

POLISHED
MAN

ACTIVATION TOOLKIT

LOCAL LEGENDS

THANKS FOR BEING A LOCAL LEGEND!

Polished Man is building a community of men against gendered violence.

At the heart of this movement are people like you, our local legends. We know that when trusted role models take a stand, they inspire more men to follow their lead, raising the bar until violence is unacceptable.

So we've created this toolkit to support you to spark conversations about ending violence in your community. In it you'll find:



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- 01** Ideas for community activations you can run
 - 02** Event planning guide to help things run smoothly
 - 03** Messaging guides, so you can speak to people with confidence and clarity
 - 04** Downloadable posters and materials you can print
 - 05** Resources for further information and support that you can share with your community
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*Together we can build
communities free from violence*

WHAT WILL YOUR ACTIVATION FOCUS ON?

Gender-based violence is a big issue, and it can be hard to know where to start.

Choose a topic that matters to you and your community. You can choose one topic, or multiple.

1

Shifting rigid gender norms that drive violence

Outdated ideas about what it means to “be a man” pressure men to act tough, hide their feelings and value being in control. These expectations hurt men’s wellbeing, and are a key driver of violence against women and children. You could explore

- What did we learn growing up about being “strong”? What does strength look like to us now?
- Where do we see pressure to “man up” at work, in sport or in our friendship groups?
- How can we make it normal for men and boys to show care, ask for help and be themselves?

2

Standing with Victim-survivors

Violence often happens behind closed doors, and much of it isn’t physical. When we understand what victim-survivors go through, we can show up with care. Painting a nail is one simple way for men to show that violence isn’t okay and that victim-survivors aren’t alone. You could explore:

- What does family, domestic and sexual violence look like beyond physical harm?
- Why is it so hard for people to speak up or leave, and what do victim-survivors say they need from the people around them?
- What does it look like for men to stand in solidarity every day, not just once?
- How can our club, workplace or group make it clear that we’re a safe place?

3

Having courageous conversations

Most of us have heard a “dodgy joke”, noticed a mate who’s not okay, or had someone open up about something hard, and we weren’t sure what to say. Courageous conversations don’t need perfect words, just a willingness to speak up, listen and care. You could explore:

- How comfortable do we feel having courageous conversations? What stops us from saying something when we see harmful behaviour, and what would make it easier?
- What are some simple, safe ways to step in, like changing the subject, checking in later or naming it directly?
- If someone shares something difficult with us, how do we listen, believe them and connect them to support?

4

Building respectful, equal relationships

Healthy relationships are built on respect, consent and shared responsibility, whether at home, at work or with partners. You could explore:

- What does consent and mutual respect look like in practice?
- How do we share the load of work, care and family life?
- What did we see modelled growing up, and what do we want to model now?



GET INSPIRED

COMMUNITY ACTIVATION IDEAS

You don't need to be an expert to lead change, just a willingness to start a conversation.

Here are a few ways you can activate your community:



DINNER & DIALOGUE

Host a shared meal and use table prompts to guide conversation. Keep it informal, sometimes the best discussions happen over food.

PANEL OR FIRESIDE CHAT

Invite diverse speakers to share their perspectives on the topic you've chosen. These could be people you admire in your community who you think others could benefit to hear from. Leave time for Q&A to encourage real dialogue.

MOVIE OR THEATRE NIGHT

Host a screening of a film or attend a show that explores masculinity, relationships or ending gendered violence. Follow it with a short facilitated discussion to unpack themes and reactions.

ORGANISE A SPORTS DAY OR GOLF EVENT

Bring people together through sport, whether it's a golf day, friendly match or club challenge, and use the moment to promote positive role models,

♥ RUN A POLISHED MAN FUNDRAISER

Include a fundraising drive at your action to raise funds for prevention.

💬 "REAL TALK" Q&A NIGHT

Host an open Q&A session where people can anonymously submit questions about relationships, masculinity or calling out harmful behaviour. Invite an expert to guide the discussion.

🏆 COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Run a 30-day "Real Conversations" challenge in your workplace, gym or club, encouraging participants to paint their nails, and spark conversations in their own communities. Host a celebration at the end of the 30 days for people to share their experiences.

