

Bystander Behavior

Even if you aren't directly involved in a sexual violation (either as victim or perpetrator), you have an important role to play as a member of the community. You can have a positive, powerful role in **promoting a culture of respect** and **intervening** when you see something inappropriate taking place.

Sometimes it is hard to speak up because we fear embarrassment, criticism, or we don't feel empowered to intervene. However, **all of us have a responsibility** as community members to care for one another. There are also studies showing that most bystanders only *think* they're the only ones wanting to intervene, while everyone is waiting around for someone else to speak up!

What Should I do to Help?

Speak up. You may never see a sexual assault in progress, but you will see and hear attitudes and behaviors that degrade others and promote sexual assault, harassment, or violence. *Research shows that most men are uncomfortable with language and actions that objectify women, but don't speak up because they mistakenly think that they are in the minority.* When someone tells a sexist/disrespectful joke or comment or uses demeaning language, speak up. That kind of language is not okay, and you're not alone in thinking so.



Intervene. If you do see a sexual assault, harassment, abuse, stalking, or other violation in progress, don't be a bystander! Speak up, enlist help, contact the authorities, etc. Even when an assault has not happened yet, if you see someone who is vulnerable (ex. intoxicated, alone, in an uncomfortable or intimidating situation, and/or being pursued by a "shady" character), you can enlist help to get them into safer circumstances.

Get involved. Contact the counselor, chaplain, or Our Voice to find out ways that you can positively impact the culture and reduce sexual assault, abuse, harassment and other types of violation. Students can have a powerful impact when it comes to the prevention of sexual assault and the healing of survivors.

Get Educated. You can educate others when you hear misinformation about consent, boundaries, and acceptable/unacceptable behaviors. You can also educate others about the impact that sexual violation has on victims. To get educated, talk to the Counselor, or spend some time on this website!