Teacher’s Guide

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**Program Overview**

Huddle Up and Make The Call utilizes the power of student-led initiatives and athlete testimonials to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Gender-based Violence includes violence against women and girls, sexual harassment, sexual assault, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of violence linked to gender identity. By promoting and supporting equitable, healthy relationships and safe environments for all students, Huddle Up and Make The Call empowers and inspires students to engage their peers and communities in ending all forms of Gender-based Violence.

Huddle Up and Make the Call was piloted by the Toronto Argonauts and White Ribbon with funding from Status of Women Canada. This toolkit and Teacher’s Guide, is intended to support teachers in facilitating a student-led Gender-based Violence Prevention Committee inspired by the Huddle and Make the Call program. The Huddle Up and Make the Call brand cannot be used without prior permission from White Ribbon.

**Considering Huddle Up and Make the Call for My Students**

The benefits of proactively addressing Gender-based Violence are significant. Students and the wider community stand to gain a safer environment and leadership on a pressing issue that affects people of all gender identities. In order to apply the Huddle Up and Make the Call model in your school, please consider the following:

- **Time** – it takes 15 to 20 hours over the school year for a staff advisor to coordinate the Prevention Committee and engage with community partners

- **Community Engagement** – What are the opportunities to connect with community resources such as a violence against women and girls organization, including White Ribbon, and a local sports organization?

- **Resources** – Will your school provide food for Prevention Committee meetings? Cover printing costs for surveys and posters? Will your plan include a fundraising activity?
Sample Gender-based Violence Prevention Committee Program Calendar

Before the school year begins
Review the resources in this toolkit – get familiar with the issues and choose key activities to share with students (4 hours)

1. **Getting Started** gives you an overview of issues and Huddle Up and Make the Call program model
2. **Sport as Emotion** explains how consent culture and healthy masculinity are necessary for effective leadership, belonging and inclusion.
3. **Off the Field** is about how we can use skills related to consent culture, healthy masculinity and active bystander skills to prevent Gender-based Violence in our everyday lives
4. **The Fans** offers information and skills about using our influence as role models to promote healthy masculinity and consent culture

Make connections with your community partners – local violence against women and girls organizations, White Ribbon and a local sports organization (1 hour)

**September**
Committee selection and first meeting (1 hour)

- Invite members of the student body to lead the Committee and hold your first meeting
- Consider inviting an expert from a local violence against women and girls organization or White Ribbon to introduce the topic of Gender-based Violence Prevention to the Committee
- Identify core questions for the School Climate Survey

**October/November**
Students conduct the pre-assembly School Climate Survey (1 hour)

Committee members attend a game together. You may be able to negotiate tickets courtesy of your local sports organization.

**January**
Students organize and conduct the school-wide assembly (2 hours preparation, 45min - 1 hour assembly)

**February – April**
Prevention Committee organizes activities to continue the conversation (5 hours)

1. Get your information from the experts
2. Build your GBV prevention skills
3. Sustain the conversation
"Our school combined HUMC with ongoing social justice activities in our school. For example, we did a mural in response to issue of murdered and missing indigenous women. We saw this as an opportunity to connect the program to current issues regarding gender-based violence." - Teacher

May
Students conduct the post-activity School Climate Survey (1 hour)
Final Prevention Committee meeting to review the survey results and plan for next year (1 hour)

How to Select Committee Members

"Students really took ownership of the assembly and other Huddle Up and Make the Call activities. We wanted to make sure this was student-led." - Teacher

The Committee functions best when it includes students across the gender spectrum. Young men, young women, and trans-people will have the opportunity to talk frankly with each other about Gender-based Violence and learn from each other’s insights. By collaborating, they learn to work together to become the solution to ending discrimination and violence.

Consider including students from various social groups – athletes, student leaders, students who feel strongly about the topic, and students looking for an opportunity to become more involved at school. Including a range of grade levels sets up mentoring opportunities between older and younger students, and builds in succession from year to year.

