

Your voice.



Your view.

The Power of Bystanders

Why Should I Get Involved?

Getting involved helps prevent sexual assault in a culture that too often inadvertently supports it.

Sexual violence occurs on a spectrum, from seemingly harmless catcalls directed at women on the street, to date and acquaintance rape, to stranger rape at gunpoint. If we let the little things happen without saying anything, we are contributing to a sexually violent culture.

Imagine if your sister, your mom, your girlfriend, or one of your good friends was in a sexually violent situation. What if someone watched or knew it was happening and did nothing to stop it? How would you feel? In 1968, Kitty Genovese was murdered and raped outside of her apartment building with over 30 witnesses—none of whom intervened to help her.

So, How Can I Help?

Five Steps Toward Taking Action

1. You notice some behavior towards someone that concerns you.

2. Does the situation demand action?

- Look around- are the comments/actions of someone making the target uncomfortable (or you, or others around you)
- We've already established that sexual harassment IS a big deal, so now what do you do?

3. Do you have a responsibility to act?

- Think—what are the risks for taking action and for not taking action? Would you be putting yourself in real danger if you said something, or are you just worried about not looking cool?

4. What can you do?

When you hear friends or others making sexual comments to/about someone: tell them they are being lame; tell them to stop; change the subject or distract them; tell a parent, teacher, or other adult (or discretely write them a note); stick up for the victim; walk away; most importantly, don't laugh/comment along with them

- You can encourage others to do the same
- If you feel like you might be hurt or threatened, do not intervene directly. But, you can intervene later—for example, you can talk to your friend alone later on, instead of in front of a group of people, or you can tell the bus driver about an incident once the harasser is off of the bus.

5. Taking action.

Getting involved doesn't have to be (and ideally shouldn't be) a big production. Small interventions can make a big difference in a questionable situation. Just distracting someone, saying something, checking in with a person can stop the momentum of something bad occurring. And if it wasn't going that direction in the first place, it's certainly not going to have hurt to check in.

(Adapted from Darley & Latane, 1968)?"