



White Supremacy in the Movement to End Violence Against Women

Written by the staff of Men Stopping Violence

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White supremacy, the foundation of this country, is once again exposed by the police murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade and countless others. Located in the movement to end violence against women, Men Stopping Violence calls on our fellow travelers in this movement to examine what this means about our work. The time is now for us to stop and examine our heavy reliance on the criminal legal system and the police as we work to keep women safe. It is clear to anyone who is watching the news that US police departments have been increasingly militarized for the direct purpose of oppressing, marginalizing, and containing communities of color. As part of the movement to end violence against women we also understand that the rise in militarism feeds dangerous masculinity, which leads to violence against women.

For too long, the mainstream battered women's movement has engaged the criminal justice system in ways that has led to safety for some, but injustice and further violence for many, especially communities on the margins. When we rely on the criminal legal system, the implication is that "good" men, "regular" men, do not engage in abuse of women. The reality is that all men have behaviors that are somewhere on the spectrum of abuse or violence against women, just as all white people have behaviors that are somewhere on the spectrum of abuse or violence against people of color.

In that police are the enforcers of systemic racism and sexism, reliance on them is actually undermining our work to create safer communities. At this moment in history, it is critical to acknowledge that African American men are already criminalized by the United States. We cannot stand with George Floyd while, at the same time, relying solely on the police to hold men accountable for violence against women.

Men Stopping Violence is ready to engage with others in our movement who are serious about ending violence, who see that we cannot rely on a militarized police force to end violence, who understand that white supremacy must be addressed in our work. Many of you are familiar with our community accountability model. At the core, this model shows how colonialism and patriarchy maintain the mandate for men's use of violence in relationships. The model also explains the prevalence of police brutality and state sponsored violence. At the same time, the model illustrates a pathway to creating solutions to violence against women outside the criminal legal system.

The community accountability model guides our work as we move forward to meet the challenges of the times. We are beginning the process of creating a class for white people who wish to be allies, modeled after our Men At Work classes. This is the beginning. Men Stopping Violence invites you to reach out to us with ideas and strategies for change. If we seek peace, we must demand justice.