They notice. As a mentor, you already know your actions — pretty much all of them — are observed by the teens you work with. So, how can you be the role model who actively works to prevent sexual violence?

Here’s what to do:

- Encourage open discussion and critical thinking about sexual violence.
- Clearly state you don’t tolerate any kind of sexual violence and that it’s an issue you take very seriously.
- Quickly respond to violence of any type, including bullying, sexual harassment, and dating violence.
- Try to use gender neutral language (e.g. “they” instead of “her” or “him”; “folks” instead of “guys”).
- Be respectful to others around you (like your co-workers).
- Address offensive language when it comes up by explaining why it’s hurtful.
- Promote gender equality among all members of the community.
- When listening, note your body language. Face the person and make eye contact. Give them your full attention.
- Let teens know it’s ok to say no, even in everyday situations. For example: “Jason, it’s ok to say ‘no’, but could you go to the copier and grab some copies for me?”.
- Don’t make or laugh at sexist jokes.
- Don’t perpetuate negative stereotypes (e.g. “You throw like a girl!”).
- Embrace emotions. Let all genders know it’s ok to cry. Validate their feelings.
- Show it’s ok to embrace friendships from other genders. Share examples of this from your own life.
- Call out victim blaming when you see it.
Sexual violence is a broad term and includes rape, incest, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, unwanted sexual contact, sexual harassment, exposure, and voyeurism.  
(National Sexual Violence Resource Center)

LEARN MORE – LOTS MORE – AND GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED TO HELP TEENS: itstartswithusNM.org

FOLLOW US:  
Facebook: @StartsWithUsNM  
Twitter: #StartsWithUsNM

Some content adapted from A Call to Men, Love is Respect, and Break the Cycle.