



Bystander Intervention

Building Skills to Create Safer
Communities



A BYSTANDER IS..

A person who is not the aggressor or the target

AND

who is in a position to help.



SOME GOALS OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

- Increase the safety of the person being targeted
- Create accountability
- Change the culture of a community or reinforce an existing culture



GUIDELINES

- Choose your challenge
- Confidentiality
 - Of anyone else's experience or what they share
 - Your experience and the training content can be shared
- Share airtime
- Mutual respect
- Participate now, evaluate later
- Focus on skill practice

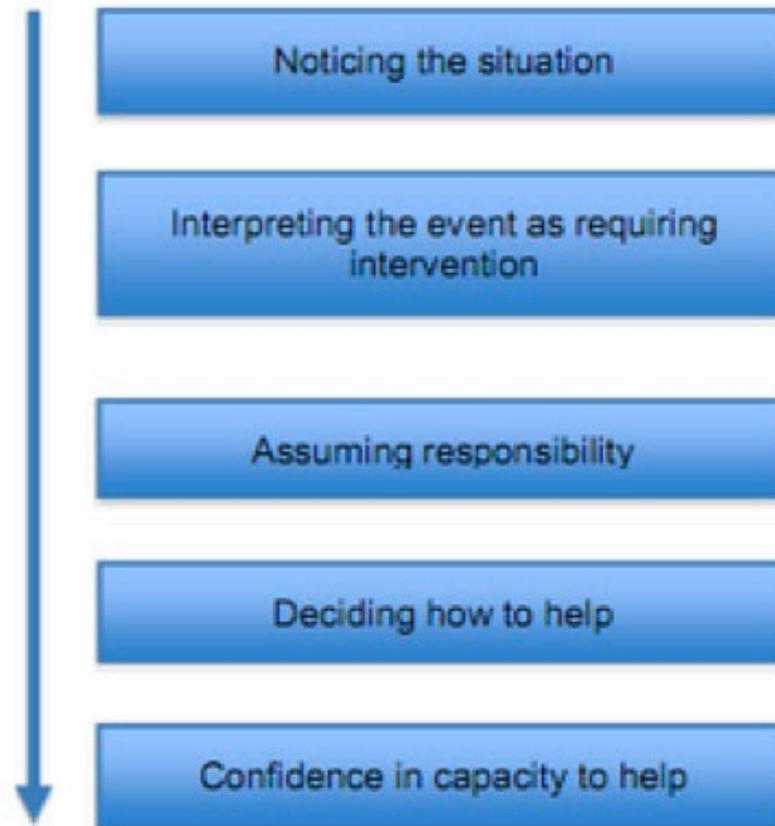


PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- Pronoun
- Role in the organization
- What are you hoping to get out of this training?

BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR

Figure 1 Latané & Darley's (1970) five-stage model

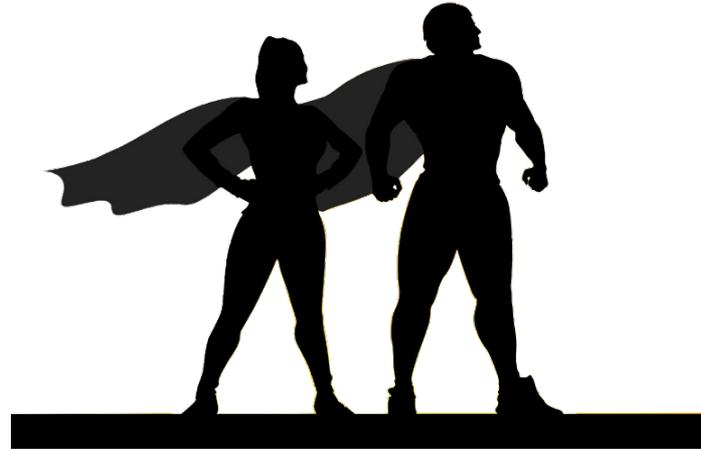




SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES...

- 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?
- What organizational policies support my intervention?

HOW DO I KNOW MY HELP IS WANTED?





BYSTANDER INTERVENTION IN AN ORGANIZATION CAN...

- Challenge inappropriate or potentially abusive behavior
- Support or reinforce shared values
- Create accountability to shared organizational practices



SCENARIO 1

You are in a meeting and a coworker refers to the October Monday holiday as Columbus Day. When someone points out that the school recognizes the holiday as Indigenous Peoples Day, the coworker rolls her eyes and dismisses the concern.

