STAND UP

A Bystander Discussion

Created By

Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence

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In Ohio in 2013 there were several high profile sexual assault cases involving bystanders. As bystanders, we all may witness behaviors related to violence. The fact is that most folks get uncomfortable talking about issues like sexual violence, even though they probably already know someone who has been affected by it! That's why we encourage people to ***Stand Up!*** to sexual violence in lots of different ways, so it doesn't seem so intimidating. The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) has created this video and accompanying discussion guide as a way to get students talking and practicing situations when they might have to step in as an active bystander.

We all play a role in preventing sexual violence and not standing by when something happens. It is our hope that by having crucial conversations with teens about standing up, we can begin to transform our communities and environments into safe places where violence of any kind is no longer supported.

Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Bystander Intervention
Fact Sheet

Bystander intervention is based on a community of responsibility model that teaches women and men how to intervene safely and effectively in cases of sexual violence before, during and after incidents with strangers, acquaintances or friends. It approaches both women and men as potential bystanders or witnesses to behaviors related to sexual violence.

Bystander intervention recognizes that we all play an important role in preventing sexual violence. Through bystander approaches communities can build a society that:

- Does not condone or allow sexual violence
- Gives everyone in the community a role and responsibility
- Promotes a community free of sexual violence

Facts about Bystander Intervention:

(excerpts from Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention.[1])

Several decades of research has detailed **situational factors** that may affect a person's willingness to act. These include:

- the presence and number of other witnesses,
- the uncertainty of the situation,
- the perceived level of urgency or danger for the victim, and
- the setting of the event.

These factors are not static, but constantly affect one another.

Research also considers **characteristics of the bystander** that may influence his or her decision to intervene, including:

- relevant skills and experience,
- relationship to the victim and/or the perpetrator,
- feelings and attitudes, and
- perception of the relative personal costs of either intervening or doing nothing.

Studies have shown that the bystander's relationship with the potential victim has a significant impact on whether they will act.

From a programmatic point of view, the easiest characteristic to influence is someone's relevant skills. Studies indicate that bystanders who feel it is their responsibility to do something and are confident about HOW to intervene, from either past experience or from skills training, are more likely to intervene.

Tips for Bystander Behaviors:

Everyday there are multiple situations where we can be active bystanders. When we witness comments or jokes about rape, media examples that depict violence as normal, and abusive behaviors, we have the opportunity to intervene by reinforcing positive behaviors BEFORE a behavior moves further towards sexual violence.

Researchers Darley and Latane (1968) published an important work on bystander apathy. They introduced five steps that bystanders must move through before they are able to take action.[2] Bystanders must first notice (or recognize) the event as something that falls along the continuum of behaviors that lead to violence.

1. Consider whether the situation demands action
2. Decide whether they have the responsibility to act
3. Choose the form of assistance to use
4. Understand how to implement the choice

There are a number of ways you can implement your chosen response. It could mean helping the person leave the situation, confronting a specific behavior, diffusing a situation, or calling for support. Other supportive bystanders could include security, police or other bystanders.

Tips for Bystander Programs:

As with any sexual violence prevention program, bystander strategies will be most effective when they:

- Include a broader approach, or as part of a multi-level program in one setting.[3]
- Are on-going, consistent and incorporated in many different settings
- Have community commitment and participation
- Are tailored to address specific community contexts and localized social norms
- Teach the skills needed to reward healthy behaviors
- Give people an opportunity to practice what to do and say in various situations.

In addition, individuals will more likely intervene when they have specific skills to recognize behaviors that are unhealthy or problematic and know how to intervene before abuse is perpetrated.

What can we do as advocates to create and empower an environment free of sexual violence?

- Educate yourself about sexual violence and share this information with friends and family
- Confront friends who make excuses for other people's behavior
- Speak up against racist, sexist, and homophobic jokes or remarks
- Teach our youth that oppression, racism, and violence no longer have a place in our communities

Stand up and speak out. Take the initiative to treat everyone equally and respectably. Become a leader in your community and advocate for a violence free world.

OAESV Bystander Intervention Video

Stand Up Discussion Guide

Purpose of the *Stand Up* video: Given several recent high profile cases involving bystanders, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence wanted to respond with resources specifically for a teen audience to educate and inform. This video depicts a real world scenario that most teens can relate to while also providing bystander response options that are realistic and safe.

[Before using the discussion guide, watch the video HERE]

Discussion Overview:

- Age Levels: 13-18
- Appropriate for: Groups, one-on-one, and classroom settings
- Audience: Middle and High School Students
- Objective: To help young adults identify and respond to potentially harmful situations in safe and realistic ways. Through discussion and role-plays, participants should gain confidence in their ability to be active bystanders.