🏆 HOST A TRIVIA NIGHT

Run a fun, relaxed trivia night and weave in a few thoughtful questions about your topic, sparking meaningful conversations in an easy, low-pressure way.

📖 CURATED CONVERSATIONS

Choose a book, article or podcast episode that highlights your chosen topic. Meet monthly to reflect and discuss what resonates.



PLANNING YOUR ACTIVATION

So you have an idea - now it's time to dive into the detail to make it a reality. Use the step by step guide below to plan out your community activation.

STEP 1

SET THE FOUNDATIONS

Work out these key things that form the foundation of your activation:

Name of Activation	Main Activity (e.g movie night)	Date
Time	Location	Number of attendees

STEP 2

LEAD WITH PURPOSE

Before planning an activation, it's good to get clarity on why you are running the activation and what you want to achieve. Before diving too deep into the detail, first get clear on the following.

Purpose: Why are you running the activation? What is the big goal?

Hint: Connect your goal to your chosen topic

Example: To create space for my soccer club to challenge rigid gender norms.

Outcomes: What specific outcomes do you want to achieve through the activation?

These can be measurable such as the number of conversations you want to have, or the \$ you'd like to raise. Or the knowledge, skills and feelings you'd like people to leave with. You can include multiple outcomes.

Example:

1. People leave feeling more confident to have tough conversations in their communities
2. People have a strong understanding of gendered violence
3. 80% of people who showed up sign up to Polished Man to learn more and take further action
4. We raise \$500

STEP 3

SPREAD THE WORD

Outline the steps that you will take to recruit people to your activation. Some suggestions include

☐ Social Media

☐ Flyers

☐ Posters

☐ Email, Texts and Direct Messages

☐ Announcement at work/school meeting

It can also be helpful to have a target of how many people you'd like to engage in your activation. **We recommend allowing at least three weeks for recruitment if you can.**

STEP 4

DESIGN THE MOMENT

An agenda is a high-level plan for how time will be used in an event. It is a guide for you to map out when things should happen and how. Here is an example of an agenda for a Polished Man activation.

TIME	ACTIVITY
00:00 (20 mins)	Set Up Stall (Hang up posters, Put food out, Set up chairs and tables, Put Nail Polish on Tables)
00:20 (10 mins)	Acknowledgement of Country and Introduction to event
00:30 (30 mins)	Presentations from Guest Speakers
1:00-1:45 (45 mins)	Open Stall (Paint nails, encourage donations, take photos)
1:45-2:00 (15 mins)	Pack Down



STEP 5

GATHER YOUR TOOLS

It can be helpful to make a list of anything you'll need to run your activation, so you can figure out what you need to source. Things to consider include

- ☐ Things you'll need for set up - tape, blue tac, tables, chairs
- ☐ Things you'll need for tech - laptops, chargers, phone chargers, HDMI cables, speakers, cameras, microphone
- ☐ Things to support connection - name tags, lanyards, conversation starter cards, food
- ☐ Things to keep the space accessible - rubbish bags, signs, printed agendas

Below are some Polished Man campaign collaterel that you can use to bring your idea to life!

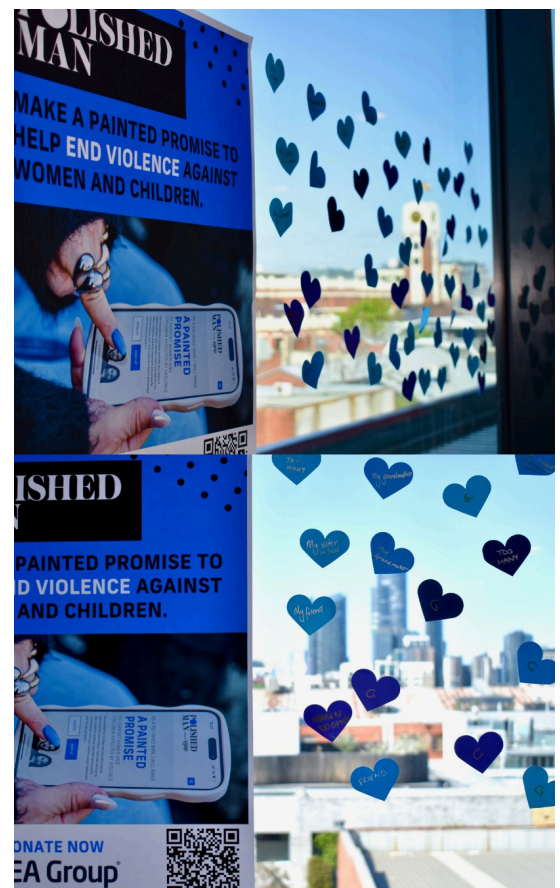
- ☐ Polished Man Printable Posters: → [Click here to download](#)
- ☐ Resource list for further support (page 13-14)
- ☐ [Polished Man Fundraising Page](#) - sign up and set up your own fundraising page . Anyone who self donates \$40 or more will receive a starter kit with nail polish, Nail Polish remover, a sticker, a branded tote bag and a pouch. Once your page is live, share your personal QR code so people can donate straight to your fundraiser.
- ☐ Polished Man Merch - Nail Polishes, T-Shirts, Hats (Coming Soon!)

