

## What is Bystander Intervention?

A bystander is a person that witnesses or hears about a criminal event, dangerous situation, a person being mistreated, or something that supports a culture of harm.

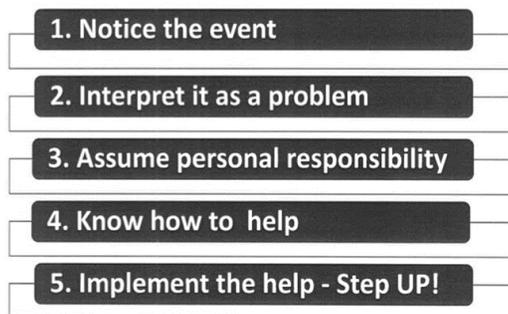
A bystander has three options when witnessing or hearing about an event. They can:

- ◆ Do nothing
- ◆ Join in and make the situation worse
- ◆ Help in some way and make the situation better (positive)

### Positive bystander behaviors

- ◆ **Direct Intervention:** is when a bystander confronts a situation. This can be addressing the harmdoer or the person being affected. For example, you may witness a situation developing with a friend and another person that looks like it may escalate so you step in and pull your friend out of the situation and walk him/her away. When safe, being direct is the most immediate way to intervene in a situation.
- ◆ **Distract:** Perhaps you don't want to address a situation directly then you can try to cause a distraction that will diffuse the situation and give a moment for things to calm down. Maybe you "accidentally" spill your drink or ask to borrow a cell phone from the person who is in the threatening situation. Sometimes that one break in a situation is all it takes to help someone out.
- ◆ **Delegate:** If you can't intervene directly in something because there is a barrier that makes you uncomfortable, then enlist some help. Ask friends to assist you or talk to a faculty or staff member. Maybe it means you need to call the police. You don't need to handle the situation alone.

### The Step UP! Model



## Why Bystanders Don't Take Action?

### Pluralistic Ignorance

- ◆ People tend to decide what an event means based on other's expressions and actions. In public, many people do not show they are upset. Bystanders look around and they see other bystanders with no expressions so no one acts.

### Who Me?: Diffusion of Responsibility

- ◆ When others are present, each bystander feels they have less responsibility because there are others present who could also respond. The more people at an emergency, the less likely it is that any one person helps. But pairs of small children who expressed their feelings, talked to each other about what was happening, and together took responsibility to act.



### Confusion: the need for help is ambiguous

- ◆ When bystanders are not sure help is needed, they are less likely to help. Being a target can feel shameful. So targets often act as if everything were fine. They might even joke or laugh. This makes it hard for the bystanders to decide if help is needed.

### Danger: danger or cost of helping

- ◆ Fear the harmdoer or others might harm the active bystander, either when the bystander is helping or later. The bystander could become a target of bullying or of social exclusion.

### Fear of disapproval

- ◆ The bystander may not be sure they have the right skills to help or will be judged negatively. When a person acts publicly in front of a group and takes charge as an active bystander, it is not unusual to feel a little insecure, especially is acting against the opinions or attitudes of others. However, developing the right judgment and skills and acting on one's values can give people confidence.



## How to be a Positive DV/SA Bystander

### How to be a positive DV/SA bystander:

- ◆ Have awareness, empathy, and courage.
- ◆ Constructively and safely intervene if you witness or hear about a criminal event, dangerous situation, or a person being mistreated, or something that supports a culture of harm
- ◆ If there is immediate danger call 911
- ◆ Reach out to an adult for help
- ◆ Call out inappropriate behaviors and conversations
- ◆ Educate yourself on local and national resources that can help
- ◆ Educate yourself on types of abuse, signs that they are happening, and after effects
- ◆ Discuss issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, etc.

