



# Bystander Intervention

Challenges, questions, and skills



# **A BYSTANDER IS..**

A person who is not the aggressor or the target of an act of abuse, harassment, or harm

**AND**

who is in a position to prevent or interrupt it.



# **SOME GOALS OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION**

- Increase the safety of the person being targeted
- Create accountability
- Change the culture of a community or public space



# **SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES...**

- Why am I moved to intervene?
- Am I the right person to intervene?
- What level of personal risk am I willing to take?
- What skills can I bring to the situation?
  - Do my skills match the need?
- How do I know my help is wanted?

# **STRATEGIC CHOICES**

The bottom of the slide features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy, ribbon-like shapes. On the left side, there are vibrant red shapes. On the right side, there are bright blue shapes. In the center, a teal or greenish-blue shape bridges the two. The overall effect is a dynamic, flowing design that suggests movement and energy.



# DIRECT CONVERSATION

- **Advantage:** Issue gets addressed explicitly
- **Disadvantage:** Greater personal risk



# INDIRECT INTERVENTION

- **Advantage:** Can prevent abuse or harassment without risk of direct approach
- **Disadvantage:** May preserve the peace without addressing the problem



# REPORTING

- **Advantage:** Creates a paper trail, documents a pattern of harm
- **Disadvantage:** Many reporting systems are punitive, resolution depends on institutions that may or may not be effective





# STRUCTURAL CHANGE

- **Advantage:** Removes the conditions in which sexual harm is possible
- **Disadvantage:** May not be possible in all situations, people most motivated to make change may not have the power



# SCENARIO

You are at a party. Your friend Alex is there with Dylan, someone they recently started dating. You overhear Alex trying to get Dylan to go to an upstairs bedroom. Dylan says they don't want to go upstairs but Alex keeps persisting and eventually they go upstairs.



# **DIRECT CONVERSATION PRACTICE**



# DIRECT CONVERSATION

- Clear, Concise, Concrete.
- Identify the specific behavior or action that is a problem
- Identify the specific change that you want



# CHALLENGING CONVERSATION STEPS

- Breathe
- Clearly identify the problem
- Say what you want or what the group expects
- Assess the response
- Agree on a next step



I noticed \_\_\_\_\_

It concerns me because \_\_\_\_\_

What were you thinking?

I hope you will \_\_\_\_\_

# TONE & BODY LANGUAGE

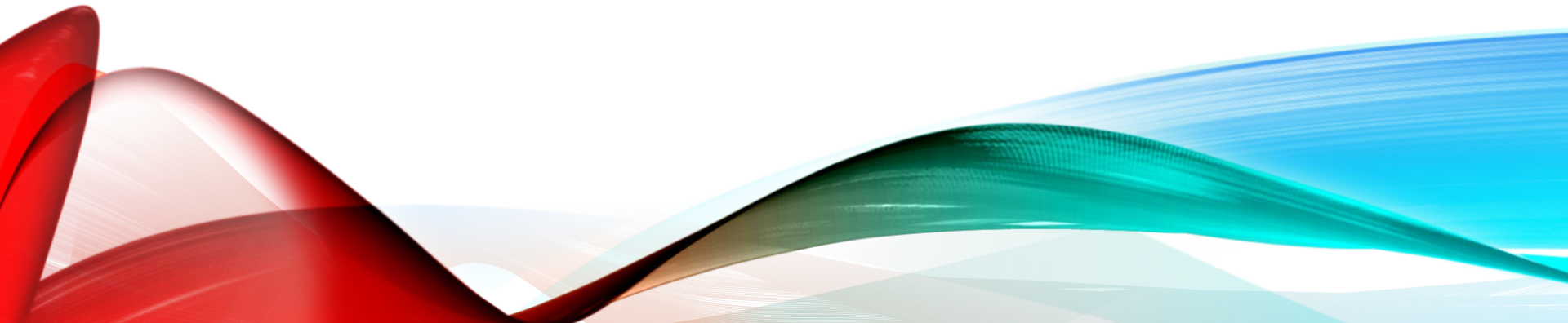
## Tone

- Respectful
- Firm

## Communicating with our Bodies

- Shoulders back
- Maintaining physical distance
- Neutral facial expression
- Not communicating aggression or nervousness

# STRATEGIES FOR CHALLENGING RESPONSES





# **MINIMIZING**

DISMISSING THE PROBLEM OR TRYING  
TO CONVINCING YOU THAT YOU ARE  
OVERREACTING



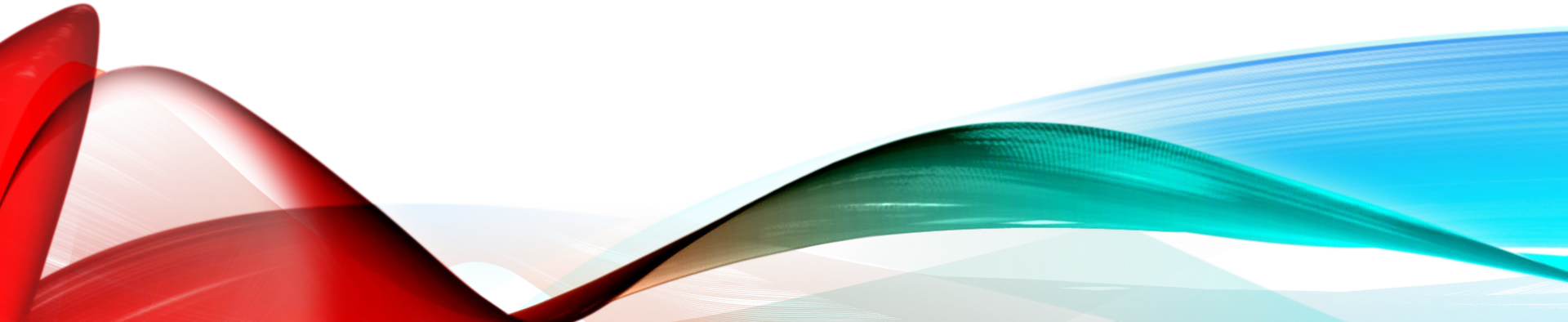


# STRATEGIES FOR MINIMIZING

- Maintain Conviction
- Communicate Clearly about why the issue is important
- Avoid agreeing to dismiss your concern

# **DEFENSIVENESS**

EXPRESSING ANGER OR DISRESPECT; ACTING  
OFFENDED THAT YOU RAISED THE CONCERN






# STRATEGIES FOR DEFENSIVENESS

- Stay calm
- Avoid apologizing or minimizing your concern
- Maintain focus on the issue
- End the conversation if it is no longer productive



# DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS



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