STRATEGIC CHOICES





DIRECT CONVERSATION

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



INDIRECT INTERVENTION

- **Advantage:** Can prevent abuse or harassment or create a positive climate 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:** Some acts of harm are not reportable or actionable, confidentiality requirements



STRUCTURAL CHANGE

- **Advantage:** Removes the conditions in which harm is possible
- **Disadvantage:** May not be possible to make change, may not happen fast enough.



MORE CONSIDERATIONS...

- Intervene in the moment or say something later?
- Casual or serious tone?
- Are you speaking as a friend or in your official role at the school?



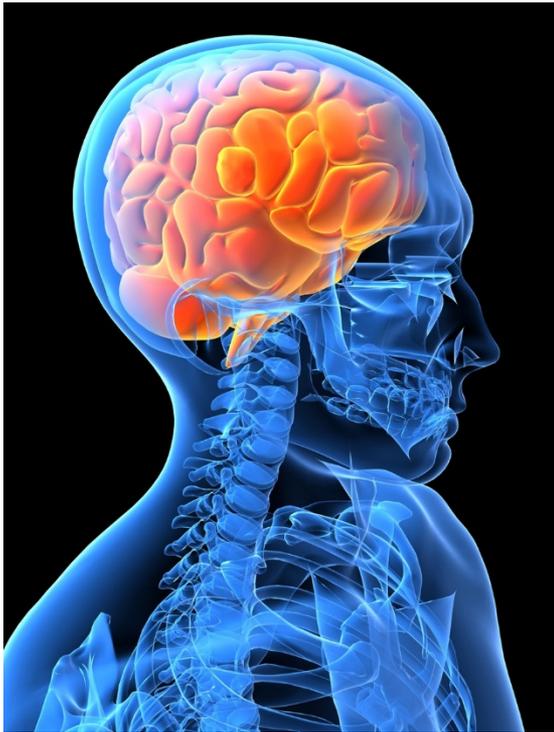
**Small group discussion:
Bystander Values Clarification Handout**

Conversation Practice

WE BEGIN BY UNDERSTANDING THE
ADRENALINE/ STRESS RESPONSE



IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S YOUR BRAIN...



What is adrenaline?

Adrenaline is a stress hormone produced in the body when there is a perceived threat or danger.

FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE RESPONSE

- Blood rushes to major muscles
- Heart – may feel heart racing
- Lungs – may experience shorter, faster breath
- Limbs – may be shaky, or feel cold or hot

These are physical sensations that we interpret as fear, anger, stress. We will address them physically.

EFFECTS OF STRESS HORMONES ON BRAIN FUNCTION

- Prefrontal Cortex (controls language and high-order thinking) is most vulnerable to stress hormones
- Stress can cause a decline in prefrontal cortex activities

(Arnsten 2009)

- Brain scans of humans under stress show diminished activity in the prefrontal cortex
- Humans under stress default to habitual behaviors
 - Activation of habitual/automatic responses
 - De-activation of complex thinking and decision making

(Yu 2016)



ADRENALINE MANAGEMENT

- Breathing
- Point of contact– finding your body in space
- Tapping
- Physical grounding

CONVERSATION DEMONSTRATION





CONVERSATION STEPS

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



I saw (or I heard) _____

It concerns me because _____

At our organization we believe/value/practice

So I hope you will/I need you to _____



NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Tone
 - Respectful
 - Firm
- Communicating with our Bodies
 - Shoulders back
 - Neutral facial expression
 - Not communicating aggression or nervousness
 - Avoid being too close to someone or standing over them

PARTNER PRACTICE



VOLUNTEERS PRACTICE WITH INSTRUCTOR



BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

For situations when boundaries are
crossed





WHAT IS A BOUNDARY?

- A line between what is acceptable, safe, or comfortable and what is not.
- A clear limit to the nature of relationships and what types of interaction are/are not part of the relationship.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS ON A CONTINUUM