### If someone discloses abuse or assault to you:

- ◆ Express your concern
- ◆ Be there, listen, stay there
- ◆ Show that you care – this may be the first time they have told someone. Be sympathetic.
- ◆ It doesn't matter so much what you say, but more how well you're listening
- ◆ Don't pry for details, respect their privacy
- ◆ If they are sharing a lot at once, encourage them to slow down
- ◆ If they need space give it to them, but make sure they know you are always there if they need you
- ◆ Believe and support the person
- ◆ People rarely make up stories about abuse or sexual assault
- ◆ Reinforce that the abuse or incident was not their fault
- ◆ Support their strengths – try to empower them to make their own decisions (who they want to tell, when to tell it, what to do, etc.)
- ◆ Encourage them to get help (medical attention, justice and legal aid, support services, counseling, etc.)
- ◆ Work on a safety plan together
- ◆ Stop rumors if you hear them



- ♥ I have the power to make a difference
- ♥ I have a responsibility to myself and others to take action
- ♥ I can help myself and others in a variety of situations
- ♥ My personal strengths can be used to help others

For the following scenarios think about:

- As a bystander how would you intervene to help?
- How can you support the victim?
- What parts of the scenario might be difficult for you?

Carla comes to class wearing a short skirt. A few popular guys in class are texting each other and laughing. They follow her out of class and are talking about how hot she looks and are repeatedly trying to get her to go to a party with them. She ignores them and keeps walking. They keep following her and are calling her names because she won't talk to them.

You and your friends are eating lunch together at school. Your friend Chris just got a girlfriend. He says, "It's typical that I only got a girlfriend after I got a job because all girls want is money. I won't buy her anything until she does her part in the kitchen and makes me a sandwich." He and a couple of your friends laugh and agree.

A new trend starts at school that includes grabbing people's butts when passing by in the hall. Everyone is doing it and no one is saying they are uncomfortable or that it should stop.

## YOU can get involved in prevention/intervention

We know that youth are aware of the issues they face and are passionate about creating solutions. Our mission is to support and empower youth to make your vision of a safer and healthier world a reality. This includes prevention and intervention on a variety of issues, both those stated in this handbook and otherwise. Any of your strengths and interests can be used to develop creative solutions to improve our community and the world.



**Working Against Violence, Inc.**

WAVI has been providing services in the Rapid City Community since 1978. WAVI has a variety of community partnerships to provide individualized, comprehensive advocacy for every client. Our work includes education, prevention, and intervention and we are excited to partner with each of the following organizations to support youth solutions. We would love to hear your prevention or intervention project idea! Contact Ashley at 605-341-3292 or ashleyw@wavi.org (M-F 8am-5pm).

### YOUTH VIP

WORKING TO CREATE A SAFER RAPID CITY.

**Youth Voices in Prevention** began as a CDC funded project aimed to reduce violence among youth and increase leadership, community engagement, positive coping, and social connections. This project was designed to enhance youth leadership and activism in the community and measure the impacts through surveys. Students participated in a variety of programming like leadership camps, working groups, advisory boards, and internships designed to encourage creative solutions to end sexual and related forms of violence. Youth continue to engage in a variety of projects that promote education, awareness, prevention, and intervention to increase positive outcomes with the varying challenges that young people face. Youth led projects with the support of community organizations are guiding the way to a safer community. We look forward to the new and exciting ideas that youth will bring to this project.

For project support and involvement contact Ashley at WAVI (605-341-3292 ashleyw@wavi.org). For information on the Youth VIP research contact Katie (603-422-3207 katie.edwards@unl.edu).



**Teen Up** is a community initiative of youth engagement. Young people serve the community in a variety of volunteer, advisory, and leadership roles throughout the community. They create projects, share their voice, and advocate for solutions to build a stronger community together.

**Take ACTION** is a youth led community engagement theatre group where young people write and perform skits about topics they can relate to. It is a collaborative project of Teen Up and Youth VIP in partnership with RCAS, WAVI and YFS. To get involved contact Kristin at Kristin.Kiner@k12.sd.us



**Youth and Family Services Connect Program** responds and provides intervention services to any youth age 11 – 24 years of age who has been affected by sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sex trafficking. We offer school support, case management, mentorship, referrals to crisis counseling, and more. Our program aims to reduce the emotional, cognitive, and physical effects of trauma on youth victims. In addition, we provide opportunities for youth to become informed leaders in the community so they can combat violence as peer mentors.

### Rapid City Youth Task Force (Homeless Coalition)



The RC Youth Task Force is a spin-off of the homeless coalition, where agencies/individuals that serve youth have met to address needs of the youth in our community. This task force is heavily involved in National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM). This organization includes adult and youth voices with an intersectional approach to educate and create solutions for the runaway and homeless youth crisis and the issues these youth face.