Discussion Items:

- Time Needed: 1 hour
- Materials Needed: Paper and writing utencil for each participant to take notes, chart paper/easel if instructor wants to take their own notes.
- Additional Handouts: OAESV factsheet *Talking Points: Sexual Violence Among Teens*

Discussion Instructions:

Step 1:

Before showing the video, consider an ice breaker activity that would be helpful in getting young people to consider their values and their "best selves". Here are two possible ice breaker options (or you could develop your own):

- Values-based writing: Have a couple of prompt questions that elicit some thought about people's values, like, "What activities are you doing when you are at your best?" or "Write about the most important person in the world to you." And then encourage folks to share in the large group. The narrative turn from here is that this exercise will be helpful, because we want folks to be thinking about themselves at their best, as well as the people that matter to them, as they consider whether they intervene in a situation or not.

- Values-based interview: Similar to above, but this time, have class members split into pairs, during which they ask similar questions of each-other. This might also include something funny or light-hearted as well, like, "What's your favorite food?" or "What's your favorite movie comedy?" From there, it could also include a bit about values, per the questions in #1 above. Partners could then introduce each other to the large group.

Step 2: **Show the video**

Step 3: **Utilize the following questions for discussion, whether in large group or small group.**

As a group, answer the following questions:

- What is a bystander?
  - A person who witnesses something that happens, without necessarily being involved in it.
- This is just for writing, not to be shared with anyone, but have you ever experienced situations similar to the one depicted in the video?
- Have you noticed situations similar to the one depicted in the video whether with friends at a party or in another place?
- When thinking about that situation, what about it made you know that this situation required a bystander action—what made you have a gut reaction?
- If it were easy, people would intervene all the time. But we know that people have a lot of barriers that get in the way of them intervening, even when they think they should. What barriers might you face taking a bystander action in this or any situation?
  - These could be personal, peer pressure, or even believing that we are going to make the situation worse.
  - How can you practice other ways around those barriers?



- Which of the solutions outlined in the video would work for you in this situation?
- Would you take those actions if it was your friend you had to confront?
- Introduce the definition of an Up-stander: A person who stands up for his or her beliefs; A person who does what they think is right, even if they are alone; A person who is not a bystander.
  - What are some ways that we can work to prevent this type of violence before it occurs?

Role play possible bystander scenarios that most teens face related to sexual assault: this could include a party situation, like in the video; a time when someone is talking about taking advantage of someone when they couldn't consent; a time in the school hallway when someone is sexually harassing (grabbing, making uncomfortable comments about) a person; or any other option you as a class could come up with. Come up with at least three bystander responses for each scenario. After the role-plays, discuss the perspectives, actions, choices, and consequences involved.

Key Points:

- There are 3 ways to be an active bystander: Do something yourself, get someone else to help, or be a distraction.
- Everyone has a role to play in ending violence.
- There are more people who witness potentially violent situations than there are people who commit violent acts. Together, we can make a change.

Statistics

- Young women ages 16-24 face the highest rates of sexual assault.[1]
  - 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old
- Nearly 1 in 5 women (18%) and 1 in 71 men (1%) have been raped in their lifetime.[2]
- More than a quarter of male victims of completed rape (28%) were first raped when they were 10 years old or younger.

Closing Remarks:

Hopefully, after today's discussion and role plays, you will have more practice reacting when you see potentially violent situations; and more practice is the only way we'll be more likely to do something in the situation if it happens. In addition, I encourage everyone to be proactive in preventing violence before it occurs in whatever ways you are comfortable with, whether talking with a friend, posting on social media, or creating/joining a group or performance at school that addresses sexual violence.

Additional Resources:

Websites:

Mentors in Violence Prevention
www.sportinsociety.org
Engaging Bystanders In Sexual Violence Prevention, a eLearning unit from the NSVRC:
http://www.nsvrc.org/elearning/3546
Know Your Power
www.know-your-power.org/
Prevent Connect
http://wiki.preventconnect.org/space/content?tag=bystander
Virginia Tech:
http://www.stopabuse.vt.edu/bystander.php#strategies
William and Mary:
http://web.wm.edu/sexualassault/geteducated_community_bystander.php
That's Not Cool:
http://www.thatsnotcool.com/

Publications:

Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention by Joan Tabachnick and NSVRC
http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Booklets_Engaging-Bystanders-in-Sexual-Violence-Prevention.pdf

Penn State & the bystander approach: Laying bare the dynamics in male peer culture, by Jackson Katz, made available through the NSVRC
http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC_News_Jackson-Katz-PSU-Part2.pdf

Bystander Intervention in Spanish Speaking Communities: Visit the CALCASA blog to hear a podcast from Emiliano Diaz de Leon of TAASA, speaking about culturally relevant prevention work in Spanish speaking commmunities
http://www.calcasa.org/2010/09/bystander-intervention-spanish-podcast/

Bystanders as agents of primary prevention, Partners in Social Change, Washington Coalition Of Sexual Assault Programs, 2011
http://www.wcsap.org/bystanders-agents-primary-prevention

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[1] Tabachnick, J. (2009) Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention, National Sexual Violence Resource Center
[2] Darley, J.M., & Latane, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 8, 377-383.
[3] Prevent Connect, Summary of features for effective bystander approaches, http://wiki.preventconnect.org/Summary+of+features+-for+effective+bystander+approaches

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