

HBR Article: how men can confront other men

Here are practical tips for men on confronting sexist behavior among peers, particularly in a factory or similar environments:

1. Build Awareness of Sexism

- **Educate Yourself:** Understand the impact of sexist comments or actions. This might include casual jokes or dismissive behavior that undermines women.
- **Be Observant:** Pay attention to subtle behaviors, such as women being interrupted or excluded from conversations.

2. Lead by Example

- **Model Respectful Behavior:** Demonstrate inclusive language and actions in your interactions.
- **Be Consistent:** Make it clear through your behavior that you value equality and inclusivity.

3. Address Behavior Privately

- **Choose the Right Moment:** If a colleague makes a sexist comment, address it privately to avoid public embarrassment.
- **Be Direct Yet Respectful:** Use "I" statements to express your concerns. For example, "I noticed that comment might have been uncomfortable for someone. Let's be mindful of our words."

4. Use Humor or Deflection in the Moment

- **Break the Ice:** Respond to a sexist joke with something like, "That one's a bit outdated, don't you think?" This approach can disarm without escalating.

5. Create a Supportive Space for Feedback

- **Encourage Others to Speak Up:** Let peers know you're open to hearing their perspectives, especially if they feel uncomfortable with certain behaviors.
- **Support Women Who Speak Out:** If a female colleague raises concerns, back her up.

6. Leverage Your Influence

- **Talk to Leaders:** Advocate for policies or programs that promote inclusivity, such as anti-harassment training or mentorship programs.
- **Challenge Norms:** Question processes or cultures that perpetuate gender inequality, such as consistently assigning women administrative tasks.

7. Avoid Defensiveness

- **Focus on Learning:** If someone calls out your own behavior, listen with an open mind rather than reacting defensively.
- **Apologize and Improve:** If you've made a mistake, acknowledge it, apologize sincerely, and commit to better actions in the future.

8. Practice Allyship Daily

- **Invite Women into Conversations:** Ensure women are included in decision-making and meetings.
- **Mentor and Advocate:** Support female colleagues in career advancement by mentoring them or recommending them for opportunities.

9. Use Empathy

- **Put Yourself in Her Shoes:** Imagine how certain comments or actions might feel if you were on the receiving end.
- **Ask Questions:** If unsure whether something might be offensive, ask for perspective in a respectful manner.