STEP 6

CREATE A SPACE WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS

Polished Man believes in creating accessible and inclusive spaces that support people to feel safe and cared for. It's important to ensure you've considered the access needs of your participants so that everyone can engage fully in your activation.

This is a great [event checklist from Undercurrent](#) that you can use to think through how to make your event accessible.



COMMUNICATING WITH CONFIDENCE

While the most important thing is to communicate authentically in your own voice, below are some tips informed by in-depth research from Our Watch, VicHealth and Gender Compass, based on conversations with over 3500 people to understand what resonates most with those who are not yet strong supporters of gender equality, but are open to change.

While some of this language may feel different to what you would usually say, meeting people where they are is key to bringing more people on the journey toward gender equality, and ending violence against women and children. You don't need to follow this word for word, but we suggest you follow the same flow for your communications. This can be applied to recruitment communications, talks, social media content etc.

COMMUNICATION TIP	EXAMPLE
Start with a values statement that invites everyone in.	Every person deserves to feel safe and cared for.
Then Paint a clear picture of the problem, that shows how women, children, and men are all impacted.	But outdated expectations pressure many men to hide their feelings and act tough, and it's hurting their mental health. This can lead to real danger when some men think it's ok to control and even harm women and children, where 1 in 3 men aged 16-35 have admitted to using intimate partner violence.
Make clear what people need to do to create change	It's time to move forward and let go of outdated ideas of what it means to be a man or woman, so people are free to be themselves. We can become positive role models, and have real conversations in our community.
Bring people back to a positive vision statement of the world we're trying to build together	Together we can build safer more caring communities.
Give people a clear tangible action they can take	Keep the conversation going. Sign Up or Donate at www.polishedman.com

BELOW ARE MORE TIPS TO CONSIDER:

- 01** Messages that centre 'Safety' and 'Caring for Others' resonate most strongly
- 02** Ground storytelling in everyday examples connected to people's experiences at work, in family life, or in social interactions, rather than talking about systems (e.g Patriarchy) which can be hard to understand
- 03** Aim to highlight the impacts of outdated gender expectations on everyone - women, children and men
- 04** Be Solutions focused. While it's essential to paint a clear picture of the problem, it's also important to paint a positive future and clear steps for how we can get there
- 05** Use language such as 'we' and 'us' to connect people to a sense of community working together



TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT STORIES TO FOCUS ON?

Gender inequality shows up in a lot of different ways - it can be hard to know where to start, and what to focus your activation on.

The following are key stories we are uplifting across Polished Man to encourage people to think beyond outdated ideas of what it means to be a man or woman. This is grounded in findings from "The Man Box Study", surveying over 3500 men in Australia, that examines the social pressures on young men to conform to rigid masculine norms and how these norms are linked to harmful attitudes, behaviours, and poorer wellbeing.

UPLIFT STORIES OF...

Men being vulnerable about their fears, asking for support, and the positive outcome this had

Men navigating conflict with care and sensitivity. Men choosing to deescalate and the positive outcome this had.

Men sharing stories of being an equal partner at home, where work and home life is shared

Men sharing stories of setting boundaries, respecting consent, and valuing mutual comfort and choice in relationships.

Men and women standing together in solidarity

TO COUNTER HARMFUL EXPECTATIONS THAT...

Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.

