

Coaching the Bystander

Activity

Resource: Ideas for Action

Grade(s): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

What Is it All About?

A bystander is anyone who is neither a victim nor an offender, but who could potentially get involved to make a difference. It means anyone who is in a position to intervene before, during, or after an act of bullying, sexual violence, or harassment. This bystander intervention role-playing activity helps participants explore how to intervene safely, open up dialogue, discuss consent, etc. Create your own scenarios, use those from past experiences within your community, or the following Draw-the-Line (DTL) scenarios:

- A friend sends you a naked picture of a girl he knows. Is it a big deal to share it with others?
- Your friend passes out on the couch at a party. Do you leave them there?

Why Do It?

Engaging bystanders can lead to change in actions and attitudes. Equip students and teachers with tools and knowledge to refrain from looking away from sexual violence and harassment, and to know what to do or say as bystanders.

How Do We Do It?

With the help of an adult ally and/or an expert, have a discussion about the role of the bystander and different options available for the bystander to take action.

The DTL scenarios include excellent talking points, positive actions, and responses that are appropriate for the situation.

Participants can then take turns expressing how they would react if they were bystanders to a situation that made them or someone else uncomfortable, or where a peer had to make a decision with consequences for someone else (e.g., whether or not to forward a compromising photo that they received).

Different formats could be used, from a monologue to a role-play with another person.

Share creations.

Consider using the “rewind button” to discuss situations and participants could do things differently as bystanders.

Ensure supports are available if anything is triggered through the activity.

What Else Do We Need?

- Camera/cell phone
- TV for playback
- Draw-The-Line scenarios

How Do We Get Creative?

Instead of having them role-play, ask participants to draw comic strips illustrating different ways in which they could respond.

Assemble a montage of all the different role-plays or monologues.

Film a documentary with this activity as the focal point.

Have older students partner with younger students and have a discussion over lunch based on the DTL scenarios.

Adapted from Draw-The-Line.