You can work towards a supportive, safe environment by asking Committee members what ground rules they want for their discussions and planning sessions. The conversation can easily become emotionally
charged and intensely personal for students. In order to direct their energies towards the group’s goals and handle conflict in a healthy way a set of Ground Rules might include:

- Confidentiality (make sure you are clear any exceptions, e.g. your legal and professional obligations to report ongoing violence)
- No one will be put on the spot – you can always pass
- Step up (quiet people will be given opportunities to contribute) and step down (the talkers will be reminded to leave space for quieter members)
- Approach conflict with curiosity, e.g. “Why do you see it that way?”
- Speak for yourself, not for others

**Partnering with Violence Against Women and Girls Experts**

Huddle Up and Make the Call works as a unit to empower young people to address Gender-based Violence. The unit includes a dedicated leader (teacher, coach, community leader) who coordinates players/students, a professional sports organization and an organization with expertise in Gender-based Violence and violence against women and girls.

Empowerment means recognizing that everyone is an expert in their own experience. As men and boys, we are familiar with the pressures to “act like a man” and the violence that we experience as boys and young men. We know firsthand the positive aspects of living as a man. Because men and boys don’t often get to talk openly about what it means to be a man, you can be sure that once you start the conversation it will take on a life of its own.

As men and boys, we don’t have access to the experiences of women and girls. When you partner with a local violence against women organization, you will find that the impact of your student project extends further into the community. You will benefit from the decades of research and practical experience with Gender-based Violence that violence against women organizations have accumulated, including information on what kinds of violence women and girls in your community are facing.

Together we have the experience, expertise and resources to prevent and respond to Gender-based Violence.
Partnering with a Local Sports Organization

You can translate the lessons learned from the White Ribbon and Toronto Argonauts partnership into a creative relationship with your local sports organization.

The Toronto Argonauts have run the Huddle Up anti-bullying campaign in schools for years, and in partnership with White Ribbon, expanded Huddle Up to include Gender-based Violence. Huddle Up and Make the Call was born.

Interested athletes received training from White Ribbon and went out to schools to tell their stories of surviving domestic abuse as a child, witnessing homophobic bullying in their school lives, and watching misogynist attitudes among their peers grow into physical and sexual violence against women.

“My perspective is, I know we all go through something, so how is it that I can help you become a better person?” – Chuck Winters, former Toronto Argonaut

They also talked about what they did to intervene in violent situations, told stories about reaching out to friends during dark times in their lives, supporting woman friends when they were being harassed in school, and challenging male friends when they were using violence against others in their life. They demonstrate that status isn’t based on a lack of respect towards women or living out harmful gender stereotypes.

"The players and their powerful stories make all the difference. It's hard not to be affected by them." - Teacher
Partnership with a local sports organization amplifies your message. The average Argos fan is male, 25-34 years old. Twelve to nineteen year olds describe the Argonauts as passionate, tough, exciting and inspirational. Combining the Gender-based Violence messaging expertise of White Ribbon with the Argos audience resulted in reaching hundreds of thousands of men and boys. The Argos provided ad space around the stadium, on their website and showed the #littleactions PSA at every home game.

How to Shape Your Message

As the Committee begins having conversations among themselves, with guest speakers and with their peers, it is important to choose our language carefully. Gender-based Violence and violence against women and girls are sensitive issues and talking about them publicly requires care. Your objective is to be compelling, to speak in a way that men and boys can hear, but not to force anyone into a conversation.

Here are seven tips on how to positively engage students, athletes and community members in preventing Gender-based Violence and violence against women and girls.

1. Acknowledge that gender-based violence affects us all

Any person of any gender may experience violence. Using the term Gender-based Violence reminds us that our gender makes us more or less vulnerable to various forms of violence – boys are more likely to experience childhood sexual abuse, women aged 16-24 are most likely to experience sexual assault from a partner or friend, LGBTQ+ and Trans people regularly face homophobic and transphobic violence.

Focus on the people who are most vulnerable to violence – women, children, Trans and LGBTQ+ people live with the most severe and prevalent forms of Gender-based Violence.

It’s a statistical reality that most men are not violent, but most Gender-based Violence comes from men. We have to hold that reality along with the fact that some boys have been abused by their mothers, that men can sometimes be the target of domestic abuse from a woman partner, that domestic violence in same-sex couples is also real.

We are all affected, and that means we all stand to benefit from reducing Gender-based Violence.
2. **Keep the conversation “safe”**

Anytime we talk about Gender-based Violence, there is likely someone in the room who has experienced sexual assault and harassment. You don’t want to re-victimize someone and plunge them back into an experience they don’t want. Give a trigger warning at the beginning of your presentations. Make it acceptable for people to participate actively, simply listen, or to leave the room.