A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak.

Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families. Women should manage the home.

A "real man" would never say no to sex

Men are in opposition to women

Use this as a guide to choose which stories you would like to share that feel most aligned to your experiences and the audience you're speaking to.



REFERENCES Our Watch Communicating Prevention The Man Box - Jesuit Social services Gender Compass - Moving the Middle
Vic Health - Framing Masculinity Report List of Values Based Messaging Guides

WHAT IS POLISHED MAN?

Polished Man is a movement inviting everyone - especially men - to stand up, speak out, and take action to end violence against women and children. [By painting one nail, you start conversations that raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and inspire change.](#)

WHERE DO FUNDS RAISED THROUGH POLISHED MAN GO?

Funds raised power Polished Man's three impact pillars:



POLISHED INNOVATORS

We back grassroots innovation led by local leaders who know best how to drive change in their communities. Funding supports grants, coaching, access to strategic networks, and training to sustain and scale impactful solutions that prevent violence.

[Learn more.](#)



POLISHED SPACES

In partnership with workplace GBV prevention experts Capyble, we drive cultural change in male-dominated spaces. Funding supports training, policy reviews, workplace activations, and outreach to help spaces across the country play an active role in preventing violence.

[Learn more.](#)



POLISHED MAN CAMPAIGN

We support Ambassadors to share their stories on a national platform, inspiring thousands to join the Polished Man community and spark meaningful conversations about ending violence. Funding goes toward creating and amplifying impactful storytelling and supporting community activations across Australia.

[Learn more.](#)

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED WITH POLISHED MAN?

There are plenty of ways you can take action to create safer, more caring communities:

- 01 Paint your nail and spark important conversations in your community
- 02 Run an activation in your community
- 03 Run your own fundraiser to support the Polished Man campaign
- 04 Donate to the Polished Man campaign
- 05 Encourage your workplace to become a Polished Space
- 06 Follow Polished Man's social media to stay across more ways you can get involved:

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)



YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIX IT, BUT YOU CAN HELP CONNECT PEOPLE TO SUPPORT.

Conversations about respect and safety can bring up strong emotions. It's important to remember that some people may have experienced violence, even if you weren't aware of it. Others may recognise behaviours in themselves they want to change. Your role is to listen without judgement and connect people to specialist support if needed.

💬 WHAT YOU CAN SAY

"Thanks for sharing that with me. I'm really glad you told me. I'm not a counsellor, but there are people who can support you, would you like help connecting with one of these services?"

DO

Listen, without interruption or judgement

Believe and validate their experiences

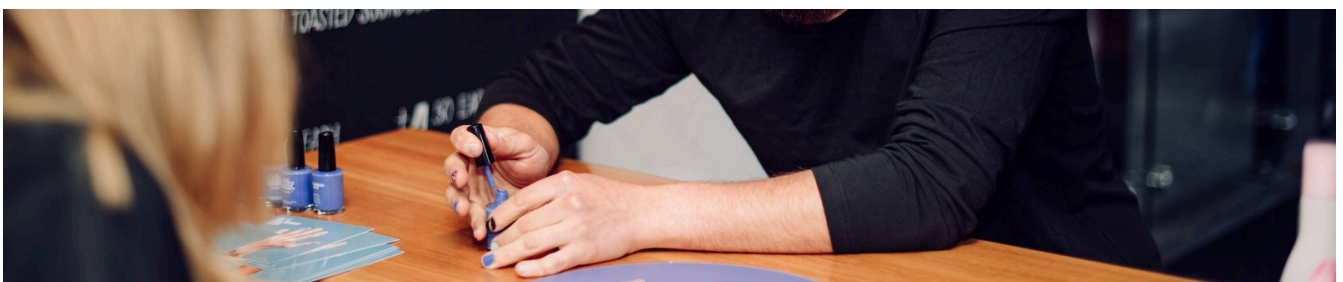
Provide information that will support them to make their own choices (as much as possible) in what happens next.

DON'T

Ask a lot of questions to try and find out details.

Judge or criticise their choices.

Try to 'fix' the problem for them or tell them what to do



SUPPORT LINES

EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE?

1800RESPECT (24/7)

 [1800 737 732](tel:1800737732)

 1800respect.org.au

Full Stop Australia

 [1800 385 578](tel:1800385578)

 fullstop.org.au

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR BEHAVIOUR?

