

How to be an Active Bystander:

Sometimes, a situation just does not feel right. It might be comments made by a friend that you feel are inappropriate or you spot someone being harassed at a party or club.

Being an active bystander means being aware of when someone's behaviour is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to challenge it. If you do not feel comfortable doing this directly, then get someone to help you such as a friend or someone in authority.

Research shows that bystander intervention can be an effective way of stopping sexual assault before it happens, as bystanders play a key role in preventing, discouraging, and/or intervening when an act of violence has the potential to occur.

Before stepping in, try the ABC approach.

Assess for safety: If you see someone in trouble, ask yourself if you can help safely in any way.

Remember, your personal safety is a priority – never put yourself at risk.

Be in a group: It's safer to call out behaviour or intervene in a group. If this is not an option, report it to others who can act.

Care for the victim. Talk to the person who you think may need help. Ask them if they are OK.

How You Can Intervene Safely:

When it comes to intervening safely, remember the four Ds – direct, distract, delegate, delay.

Direct action

Call out negative behaviour, tell the person to stop or ask the victim if they are OK. Do this as a group if you can. Be polite. Don't aggravate the situation - remain calm and state why something has offended you. Stick to exactly what has happened, don't exaggerate.

Distract

Interrupt, start a conversation with the perpetrator to allow their potential target to move away or have friends intervene. Or come up with an idea to get the victim out of the situation – tell them they need to take a call, or you need to speak to them; any excuse to get them away to safety. Alternatively, try distracting, or redirecting the situation.

Delegate

If you are too embarrassed or shy to speak out, or you don't feel safe to do so, get someone else to step in. Any decent venue has a zero tolerance policy on harassment, so the staff there will act.

Delay

If the situation is too dangerous to challenge then and there (such as there is the threat of violence or you are outnumbered) just walk away. Wait for the situation to pass then ask the victim later if they are OK. Or report it when it's safe to do so – it's never too late to act.

In an emergency, call the police on 999.