3. **Focus on strengths**

Men and boys have a positive role to play in preventing Gender-based Violence and violence against women and girls. We can challenge violence wherever we find it – at school, in our families, among friends, in our own lives. We are building a culture of consent, where people respect each other’s boundaries and are free to negotiate their intimate relationships, without pressure. There are many healthy, positive ways to express masculinity and to be a man.

4. **Clearly name violent behaviour in all its forms**

Many people do not understand that violence can be subtle, that much of the harm women and girls experience is not technically illegal or even physical. Be clear that threats, emotional abuse, minimizing sexual assault with humour, as well as sexual assault and physical abuse are all forms of violence.

Saying “violence is wrong” is important, but only goes so far. Men and boys are often not educated about the impact of non-physical violence, so always take the opportunity to explain the impact on a person’s mental health, social status, self-confidence, as well as physical harm.

It’s important to keep in mind that people often use violence when they feel a lack of power in their own life. Shaming people when they use violence further isolates them and creates the need for more violence, more control. It’s more productive to clearly denounce someone’s violent behaviour as an example of rape culture than to scapegoat the few individuals who get caught. Make it everyone’s responsibility to hold each other accountable and call our violence.

5. **Push back against victim blaming**

A common assumption is that survivors of violence are somehow at fault. Whether it’s asking what someone was wearing, why they were out so late, or accusing them of seeking revenge with false allegations, survivors face a hostile environment when they decide to look for support. You can make it safer for people to come forward and seek help by insisting that it is never the survivor’s fault that somebody chose to hurt them. The responsibility lies with the person using violence, and the culture of silence that allows them to do so.

6. **Language matters**

The word survivor, rather than “victim”, reminds us that a person who experiences violence and comes out the other side is showing tremendous personal strength and resilience.

As men and boys addressing violence against women and girls, it’s useful to ask ourselves if we are trying to “help” women and girls, or support them. “Helping” suggests that we are good guys doing something nice for women, and that we know what would be most helpful. Supporting reminds us that survivors are in charge of their own lives, will make their own decisions about how to address violence against women and girls, and that our role is to make those choices possible.
7. **Regularly acknowledge the expertise of Gender-based Violence and violence against women and girls experts**

Gender-based violence organizations have decades of experience in responding to violence against women and girls. Women and girls are the experts in their lives, and men’s efforts to address violence against women and girls need to harmonize with what women are asking for. We are joining a team of people that has a long-established playbook and team chemistry, so keep an open line of communication to your local violence against women and girls organizations and the needs of survivors of Gender-based violence. When people praise you for addressing violence against women and girls, don’t forget to give credit where credit is due.

**Pre-Assembly School Climate Survey**

In order to learn about the needs of your school community, Committee members survey their peers. The survey questions should address the following elements of Gender-based Violence:

1. **Ability to recognize street and school harassment, consent, healthy relationships, offensive gendered language and violent or discriminatory behaviour.**
2. **Level of awareness of street and school harassment, offensive language and discriminatory behaviours within your school.**
3. **Sites of violence and who is targeted, e.g. locker room, classroom, circle of friends**
4. **Knowing how to support fellow students and community members who have experienced harassment and discriminatory behaviour, e.g. How to speak up against offensive language or discrimination against women and girls.**
5. **Awareness level of resources to prevent and report Gender-based Violence (at school and in the community).**

**Appendix B** offers a Sample School Climate Survey, which you can download here.

Once questions are chosen, the Committee will survey the student body with your help. Consider how to best reach a large number of students easily. You will also need to consider including a trigger warning, and ensuring that students can choose not to participate in the survey. Most Gender-based Violence goes unreported and you are unlikely to know whether or not a student is struggling with a current or past experience of violence – it is imperative that they get to choose for themselves how to participate in activities about Gender-based Violence, if at all.

