

# kids these days...

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## NO JOKING MATTER

There are hundreds of jokes in circulation about relationships, about violence against women, and even violence against men.

It is in our nature to make jokes, either in an effort to get a quick laugh or to avoid a potentially uncomfortable situation. I'm sure all of us have heard one making light of violent conflict and then just as quickly have forgotten it.

While we know enough to filter these attempts at humour, I wonder exactly what kind of message such jokes leave with kids these days, especially when the violence is targeted at those we are supposed to love?

What impact does it then have in later shaping their relationships when they become adults?

Family violence is no laughing matter. It has devastating consequences that can result in physical and emotional harm.

It touches every group in every community across Alberta, regardless of people's income, education or cultural background.

No one should live in fear in their own homes.

Whatever the circumstances may be, and no matter who the players are, abuse of any kind is wrong and should not be tolerated.

As caring friends, families and neighbours, we all share a responsibility to stand up for those affected by family violence. When we are silent about the issue or fail to act, we only succeed in contributing to the problem.

November is Family Violence Prevention Month.

The goal of the "End the Silence. Stop the Violence." campaign is to raise awareness of this important issue and encourage Albertans to take action to help end the cycle of violence.

There are a number of events occurring around our region, such as in Cold Lake, Lac La Biche, Whitecourt and Slave Lake.

For more information on these events check out the Events section of the North Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority website at [www.northcentralcfsa.gov.ab.ca](http://www.northcentralcfsa.gov.ab.ca).

Kids these days have the opportunity to educate themselves in ways that previous generations may not have.

They have more options than ever before and need to know that there is always a way out of a bad situation if they are willing to acknowledge that the circumstances are undesirable and need to be changed.

How can you "End the Silence" and "Stop the Violence"? How can you help to make a difference in your community?

Well, for a start, if you hear or see something that you feel is not quite right with family members, friends, co-workers, neighbours or youth in your life, or you suspect someone you know is experiencing family violence or bullying, call the 24 hour/ 7 days week Family Violence Info Line or Bullying Helpline, toll-free in Alberta to find out how you can help.

The Family Violence Info Line is 310-1818, with help available in over 170 languages; Bullying Helpline: 1-888-456-2323.

Alberta is taking a leadership role in developing supports and services for those impacted by family violence. To learn more about the resources available and for more information about family violence I also encourage you to visit [www.familyviolence.alberta.ca](http://www.familyviolence.alberta.ca).

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Feedback is welcome and can be sent via email to [david.rideout@gov.ab.ca](mailto:david.rideout@gov.ab.ca).