# Take Action: Challenge the condoning of violence against women with disabilities

Use anti-violence messaging and frame disability using a strengths-based model.

**Examples of anti-violence messaging include:**

* **Reduce victim blaming:**
* Women with disabilities have a right to safety, respect and equality.
* It’s not her fault.
* **Perpetrator accountability:**
* Lots of carers experience stress without becoming violent.
* Violence is a choice. He chose to use power over her.
* **There is no justification:**
* It’s not ok, ever.
* **Name the problem:**
* This is family violence. This is sexual assault. This is abuse.
* **Use systems of accountability:**
* This is unlawful.
* **Challenge minimising:**
* It’s a big deal, and it’s wrong.

**Frame disability using a strengths-based model:**

Use factual language that doesn’t reinforce stereotypes, imply weakness, alienate women or suggest disability is a reason for violence.

* Women with disabilities aren’t “vulnerable to violence.”

**Women with disabilities are *targeted* for violence.**

* She isn’t “bound to a wheelchair.” She is *enabled* by it.

**She uses a wheelchair.**

* She doesn’t “have the mentality of a 3-year old.”

**She’s an adult woman with an intellectual disability.**

* She isn’t “suffering from” or “struggling with” a disability.

**She has dementia.**

* She is not “dependent” on her partner. *All* relationships involve interdependence.

**Her partner provides her with support.**

* She doesn’t need others to do everything for her.

**If she needs help, she’ll ask for it.**

* She doesn’t have a “lower quality of life.”

**The presence or absence of disability is not what predicts quality of life.**

* She does not “have difficulty remembering.”

**She has a brain injury and understands information best when a written summary is provided.**

This resource was inspired by a speech in 2018 by Activist Sue Salthouse on disability and language in the media. Content adapted from Change the Story: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women and their Children in Australia, Our Watch (2015).