

Information about Bystander Intervention

Bystander intervention (adapted from Vassar)

When a bystander notices a situation that seems out of the ordinary, they need to evaluate and determine if it is an emergency or one in which someone needs assistance. If they decide this is the case, they need to take action. Most frequently, people are less willing to take action if there are other bystanders present – everyone waits for someone else to take responsibility. In situations of physical or sexual violence, having someone else present is often more empowering as the bystander will feel more empowered. The bystander must then decide the best course of action

Whether this is to help the person leave the situation, confront a behavior, diffuse a situation, or call for other support/security.

The best way bystanders can assist in creating an empowering climate free of interpersonal violence is to diffuse the problem behaviors before they escalate.

- Educate yourself about interpersonal violence AND share this info with friends
- Confront friends who make excuses for other peoples' abusive behavior
- Speak up against racist, sexist, and homophobic jokes or remarks

Tips for Intervening

In a situation potentially involving sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking:

- Approach everyone as a friend
- Do not be antagonistic
- Avoid using violence
- Be honest and direct whenever possible
- Recruit help if necessary
- Keep yourself safe
- If things get out of hand or become too serious, contact the police

The Bystander Intervention Playbook

From the University of Vermont

- **Defensive Split** – Step in and separate two people. Let them know your concerns and reasons for intervening. Be a friend and let them know you are acting in their best interest. Make sure each person makes it home safely
- **Pick and Roll** – Use a distraction to redirect the focus somewhere else: “Hey, I need to talk to you.” or “Hey, this party is lame. Let’s go somewhere else.”
- **The Option** – Evaluate the situation and people involved to determine your best move. You could directly intervene yourself, or alert friends of each person to come in and help. If the person reacts badly, try a different approach.
- **Full Court Press** – Recruit the help of friends of both people to step in as a group.
- **Fumblerooski** – Divert the attention of one person away from the other person. Have someone standing by to redirect the other person’s focus (see Pick and Roll). Commit a party foul (i.e. spilling your drink) if you need to.

***Please remember that any situation that threatens physical harm to yourself or another student should be assessed carefully. Contact SUPD at 1-512-863-1944 if needed to assist to defuse the situation.**