**Active Bystander Strategies**

**Ways You Can Be Active in Promoting Positive Change**

Active Bystandership can help in combatting any harmful or unjust act such as acts of racism, sexism, or homophobia, and can ultimately counter negative actions with positive actions.

Active Bystandership is rooted in an ethic of care, which means that on the most basic level we care about the wellbeing of those who are like and different from us. This care affords us the ability to do one or more things during cases when we witness injustice such as:

1. **Speaking up:** If you are friends with the person who is doing the injustice, then you can ask questions about why they are behaving in an unjust way.
2. **Responding as a group**: Without being obtrusive, have others join you in your conversation with the person causing the injustice.
3. **Create a distraction**: If you see someone engaging in unjust behavior, create a distraction such as asking a question about directions or where something is located.

**In the Moment:**

1. **Acknowledge the offense:** Identify the inappropriate behavior so it isn’t glossed over or ignored. This could create an opening for discussion.
2. **Interrupt the behavior:** Protect someone from harm, and another from being harmful or cruel. Emphasize that harmful behavior is unacceptable.
3. **Publicly support an aggrieved person:** Help someone who has been hurt or offended. This can be done by upholding a community or cultural norm.
4. **Encourage open dialogue:** Tension between individuals can be due to misunderstanding beliefs, values, or intent. This could be eliminated by open dialogue.
5. **Call for help:** Others may be best able to cope with a situation, make sure the person best-prepared is handing the situation.
6. **“I” Statements:** Three parts: 1. State your feelings, 2. Name the behavior, 3. State how you want the person to respond. This focuses on your feelings rather than criticizing the other person.
   1. Example: “I feel  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Please don’t do that anymore.”
7. **Group Intervention:** This is best used when a person has a pattern of inappropriate behavior and many examples can be used.

**After the Fact:**

1. **Privately support the upset person:** Listen respectfully and provide support to the offended or upset person.
2. **Talk privately with the person who acted inappropriately:** Have a constructive conversation with the inappropriate actor that allows them to save face.
3. **Report the incident, with or without names:** the police, human rights council, bias response team, parent or other appropriate official.

(“In the Moment” and “After the Fact” adapted from <http://www.tcatmorristown.edu/be-active-bystander> and <http://web.mit.edu/bystanders/strategies/strat_talk.html>)

**Active Bystander Resources**

Websites:

[Our Power as Active Bystanders](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-the-garden-good-and-evil/201201/our-power-active-bystanders)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/power-and-prejudice/201311/speak-or-stay-silent-5-reasons-confront-prejudice>

[The American Bystander](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/maura-dickey/the-american-bystander_b_8020868.html)

[NSVRC](http://www.nsvrc.org/projects/engaging-bystanders-sexual-violence-prevention)

Pamphlets:

[Do Something Campaign](http://www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/748725/DoSomethingAboutRacism_4Postcards.pdf)

[Active Witnessing Training Manual](https://www.academicvideostore.com/sites/default/files/video-attachments/220%20ART%20trainer%20manual%20protocol%20v4.1.pdf)

Videos:

[Effective Interventions](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXMa1K8zofU&feature=youtu.be)

[Bystander Effects](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/behavior/social-psychology/v/bystander-effect)