, or save it and carry it with you for when you want to reflect on your behaviours.

R TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS

E TREAT YOUR PARTNER AS AN EQUAL

S SAY HOW YOU FEEL

P LISTEN TO OTHER POINTS OF VIEW

E EMPATHISE WITH YOUR FAMILY

C CHALLENGE SET BELIEFS

T TELL YOUR KIDS YOU LOVE THEM

SHARING IS CARING

Strong, respectful relationships are based on equality. That means your partner is her own person, and so are you. You don't need to have all the power – you can make decisions with her, not for her.

See her as a valuable individual. Life is challenging and sometimes makes you angry. You can't control what happens, but you can control how you react. It's about seeing her as an individual who has the same challenges in her own life.



How should people act? There are no 'right' ways for a woman or a man to be. It's much easier to let each person choose what to do and how to behave, instead of following rules that put people in boxes. Question all those messages about how a man should be and pressures to only live in the 'man box'.

How would you like to be treated? You don't want to be put in a box – and neither does she. Treat her – and everyone else – as an individual, whether they're male or female, young or old.

Check how you come across. Your heart might be in the right place, but sometimes old habits can take over. Ask her what you can do to treat her as an equal, and take it on board.

Take an attitude of gratitude. Think about how she improves your life and makes you a better person. Then tell her about these things.

Walk a mile in her shoes. Imagine how it feels to be in her situation. Treat her with the same respect in private as you do in public – it's not about how others see you, it's about knowing and respecting yourself – and her.

Live your values. Most cultures and religions include respect between men and women. A great example is the classic Aussie idea of 'a fair go' that's based on equality and fairness for all. Support and encouragement to grow respectful relationships is all around you, in writings, support groups and even your own mates.

Use your crew for more than a crew cut. If you're not sure where to start, watch how other men show respect to the women in their lives. Notice the way they speak and listen to what they say.

GOOD COMMUNICATION

Strong, respectful relationships use good communication. Everyone has different opinions at times but what matters is how you deal with them. Take time to think and listen. Then talk about your feelings and work through the conflict together.

 Take time	If you're open to how each person feels, speak respectfully and let go of the idea that you should be in charge. It's amazing what disagreements you can sort out together.
 Be clear	Say how you feel, what worries you and what you'd like to see happen. Start with the words "I feel..."
 Open up	Talk about all your feelings. From love and joy, to uncertainty, shame and anger, all of your feelings are valid and should be acknowledged.
 Throw out the old ideas	There are no 'right' ways to feel, for men or women. You have all kinds of feelings and it's okay to admit it. Don't worry about what being "blokey" or "manly" looks like, and don't expect women to act a certain way either. Nobody fits perfectly into a box.
 Check how you're doing	Your heart might be in the right place, but sometimes old habits can take over. Ask her what you can do to communicate better, and really take it on board.
 Screwed up?	Nobody's perfect, so do what you can right way to put things right, learn from your mistakes and move on. And try seeing her side when she's made a mistake too.
 Really listen	Ask her questions and value her views as much as you do your own. Think about what she has to say, and take her ideas on board.
 Have an attitude of gratitude	Think about how she improves your life and makes you a better person. Then tell her about it.
 Manage stressful times	If you feel like you're going to lose it, don't dump on her – take time out to calm down. When you're ready to talk respectfully, you're ready to resolve the conflict.
 Find out how	Watch how other men show respect to women in their lives. Notice the way they stand and speak, and learn from them.

SEX AND LOVE

YES to enthusiastic, consensual sex.

Before you start anything sexual, always ask first. Show your respect by not assuming you get to choose everything. Sex is always better when you're both enthusiastic, get to choose and each of you can change your mind at any time.

Take "no" for an answer. If you ask and she says "no", "maybe" or nothing, don't keep pressing. You wouldn't force her to have a drink if she didn't feel like it. She might change her mind later – that's her right.

Can she say yes? If she's out of it on drugs or alcohol, or you're threatening her, she's not able to agree to sex. So just stop. Better still, if she's not able to give consent, don't ask to begin with. It's illegal. [Click here](#) or scan the QR code for an easy explainer video showing how consent for sex is the same as consent for a cup of tea.