Once the Committee has collected and analyzed the survey responses, they can use this information to plan the school-wide assembly and follow up activities. They may choose to share highlights from the survey at the assembly, or ask the speakers to focus on topics that need to be addressed, as revealed by the survey.
School-wide Assembly

"The players and their powerful stories make all the difference. It's hard not to be affected by them." - Teacher

A school-wide assembly kicks off the conversation about Gender-based Violence in the wider school community. By including student emcee’s, community experts in Gender-based Violence and the personal stories of professional athletes, the entire school community is invited to take a step towards a safe inclusive and healthy school climate for people of all gender identities. The assembly can last from 45 minutes to 1 hour in length.

Sample Student Roles in Organizing the School-wide Assembly

- School liaison/s: Connect with school administration regarding allocated assembly space. They will also work on outreach to the student body through in-class presentations, public announcements, posters, tabling and so on.
- Content organizer/s: Create skits, presentations, talking points or any content the committee wants to present to the assembly.
- Equipment organizer/s: Work with school staff to arrange for sound equipment, projectors and any other equipment necessary for the assembly.
- Program partners liaison/s: Connect with White Ribbon and a local sports organization for any support they may need organizing the assembly, as well as coordinating student activities with social media campaigns, special dates, etc. being observed by White Ribbon and sports partners.
- Social media organizer/s: Take a lead role in creating school-wide social media initiatives in order to promote the upcoming assembly.

Roles vary in the amount of work and the skills necessary to succeed. Students may wish to take on multiple roles or share a role between two students whose skills complement each other.
Sample Assembly Timeline
Total time: 45 minutes

1. Welcome from Gender-based Violence Prevention Committee Emcees (5 minutes)
   a. Share the Committee’s purpose and the reasons for an assembly
   b. Let people know what’s coming up in this assembly
   c. Create a safe space, including a trigger warning, identifying support people and giving permission to leave

2. White Ribbon Representative (10 minutes)
   a. What is Gender-based Violence?
   b. What is the role of men and boys in preventing Gender-based Violence?
   c. Examples of how to prevent Gender-based Violence

3. Video or Student Presentation (3-5 minutes)
   a. #littleactions PSA or,
   b. skit, spoken word, music by students

4. Professional athlete testimonial (10 minutes)
   a. E.g. team alumnus

5. Professional athlete testimonial (10 minutes)
   a. E.g. current player

6. Closing from Prevention Committee Emcees (5 minutes)
   a. Thank you’s
   b. What to expect next from the Committee

“I saw kids come up to me and say thank you, that message helped me out. I saw kids sitting in the background, in uncomfortable situations, laughing to deflect attention from them. Kids with their heads down, kids becoming emotional. Saying, ‘Thank you, I didn’t know how I could deal with this because I felt alone.’ I spoke to over 5000 kids over the past three years. Fifty of them come up to you afterwards and that’s a small percentage, but that’s the beginning of the healing.” – Chuck Winters, former Toronto Argonaut
Post-Assembly Activities
In the weeks following the school-wide assembly, the Committee is encouraged to build on the momentum by engaging their school and community in a variety of ways. These activities sustain the conversation about Gender-based Violence and allow students to get creative and make their learning fit their school and personalities.

Example activities
After the school-wide assembly, the Committee will continue to learn from violence against women and girls experts, build their own skills to prevent Gender-based Violence and engage the wider school community. Below are some examples of how Gender-based Violence Prevention Committees have achieved these three stages.

1. Get your information from the experts

Guest speakers – The Committee may have already met with a representative from a women’s organization, women’s shelter, crisis centre, university gender issues department, LGBTQ+ advocate, White Ribbon or a teacher or school board representative experienced in gender issues. They may wish to invite another guest speaker with expertise in an area of interest to the Committee.

Displays and tabling - Invite local women’s shelters, crisis centres, White Ribbon and youth drop-in programs to set up violence awareness tables in your school lobby during lunchtime.

2. Build your Gender-based Violence prevention skills

Use the Skills Practice activities in this toolkit to explore consent, healthy masculinity and active bystander intervention. Once the Committee has made these skills their own, they will be in a position to share their knowledge with peers and family.
3. **Sustain the conversation**

The number of ways to keep the momentum going is limited only by students imagination and the time they have available. Below are a number of activities that have been used by Huddle and Make the Call student committees.

