



## Bystander Intervention

### What is an active bystander?

- An active bystander is someone who decides to take action when they witness someone engaging in inappropriate, unwanted and *disrespectful* behaviour that is directed at someone else.
- Inappropriate behaviour includes violence, harassment and discrimination towards others on the basis of their age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, cultural identity, religion or other personal characteristic.
- When a bystander intervenes, not only does the person who is the target of the behaviour receive immediate support and safety, but the perpetrator can be discouraged from continuing their behaviour.
- Bystanders who intervene also actively contribute to the prevention of *violence* and harassment by publicly calling out these behaviours and demonstrating to others that they can take similar action too.

## Take action: How to be an active bystander.

- There are many ways to intervene as a bystander and the best approach may differ depending on the situation. You don't have to intervene alone - you can intervene with another friend or bystander.
  - asking the person who is the target of the behaviour if they are okay and would like help
  - immediately reporting the incident to someone who has the authority to safely intervene.
- Some ways to intervene as a bystander include:
  - standing closer to and/or making eye contact with the person who is the target of the behaviour
  - subtly checking in with those involved to better understand what is happening
  - telling the perpetrator calmly and respectfully that their behaviour is inappropriate
  - diffusing the situation by diverting the perpetrator's attention away from their target
- If you decide to take action as a bystander, always keep your safety and the safety of others in mind. It may not always be safe to confront the perpetrator or to intervene in a situation alone. If so, intervene as a group or ask someone with the authority to safely intervene instead such as a member of security or a police officer. Being an active bystander should not mean that your own safety is put at risk.

Let's change the culture by standing up for what is right and wrong together.

**Preventing violence and harassment is everyone's responsibility. Bystander intervention shifts responsibility for the prevention of violence and harassment from individuals to society as a whole.**

- Talk with your friends about the importance of bystander intervention. Let them know that they would have your support if they intervened after witnessing inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour.
- Support the active bystander. If you see someone else being an active bystander, have their back by standing with them or approaching them afterwards and thanking them for their actions.
- It's important to challenge attitudes that justify, excuse or downplay the seriousness of violence and harassment or shift the blame for such behaviours as they provide the conditions in which these behaviours are more likely to occur. Call out these attitudes whenever you hear them.
- Remember, if you decide to intervene when you witness someone engaging in inappropriate, unwanted and disrespectful behaviour towards someone else, you will have the support of others around you.