



Welcome to Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition

committed to the prevention and elimination of domestic and sexual violence

MEDIA LITERACY

Definition

Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. Center for Media Literacy, 2009

Why become media literate?

Media does not just influence our culture. In many ways, it **IS** our culture. It is not practical to tell people to ignore or boycott all forms of media to protect themselves from unwanted messages. Instead, we want people to become aware of and understand what messages they are receiving and be able to have a conversation about how they feel about the messages and what impact those messages have on others.

Once you can identify what is being conveyed by the media, you can begin to access the messages you want and sort through the ones you don't. This is not to say that you can or have to avoid all negative messages. Rather, you will now recognize those messages, process them, and move on.

What are the connections to our work as advocates?

As advocates, we can educate our communities that the images and messages of violence in the media contribute to a culture that tolerates actual violence. We can illustrate how hyper-sexualized images of women promote the idea that women want and are made purely for sex. We can point out that the hyper-masculine and hyper-violent images of men endorse the idea that men need to exhibit the same behaviors in order to be a “real man”. The way that the media portrays men and women interacting, especially in relationships, dictates how relationships “should” look.

Knowing these connections, we can look deeper into messages specific to a tolerance and acceptance of sexual and domestic violence, including but not limited to:

- Impact of media on gender socialization and normalization of violence
- Rape culture—impact of media on the perpetuation of a culture tolerant of sexual violence
- Impact of media violence on children
- Pornography and its relationship to sexual violence

By educating ourselves and our communities on the impact of these negative media messages, we can start to seek and create counter messages. The desired outcome is a shift in culture; one that no longer tolerates interpersonal violence. As new media messages and outlets emerge, we have the unique opportunity and responsibility to help shape the messages. To learn how or for more information, visit our website at www.ndvsac.org or go to www.medialit.org