No to Violence - Men's Referral Service

 [1300 766 491](tel:1300766491)

 ntv.org.au

MensLine Australia (24/7)

 [1300 78 99 78](tel:1300789978)

 mensline.org.au

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUPPORT

13YARN (24/7 crisis support)

 [13 92 76](tel:139276)

 13yarn.org.au

FVPLS Services

 <https://fnaafv.org.au/fvpls-services/>

LGBTQIA+ SUPPORT

QLife

 [1800 184 527](tel:1800184527)

 qlife.org.au

ACON

 acon.org.au

MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

 [1800 755 988](tel:1800755988)

 intouch.org.au

GENERAL MENTAL HEALTH

Beyond Blue

 [1300 22 4636](tel:1300224636)

Headspace (12–25 yrs)

 headspace.org.au

Kids Helpline (Ages 5–25)

 [1800 55 1800](tel:1800551800) (24/7)

 kidshelpline.com.au

Suicide Call Back Service

 [1300 659 467](tel:1300659467)

TELL US HOW IT WENT

SHARING YOUR IMPACT

We'd love to hear about the incredible initiatives our Local Legends are running across Australia.

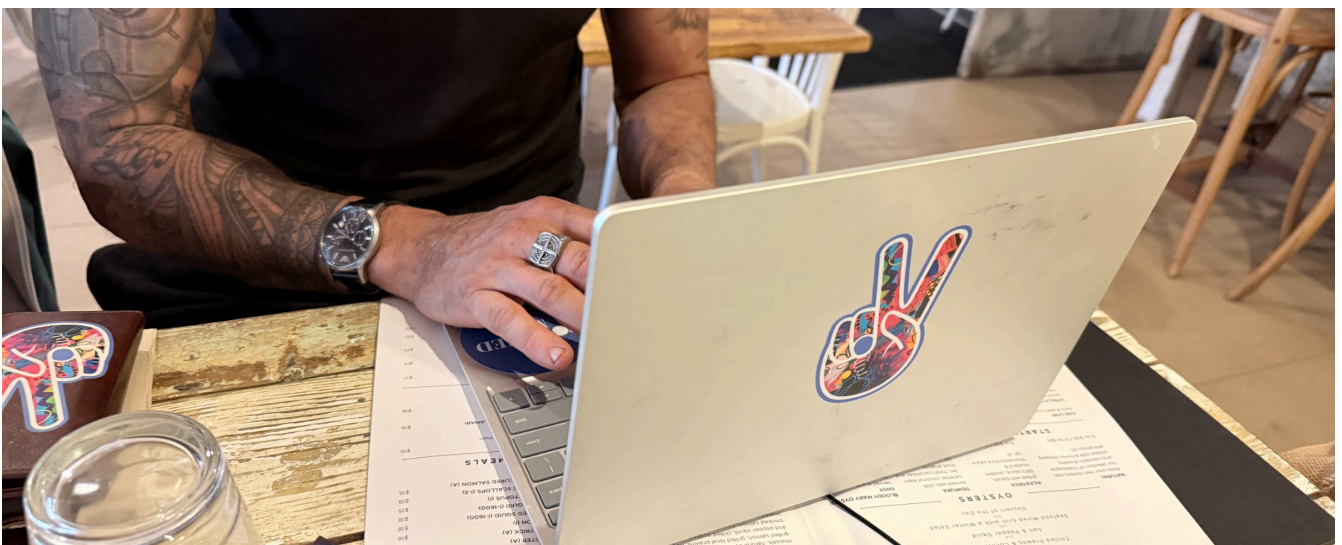
When you share your impact, it helps us understand how many people we're reaching, what conversations are being sparked, and the difference being made in communities like yours. It also allows us to share powerful stories that inspire others to step up and get involved.

Just as importantly, your reflections help us learn, what's working well, what challenges you're facing, and how we can strengthen the support we provide.

LOCAL LEGEND REFLECTION SURVEY

If you've organised an activation, please complete our short Local Legend survey to share your insights and reflections. You can also share images of your activation through this survey, so we can amplify your activation across our social media

 [Complete Survey](#)



Together we can build communities free from violence