

Bystander Intervention

You don't have to be a hero or make a big scene to make a difference in someone's life. You can take steps to protect someone who may be at risk in a way that fits your comfort level.

Whether you're making sure an intoxicated friend gets home safely, letting someone know that a rape joke isn't funny, or getting security involved when someone is behaving aggressively, taking action can affect the way those around you think about and respond to sexual violence.

The first step in bystander intervention is to understand and recognize sexual violence. Sexual violence is any unwanted or abusive behaviours that are sexual in nature including sexual harassment and sexual assault. For additional learning, our Adult Sexual Violence Information Sheet and our website "Learn" section provide a strong foundation of understanding.

When to Intervene

It can be difficult as a bystander to know if what you are witnessing is consensual or not.

Consent means that everyone involved **voluntarily** agrees to engage in a given activity, whether that's flirting, dancing, or sex. Consent is about mutual enjoyment and active, ongoing participation. As a bystander, we want to watch for dynamics where participation is one-sided, body language doesn't match, or where one person is much more intoxicated.

Challenge your assumptions about the causes of sexual violence.

Consent is not the same as flirting, and has nothing to do with what someone is wearing, where they are, whether they've been drinking, their sexual history, or their profession.

Most instances of sexual violence don't involve physical force but do involve emotional force like pressure, guilt, threats, or manipulation.

There are many ways that a person can show or imply "no" through their actions, words, or body language. Some examples include:

Pushing someone away (fight)

Turning or walking away (flight)

Doing nothing (freeze)

Saying no/maybe/
I don't know

Changing the subject

Making excuses



How to Intervene

Most people think interventions are direct and confrontational but there are lots of ways to intervene that are much more indirect and have a low risk for conflict. Whatever way you choose to intervene, make sure to always prioritize and take guidance from the person experiencing harm.

The 4 Ds of Bystander Intervention

Direct

Address the situation head on.
Examples:

Consider using DESC Conflict Resolution Model

Check in with the person being harmed

Distract

Indirectly de-escalate the situation. Examples:

Change the subject

Insert yourself into the situation

Strike up a conversation with either party



Listen. Believe. Support.

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Delegate

Get someone else involved.
Examples:

Tell staff or authority at the location

Find the person's friends

Brainstorm with others

Delay

Follow up with the person experiencing harm to check in and offer support.

DESC Conflict Resolution Model

- D** Describe the situation
- E** Express why you're concerned
- S** Specify what you want them to do
- C** Consequence - highlight the positive consequence for listening to you

5 Minute Friend Bystander Intervention Training

5 Minute Friend is a collection of anti-sexual violence and bystander intervention workshops offered by SACE to provide nightlife industry staff and management with training, guidance, and support on responding to, and ultimately preventing sexual violence. For more information on this and similar educational programming, call **780.423.4102** and select option 5 to speak to a Public Educator, or email education@sace.ca.

When you intervene as a bystander you are helping to create a culture of consent where everyone gets to feel safe; a society or environment in which obtaining consent and respecting boundaries is the norm, for both sexual contact and everyday activities.

For discussion about how to create safer spaces for your workplace, community group, event, etc., call SACE at **780.423.4102** and select option 5 to speak to a Public Educator, or email education@sace.ca

If you would like to talk to someone to receive support in your role as a supporter, call the SACE 24-Hour Support & Info Line at **780.423.4121**. For more options from 9am - 9pm, chat at sace.ca or access text, toll free, or interpreter assisted language support at **1.866.403.8000**.