

International Men's Day and why we should celebrate it

Over the last 10 years, International Women's Day (IWD) has gained considerable momentum and attracted more attention year on year. Indeed, on **8 March** this year, IWD celebrated its 110th year.

The purpose of IWD is to: (i) celebrate women's achievements; (ii) raise awareness about women's equality; (iii) lobby for accelerated gender parity; and (iv) fundraise for female focused charities.

Whilst it is fantastic to see how far IWD has come and to see it recognised on a global level, 8 March does attract the following question: what about **International Men's Day**?

International Men's Day is on **19 November** and it is not new. It has been celebrated annually for almost 20 years, since 1992.

Whilst some of you reading may scoff at the idea – “men already rule the world, why do they need a whole day?” more should be said about raising the profile of International Men's Day's profile. By men and by women.

As highlighted in Richard Herring's brilliant book “The Problem with Men” there are a few simple ways which this day can and should be celebrated:

1. Praising positive male role models and celebrating men's positive contributions to society – I vote for Marcus Rashford this year. Who would you nominate?
2. Use it as an opportunity to check-in on friend/family wellbeing – men's suicide rate is much higher than the rate in women and part of the problem is thought to be men's inability to communicate properly about their

feelings. Start breaking this taboo.

3. Recognise discrimination against men, ascertain who is responsible for this discrimination and tackle it, without blaming feminism (i.e. there is a growing movement amongst some male activists which seeks to attribute men's rising inequality with women's increased equality).
4. Improve and promote gender equality together. More women should get involved in International Men's day and vice versa.
5. Be part of creating a better, more equal and safer world.

Ultimately, celebrating International Men's day does not have to be complicated. If 19 November allows men to talk to each other and to women openly and honestly about the positives of being a man, then I believe this will help overall gender equality (and hopefully stop the question of "When is International Men's day?" on International Women's day).

If you would like to know more, or you need advice about equality, diversity or sex discrimination please contact Emily Plosker (emilyplosker@bdbf.co.uk) or your usual BDBF contact.

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