



PROMOTE POSITIVE IMAGES OF WOMEN

Responsible marketing and media

Media is a powerful force in shaping society's attitudes and perceptions.

Television, advertising, movies, video, music, websites, social media and even Halloween costumes often portray girls and women as sex objects. Often the prevalent message is that only certain types of female bodies or appearances are acceptable and desirable.

Violence against women is a serious issue and not just a personal or private matter. Violence is sometimes used to get people's attention and sell products. While it may seem harmless, daily exposure to violent images and messages can normalize and perpetuate violence against women.

Women of colour, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, lesbian and transgender women often receive additional negative messages about their sexualization or worth, based in racism, ableism and homophobia.

When constantly exposed to unrealistic sexualized images, women and girls often become critical of their own bodies. They may start to believe their main value comes from their appearance, rather than their intelligence, talents and other strengths.

This issue also affects boys and men. Boys and men see unrealistic images of women and impose these expectations and unattainable standards on women in their lives. **The sexualization of girls and women can lead to broader societal consequences, such as sexism, sex bias, and sexist attitudes from males.**





The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council invites **YOU** to **TAKE** **ACTION**

We can all do our part to ensure media images of women are positive and empowering. By following these guidelines you can promote the use of positive, empowering messages that help create equality and diversity in the larger society.

ORGANIZATIONS that use all forms of media to deliver information or market products - ask yourself these basic questions:

- 1** Does your advertising sexualize women's bodies? Do images or references to women focus on specific body parts, or are women portrayed in a way that shows them primarily as sexual objects?
- 2** Is violence portrayed or implied? Does the portrayal of violence help to challenge or address negative social behaviours or attitudes?
- 3** How does your advertising portray women's bodies? Men's bodies? Are there a variety of shapes and sizes represented in the image or ad?
- 4** What social or cultural messages are you using to sell your product or service? Do these messages reflect positive and empowering ideas about diverse groups of people in society?

FACT:
Men and women exposed to material objectifying women and to violent images of women were more likely to accept the myths around rape, sexual harassment, sex role stereotypes and personal violence.ⁱ

FACT:
A recent survey for the Canadian Women's Foundation showed 90 per cent of Canadians agree that exposure to unrealistic sexual images of women in advertising is a problem for girls as they're growing up. (Sixty-two per cent see it as a major problem; 28 per cent see it as a minor problem.)ⁱⁱ

5

How are the following groups of people represented (or not represented) in your advertising?

- Aboriginal men and women
- Men and women of colour
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or two spirited people
- Men and women with disabilities

FACT:

Eighty-eight per cent of Canadians think exposure to unrealistic sexual images of women in TV and movies contributes to problems for girls and women.ⁱⁱ

FACT:

The volume of images showing girls and women as sex objects keeps increasing. Access to this kind of content keeps spreading through the Internet and social media. This leads to increased negative exposure and pressure on women and young girls.ⁱ

6

What positive or negative messages are being conveyed? If there are negative messages, how can they be changed?

7

Are there positive role models of men and women in all their diversity represented in the ad?

INDIVIDUALS can also help promote positive images of women:

1

Encourage business and organization leaders to think about the effect their media and marketing messages have on the public. Encourage them to choose positive, healthy role models for girls and women.

2

Teach young women to value themselves for who they are, as they are, from an early age. Support campaigns and companies that promote positive images of women.

3

Encourage men to think about how they discuss women. When they listen to music or watch television, ask them if they'd talk that way about a girlfriend, sister or wife? Remind them that their comments can send strong messages – for better or worse – to young people.

4

Convince advertisers and media outlets to use positive, supportive and empowering visuals and messages when they are dealing with women's issues.



What is the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council?

The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (MWAC) works within the Manitoba Status of Women Division to represent the issues and concerns of Manitoba women. The council focuses on issues that have a social, legal or economic impact on the lives of women and their families.

The council consists of a chair and community members appointed by the provincial government. The advisory council reports to the minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Members reflect the cultural diversity of Manitoba women and come from rural, urban and northern communities.

Information sources:

ⁱ American Psychological Association (2010). *Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls.* www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-full.pdf

ⁱⁱ Canadian Women's Foundation (2013). Angus Reid Omnibus Survey. www.canadianwomen.org/girlsomnibus

For more information contact:



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