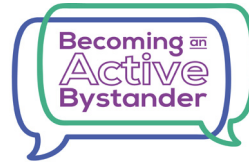




OFFICE FOR
**SEXUAL VIOLENCE
RESPONSE, SUPPORT
and EDUCATION**



To attend or request
a "becoming an active
bystander" workshop,
please visit
[https://involvement.
mcgill.ca/](https://involvement.mcgill.ca/)

What is a bystander?

A **bystander** is anyone who is a witness to an act or a situation but it not the person towards whom the act or situation is directed. The term refers to anyone who is in a position to intervene.

A **Passive Bystander** chooses not to interrupt or intervene. There are several reasons why someone would choose not to do anything. This could be due to external pressures, not knowing what to do, concern for personal safety, or an inability to recognise a situation as harmful.

An **Active Bystander** takes the initiative to help in situations of concern and makes a positive difference.

Bystander Intervention Steps:

- ▶ **Notice the situation:**
Be aware of what is going on around you
- ▶ **Interpret it as a problem:**
Listen to your inner alarm
- ▶ **Feel responsible to act:**
You are part of the solution
- ▶ **Know how to intervene:**
Educate yourself on what you would do
- ▶ **Intervene safely:**
Take action in a way that feels safe

Tools for Becoming an Active Bystander

Step 1: Notice the Situation:

Actions don't happen in a vacuum; actions contribute to a certain culture. Take note of how physical expressions, verbal expressions, and attitudes and beliefs contribute to an overall climate of respect or violence/aggression.

Step 2: Interpret the Situation as Problematic:

How do you know when to act? Below are some signs that can indicate when someone seems uncomfortable in a situation, or is not consenting with what is going on.

- ▶ Body turned away from other person
- ▶ Not looking at the other person, but looking around the room, or at other people
- ▶ Crossed arms or otherwise closed off body language
- ▶ Giving the other person short replies or not engaging with them
- ▶ One person looking more intoxicated than the other

Be Direct:

Approach the person you are concerned about. Do anything to give that person a way out of the situation, if you have judged that they are looking for one. Ignore the initiator when appropriate. Alternately, approach the initiator. Use "I" statements: "I feel_____when you____. Please stop." Use humour when appropriate.

Delegate:

Find another person to intervene on your behalf. This may be a friend of the person you are concerned about, a supervisor, or someone responsible for an event.

Distract:

Do anything that distracts those involved. Providing a three second window is often all that is needed to give someone a chance to get out of a situation.

Always try to act consensually, and always take your own safety into consideration. If you were unable to interrupt a situation, follow-up with the person you are concerned about if you can.



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