



# Training Active Bystanders

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# Unit 1 Information Sheet

## Bystanders

- A bystander is a witness, someone who knows what is happening and is in a position to take action.
- Passive bystanders show acceptance of what is happening or even join in, leading to the perception that the actions are accepted or approved.
- Active bystanders stop the harmdoing

**Target:** A target is the receiver of harm.

**Harmdoing** is defined to include:

- hurtful teasing
- name calling, saying hurtful things
- touching in a way that is uncomfortable,
- sending mean or nasty communications (notes or through social media)
- excluding or ignoring someone
- telling lies, spreading false rumors
- threatening
- bullying and cyber-bullying
- forcing someone to do something
- physical violence including hitting, kicking, shoving
- stealing or damaging someone's possessions
- making negative comments or gestures:
  - o with a sexual meaning,
  - o about someone's sexual orientation,
  - o about someone's race, color, religion, nationality, class, ethnicity
  - o about someone's body type.

**Consequences** are the effects or result of an action. There are consequences of harmdoing for the target, harmdoer, bystanders and the community culture.

**Complicity** means any actions, or non-verbal reactions, facial expressions or gestures, etc. Laughing, joining in the harmdoing, saying something to encourage the harmdoer, all make the bystander complicit. Complicit bystanders are also known as negative bystanders.

**Moral courage** is the ability and willingness to act on our values to do the right thing even though others might disapprove of our actions, or exclude us, or do other harm to us. Moral courage means doing what we believe is right even when we are acting contrary to the values, beliefs or expectations of people around us.

*To know what  
is right and not  
do it is the worst  
cowardice.*

*-Confucius  
(551-479 BCE)*

## Unit 2 Information Sheet

### Situational Inhibitors of Active Bystandership:

These prevent positive action in certain bystander situations

Please note how to INTERRUPT or BREAK DOWN these Inhibitors

**1. Masks** – Pluralistic Ignorance -- When people do not show their feelings in public, they look at each other, see only masks, and so define the situation for each other as one in which no action is needed.

**2. Confusion** – Ambiguity of the Need for Help -- When it is unclear that there is a need for help, it is less likely that people will help.

**3. Who Me?** – Diffusion of Responsibility – When others are present, each bystander feels they have less responsibility because others could also respond to the situation.

**4. Fear** – Fear of Disapproval – When there is a concern about doing the wrong thing acting inappropriately, looking foolish or being judged negatively, people are less likely to help.

**5. Danger** – Danger or Cost of Helping – When there is fear of retaliation against oneself, friends or family, when the effort to help is very difficult, or when the emotional cost is high, people are less likely to help.

*Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.*

*-James Baldwin (1924-1987, eminent American novelist, playwright, poet, essayist and civil rights activist.*

# Unit 3 Information Sheet

## Active Bystander Skills and Competencies

### Tone of voice

Tone of voice includes volume, emphasis and meaning (such as kind or nasty). Tone of voice often conveys more of the message than the words themselves.

### Body language

Body language includes how close you get, using your hands, moving your head and more. A lot of communication is not verbal! Body language lets someone know how serious the situation is.

### Recruiting Allies

Why it is important to recruit allies:

- It reduces risk
- It creates allies for bystanders and targets, people to back you up
- It generates power

The effects of recruiting allies:

- It helps people to know what is happening
- You make suggestions for what others might do
- You show the target what s/he can do to recruit help in the future

### Moral Courage

Moral courage is the ability and willingness to act on our values to do the right thing even though others might disapprove of our actions, or exclude us, or do other harm to us. Moral courage means doing what we believe is right even when we are acting contrary to the values, beliefs or expectations of people around us.

*The best time to make friends is before you need them.*

*-Ethel Barrymore (August 15, 1879-June 18, 1959) was an American actress and a member of the Barrymore family of actors, Great Aunt to Drew Barrymore.*

## Unit 4 Information Sheet

### Promoters of Active Bystandership

**Reciprocity and Self Interest**—This is when we help someone because we expect that in the future they in turn will help us or those we care about. This concept extends to what might directly benefit our family, friends, and our community, the idea of “pay it forward.”

**Empathy**—This is putting yourself in another’s shoes. Empathy is the sense that results from understanding how another person feels based on how they look or what they say. Empathy may also be based on how you imagine that person might feel given what has happened or is happening to them. Empathy is feeling with another. Sympathy is feeling for another.

**Responsibility for others** – This is the feeling or belief that I am personally responsible for other people’s well being because their well being affects me.

**Inclusive caring** — This is caring about people other than those you closely identify with, extending beyond family, friends, members of your own religion, and people who are like you to people who are sometimes very different.

*In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.*

*-Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 - 1968), clergyman, activist, and prominent leader in the civil rights movement using nonviolent methods following the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.*

# Unit 5 Information Sheet

## The Evolution of Helpful and Harmful Actions

### Community values

Community values means that most people in a community value certain kinds of behaviors and believe that they are desirable while some other kinds of behaviors are not valued. Those who are part of a particular community know these behaviors, know what is expected or considered "normal" and act accordingly.

### Evolution of helpful and harmful actions

A person who harms another changes as a result of those actions. A person who helps another also changes. Community values evolve. When there are no negative consequences for harming, then harmdoers, bystanders and even targets see harmful actions as justified and acceptable. The opposite is true when people are active bystanders. Harmdoing is seen as unacceptable, bystanders continue and increase helping behavior, and the norms and the values of the community change to make helping more likely.

### Reasons for supporting the target:

1. A feeling of empathy – You feel with the target.
2. Reduces ambiguity – People will see that action is needed.
3. Taking responsibility for others – You feel a responsibility to act.
4. Moral courage – You know it's the right thing to do.
5. Reciprocity and Self interest – By helping others, they could help you.
6. Encouraging the target to act – The target sees how to stick up for themselves.

### Understanding the harmdoer:

1. Ask them to walk away with you.
2. Use humor.
3. Ask questions.
4. Stopping the harm early keeps the situation from escalating and the harmdoer can walk away more easily.

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.*

*-Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) Gandhi led the successful nonviolent resistance movement against British colonial rule in India during the first half of the 20th century.*

## Unit 6 Information Sheet

### Reasons and Goals for Intervening

1. To stop harmful behavior in the moment.
2. To create long-term beneficial effects
3. To keep the intervener safe. SAFETY!
4. To prevent generating more anger towards the target.
5. To transform the target.
6. To transform the harmdoer–target relationship.
7. To create norms and a culture where harmdoing is not acceptable.

### Moral Courage

Moral courage is the ability and willingness to act on our values to do the right thing even though others might disapprove of our actions, or exclude us, or do other harm to us. Moral courage means doing what we believe is right even when we are acting contrary to the values, beliefs or expectations of people around us.

### Activity Grid

Calling Attention to a Harmful Situation	Diffusion of Responsibility	Consequences for the Target	Supporting the Target	Making Suggestions to Other Bystanders
Community Values	Complicity	Taking Responsibility for Others	Evolution of Harmful Actions	Supporting the Harmdoer
Recruiting Allies	Responsibility For Others	Pluralistic Ignorance	Ambiguity of the Need for Help	Danger
Evolution of Helpful Actions	Body Language	Fear of Disapproval	Moral Courage	Inclusive Caring
Harmdoing	Empathy	De-escalating	Tone of Voice	Safety

*Few are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality of those who seek to change a world which yields most painfully to change.*

*-From Robert F. Kennedy's 1966 address to students at the University of Cape town, South Africa*