****

**Advocacy Suggestions During 16 Days 2019**

There are many things that we can do to help advocate for an end to gender-based violence. No matter where in the world you live and what context you are in, think about the following:

* **WHICH** specific thing you would like to see improve or change? There may be many things! But it is helpful to pick one and follow the process below for each thing you want to address, so that your advocacy can be targeted and clear.
* **DOES** anyone in your local area have a specific expertise on this issue? For example, it is very sensible to speak to a local project – such as a refuge - to find out what support is lacking for their services, which you could then advocate for.
* **WHO** in your community/country might be in a position to influence that change? We can advocate to anyone who might be in a position to help influence or change things… you can decide to go as high-level or as local as you like. So, it could be your local councillors, your government, or even your local church or community leaders.
* **HOW** might you, or someone you know, be able to get in touch with them or meet them?

When you contact them/meet them, be clear on the following beforehand:

* **WHAT** is the message that you want them to understand? (i.e. what would you like to see happen, and what they can do to help get there)
* **What** is the current situation (i.e. what is the reason why that change is needed, why is what you are asking important?)
* **WHY** should they did what you ask (i.e. what would it achieve? How would the current situation change as a result of their action what would the benefit be)

Tips:

* **It is good to ask questions!** Even asking questions about what is being provided in a certain area can help put an issue on someone’s radar.
* **It is good to listen!** If there is resistance, it is good to show that you are willing to listen to help understand why there is resistance. This may help them to realise that you are not just “demanding” something, but willing to walk alongside and support them to bring about change together. It can also reveal the obstacles that they may face in bringing about change – and therefore give you insights in who else to advocate to or other areas that need to be addressed first in order to bring about the change you are hoping for.
* **Take** a notepad and pen, and feel free to take in with you any key bullet points or details that may help you.
* **Persist!** It can take time for change to take place… but polite persistence can really work.

Below are a few specific ideas for Britain & Ireland which you could choose from, to do during this year’s 16 days. Why not join with others in your local area and encourage them to do the same thing? There is strength in numbers!

**Engaging your Church:**

* Inform your church leaders about gender-based violence and ask them to better inform themselves on the issue;
* Encourage training on this area for anyone that you know in a public facing role, which may help them identify and support victims. There are courses that can be taken.
* Mothers’ Union will be adding posters and leaflets closer to the 16 days which you can put up in your church, local community and share with others to encourage them to do the same.

**Church Pack**

Restored have published a pack for churches specifically on ending domestic abuse: [Ending Domestic Abuse: A Pack for Churches](https://www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/download/58/). This would be a very sensible starting point on addressing this one form of gender-based violence. How about promoting it to other churches in your area too and inviting them to join with you on the advocacy points above?

**Other broader messages**In conversations, take a stand against root causes of gender-based violence, such as harmful attitudes and norms about men and women.

* Ask your government or leaders to support or make national, local and customary laws that prohibit all forms of violence against women and girls.

**Methods of communicating with leaders**

* Arrange a meeting
* Send an email or a letter
* Send an invitation to an event on gender-based violence
* Contact your local media, such as radio and newspaper, to let them know what you are doing and to encourage others to take part in the campaign
* Use social media

And remember - there are other people in your area who may feel passionate about this. When you have a clear direction, you can bring other people from your church or community on board to advocate for the same thing. Something started during these 16 days could be something you see change throughout the year ahead…