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Keep checking. Before doing anything different, ask again. If you don't get a "Yes" then don't pressure her. It's always better with an enthusiastic "Yes!"

The real deal is sexier. Make it a real experience where you're both comfortable about being yourselves. The real thing is sexier anyway.

Should the man lead? You might think that you have the right to sex, or that it's your job to take charge and lead, but your partner likely disagrees. Women should have an equal say in the bedroom. When you throw out those old scripts telling you how men and women should act, it's better for everyone.

Trustworthy is sexy. Asking her if she's into it and respecting her reply is a good way to build a respectful relationship, just like planning a date or a holiday together.

Let her choose. Threats are not a good idea. They're violent and illegal. If you threaten her, she can't freely agree, so stop. It's much sexier to let her choose how to behave.



YOUR ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT CHECKLIST

Take a second before you proceed to think	✓
Have I thought about what I really want, here, with this person? Be honest with yourself and the other person. Check what your values tell you is right.	
What do they want here? Get more info by asking them.	
Does it fit the NUDE Acronym? The NUDE Acronym below can help you make sure all consent is given willingly and enthusiastically.	

N NO STRINGS ATTACHED. THEY'RE FREE TO SAY YES OR NO AS THEY PLEASE.

U UNDERSTOOD. THEY KNOW WHAT WILL BE INVOLVED. EVERY ACTION REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING AND CONSENT.

D DELIBERATE. THEY AREN'T UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS, AND AREN'T BEING PRESSURED TO PARTICIPATE.

E EMPHATIC. IT NEEDS TO BE A DEFINITE, CLEAR YES. A MAYBE, SILENCE, OR HESITATION SHOULD BE TREATED AS A NO.

PORN - WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

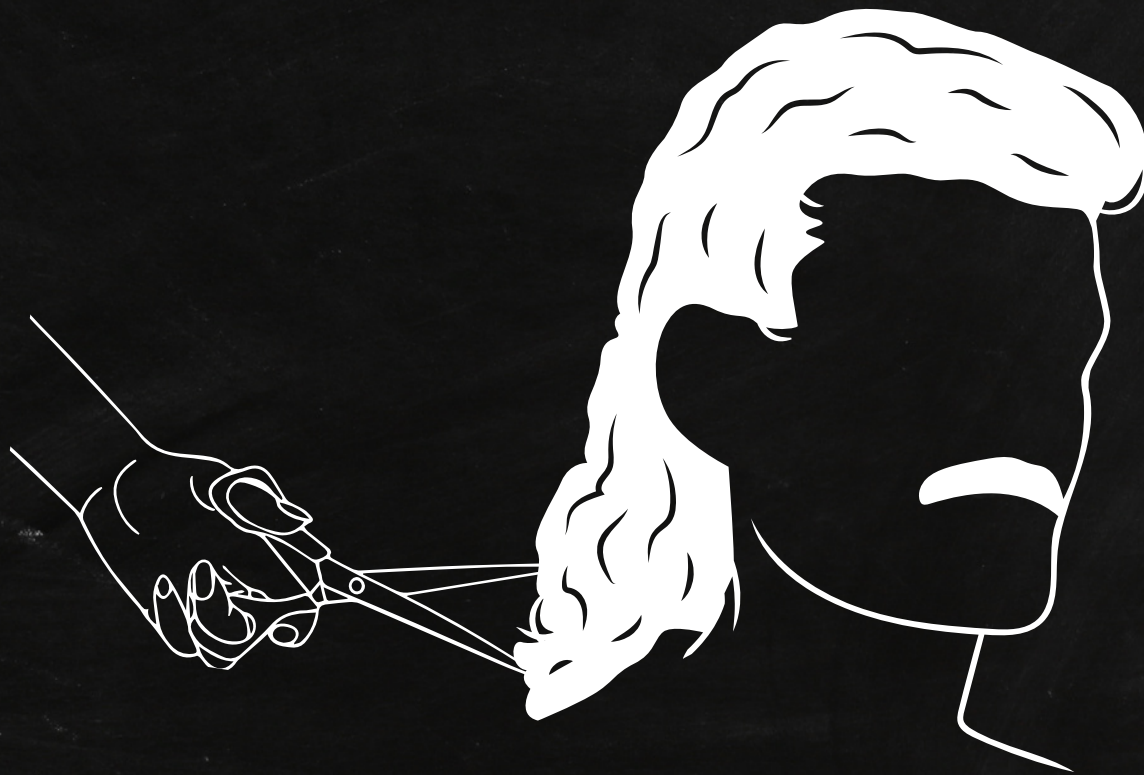
It's time to get critical about porn.

Who has the power? Does everyone give their consent? Most porn shows non-consensual sex and doesn't help us develop healthy ideas of respectful sex. See how much violence or abuse there is. And look at who uses violence against who. See how this is mainly directed against women. Porn is a turn on, but it links sex with violence against women, so really check how porn affects your attitudes and relationships, and even your behaviour.

Look at how porn affects you and ensure you're in charge of yourself. If you look at lots of porn your brain will get wired to it. You want to be turned on by real bodies, real situations and relationships and real respect.

Keep it real.

Porn is unreal, while real relationships are between equals, who are enthusiastic about being together. Check you're treating women with respect, and that there's always enthusiastic consent. By developing your own skills to have good, real sex it'll be more satisfying, in every way possible.



HOW YOU BEHAVE

You might be worried that you're using violence towards your partner or other women. If you think your behaviour is disrespectful, then it's time to take responsibility for your actions.



Believe in a better life. Nothing is set in stone – you can learn and change, and that includes learning new ways of acting.



Choose respect. Think about the kind of man you want to be. If you're a dad, think about giving your kids a better, happier life.



Check out your behaviour. Ask your partner or other people what they think about your actions.



Open up. Talk to someone you trust. This might be a mate, a family member or a counsellor. Talking can really help.



Try new ways. Look at how other men show respect, or take a course to learn what you need to do. Visit MensLine for help at mensline.org.au



Walking the talk. Start by trying the respectful actions in this toolbox. They might feel awkward at first, but like a new pair of shoes, they'll get more comfortable the more you use them.



Think about how you're feeling. If you feel like you're going to lose it, don't go back to your old ways – take time out to calm down. When you're ready to talk respectfully, you're ready to choose new ways of acting.



One step at a time. Rome wasn't built in a day, and nobody's perfect. Give yourself time to change, and use your mistakes to learn and grow. Try hanging with guys who show women respect, and soon you'll be like them – and like most men.



Put things right. Front up to the people you've hurt, admit that your actions affected them, and listen to what they have to say. It's the only way to rebuild trust, and it takes time.



Look after yourself. Caring for others means caring for yourself too. Manage your stress and mental well-being, as well as your physical health. Eat well, get some exercise – and go easy on alcohol and drugs.

ALL ABOUT INFLUENCE

YES to influencing other men.

When you've made some changes in your life and your behaviour, and you're getting comfortable with showing respect, it can be upsetting to see other men being violent to women. Here are some ways you can help them learn to behave with respect

Be yourself with your mates. No need to lecture – your good example can make a difference, so live by your values. Talk about your partner as an equal, and show that you decide things together. Mention the things you appreciate about her.

Question set ideas about men. Ask your mates why men always have to live in the 'Man Box' and always be right or act tough. Show you disagree when another man says something disrespectful towards women – not by smiling or laughing, but by staying silent, turning away or walking off. Or better still, you can say:

Why would you say that?

I know it's a joke, but it's just not funny.

Think about what you just said.

Come on, mate, you're better than that.

I don't think we'd agree with that, would we guys?

Bro, not cool.

Most men are respectful. They might not have the confidence to show this in front of their mates, but you'll have their support if you speak up.

Be a good example to your kids. By your actions and language, show your kids how to respect each other and how they're worthy of respect themselves. Treat your sons and daughters the same way.

Stand up. Wear the white ribbon, and talk about what it represents. Tell other men about this toolbox, and use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, or even plain old conversation to encourage other men to say **YES** to respectful relationships.



THE BARBER SHOP



Thank you to White Ribbon New Zealand, who allowed us to adapt this resource for the White Ribbon Australia Barber Shop.

White Ribbon New Zealand. (2020). Respectful Relationships. Retrieved from <https://whiteribbon.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Toolbox-Respectful-Relationships-White-Ribbon.pdf>