**Missed
Social Cues**

**Inappropriate
Behaviors**

**Abusive
Behaviors**



SCENARIO 2

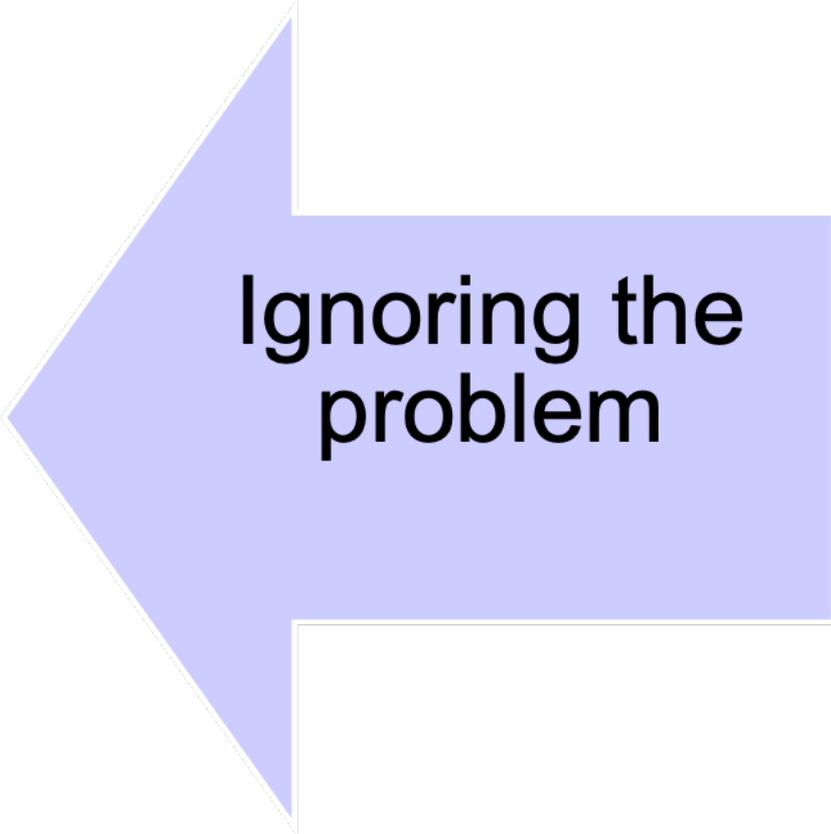
You follow a coworker on social media. They post a picture of students at a swim meet with the comment, “the swim team is looking great in their suits”. The photo appears to have been taken by your coworker and is not part of the school’s social media.

WHEN WE OBSERVE BOUNDARY-VIOLATING BEHAVIOR

- Try to understand the behavior
- Communicate a concern
- Communicate a message about shared values
- Identify next steps based on
 - Reaction in the moment
 - What changes after the fact

Addressing the behavior can help us determine where it falls on the continuum

STAYING AWAY FROM THE EXTREMES



Ignoring the
problem



Assuming
the worst



WHAT IS A CHALLENGING CONVERSATION?

- Asking questions that are uncomfortable for you or the other person
- Communicating a concern or problem you see with someone else's actions
- Questioning a common practice or widely held belief
- Bringing attention to actions you see as inappropriate



WHY WE MAY AVOID CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

- Power inequality
- It's hard to question people we like or respect
- Fear of repercussions
- They are uncomfortable for us
- We may second guess ourselves
 - Am I overreacting? Is it really a problem?



BUT WHEN WE SAY NOTHING...

- A person who is not using good judgment doesn't get an opportunity to learn
- A person who is at risk to harass or harm sees boundary violations going unchallenged.
- We don't get information that helps us tell the difference.



I noticed _____

It concerns me because _____

What were you thinking?

I hope you will _____

STRATEGIES FOR CHALLENGING RESPONSES





COMMON REACTIONS

- Accepting
- Minimizing
- Shifting Focus/Blaming
- Insulting/Mocking



ACCEPTING

- Don't assume all challenging conversations will go badly!
- Sometimes the other person will hear what you've said and accept it.



MINIMIZING

- Dismissing the problem or trying to convince you that you are overreacting



STRATEGIES FOR MINIMIZING

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



SHIFTING FOCUS

- Bringing up other problems or issues as an explanation
- Placing blame on other people
- Trying to move the conversation to a new topic



STRATEGIES FOR SHIFTING FOCUS

- Don't get sidetracked
- Acknowledge any truth in their response
- Agree to discuss other issues later, but stay on point



INSULTING / MOCKING

- Expressing anger or disrespect in response to the concern
- Trying to turn negative focus on you

STRATEGIES FOR INSULTING / MOCKING

- Stay calm
- Don't let your ego get hooked
- Avoid apologizing or minimizing your concern
- Maintain focus on the issue
- End the conversation if it is no longer productive

VOLUNTEERS PRACTICE WITH INSTRUCTOR





DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS



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