a. Invite a guest speaker from a VAW organization, White Ribbon or a university Gender Studies department to give a talk to your group. Possible topics:
   i. Men and boys’ role in responding to and preventing Gender-based Violence
   ii. Understanding different kinds of GBV (dating violence and violence in relationships, sexual assault, violence against Indigenous women, violence against LGBTQ+ people)
   iii. Consent Culture
   iv. Flirting vs. Harassment
   v. Gender-based Violence and social media

b. "We engaged our local police division as a way to make this a community-wide initiative." - Teacher

c. Organize your team or classmates to sign the White Ribbon pledge: “I pledge never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women.”

d. Hold a lunchtime event that displays a range of [Draw-the-Line](#) scenario cards. Challenge each other to create responses to the scenarios and use a hashtag like #littleactions to share. Choose social media platforms that let people be creative, share video, images and their comments.

e. Get the help of students interested in drama and video production to create a short Public Service Announcement that demonstrates a practical way people can prevent GBV.
f. “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” is a great way to tackle the serious issue of VAWG while not taking ourselves too seriously. Plan a route through your community and walk a mile in women’s shoes to raise awareness about the violence faced by women and girls. Collect pledges to raise funds for White Ribbon and/or your local violence against women and girls organization and invite athletes and public figures to join in your walk.

g. Screen a film or series of short videos at your school or community centre on a topic like consent or positive masculinity. Host a discussion or panel afterward about men’s role in ending Gender-based Violence.

h. As a team, create a banner or mural for your school lobby, community centre, or sports facility.
i. One of the most powerful things you can do as an ally to survivors of Gender-based Violence is to let them know they aren’t alone. Organize a public event in partnership with a violence against women and girls organization to make it clear that you stand with survivors.

j. As role models to peers and younger kids, how do you model consent? Can you explain what #consent is between friends, intimate partners, among teammates?

k. Create posters for your school, locker room or classroom that describe healthy masculinity and encourage people to challenge specific forms of Gender-based Violence that happen at your school, at home, or among friends.

l. Be creative! Use your poetry, spoken word pieces, music or visual art to get your message across.

m. Mark important dates with messages in your school’s morning announcements or at practice.
   i. The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence begins on November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and ends on December 10 (Human Rights Day).
   ii. December 6 marks the anniversary of the Montréal Massacre, and people across Canada renew their commitment to ending violence against women and girls on this day.
   iii. International Women’s Day (March 8) celebrates the strength of women and girls.
iv. Sexual Assault Awareness Month (May) is a great time to talk about consent culture before prom.

n. Aboriginal women report violent victimization of both spousal and non-spousal violence, at a much higher rate (2.5 times) than compared to non-Aboriginal women. Honour the strength of Indigenous women and girls by learning how all Canadians can stop the particularly severe violence they face.

o. Don’t do it alone! Hold a discussion group that meets regularly to learn about the different forms of Gender-based Violence, strategies to prevent it, and promote positive masculinity in all aspects of life, on and off the field.

Post-activity School Climate Survey
After the school-wide assembly and follow up activities, the Committee conducts the School Climate Survey again to evaluate the changes in the perception and attitude of their peers. With the awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement, the Committee can make suggestions for next year’s group.

Final Note
As the staff advisor of the student-led Gender-based Violence Prevention Committee, your role is to convene the right people to work together and help the Committee move toward their goals. You will create a network of people that empower students to recognize and respond to Gender-based Violence in ways that fit their unique situations. Welcome to an exciting journey!
Appendix A: Sample Huddle Up and Make the Call Poster

Below is sample event poster. Consider including images from your local sports organization and include the logos and social media accounts of your partners.
Appendix B: Sample School Climate Survey

1. Does harassment occur in your school?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Unsure

2. If you witness or experience sexual harassment at your school, would you reach out to anyone at your school?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Unsure

3. Do you feel you are able to speak up to a fellow student who is sexually harassing (whether physically or verbally) another student?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Unsure

4. Do you feel you would know what to say to a student who is sexually harassing (whether physically or verbally) another student?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Unsure

5. Do you feel there are supports in place at your school for students who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Unsure

6. Aggressive men are real men
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Not Sure
   - [ ] Agree
7. Guys can't help themselves, they need more sex than women do

- Strongly Agree
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Not Sure
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8. There are times when a woman says no, but she really means yes

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Not Sure
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

9. Crying, talking about emotions and expressing feelings are what women do, not men

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Not Sure
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
10. It is ok for a man to fight someone, if the other person insulted him

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Not Sure

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree