

# Add Active Bystander Training to Your Toolkit

Tsültrim Allione says:

"I was at a lunch with the Dalai Lama and five Buddhist teachers at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. We were sitting in a charming room with white carpets and many windows. The food was a delightful, fragrant, vegetarian Indian meal. There were lovely flower arrangements on the table.

"We were discussing sexual misconduct among Western Buddhist teachers. A woman Buddhist from California brought up someone who was using his students for his own sexual needs. One woman said, 'We are working with him with compassion, trying to get him to understand his motives for exploiting female students and to help him change his actions.

"The Dalai Lama slammed his fist on the table, saying loudly, 'Compassion is fine, but it has to stop! And those doing it should be exposed!' All the serving plates on the table jumped, the water glasses tipped precariously, and I almost choked on the bite of saffron rice in my mouth.

"Suddenly I saw him as a fierce manifestation of compassion and realized that this clarity did not mean that the Dalai Lama had moved away from compassion. Rather, he was bringing compassion and manifesting it as decisive fierceness. His magnetism was glowing like a fire.

"I will always remember that day, because it was such a good teaching on compassion and precision. Compassion is not a wishy-washy 'anything goes' approach. Compassion can say a fierce no!"

- Tsültrim Allione, from her book *\*Wisdom Rising\**

“Compassion *isn't* permissive. We have protective use of force...”

~Marshall Rosenberg.

“One of the most surprising findings in my work has been that the most compassionate people have strong boundaries.” ~Brene Brown

## Protective Use of Force

“In some situations, however, the opportunity for dialogue may not exist, and the use of force may be necessary to protect life or individual rights. For instance, the other party may not be willing to communicate, or imminent danger may not allow time for communication. In these situations, we may need to resort to force. If we do, NVC needs us to differentiate between protective and punitive use of force.” *Marshall Rosenberg, PhD*

	Punitive	Protective	Restorative
Intention	Inflict suffering on person who caused harm.	Protect targets from injury or injustice. Protect needs of the group.	Address harm. “Who was harmed?” “What needs to be done to make it right?”
Assumption	Person who harmed others is wrong or bad	The person who harmed others is ignorant.	Healing from trauma is possible.
Corrective Action	Make them pay	Empathy and education.	Community processes for truth-telling

## **Mentors for Violence Prevention (MVP)**

**“Changing social norms that accept violence as a part of life.”**

MVP is based on a peer leadership model that targets not only potential perpetrators of violence and associated behaviors, but the role of the “bystander” to these behaviors. The model seeks to empower those who might otherwise be silent observers to situations where **violence** is unfolding. It has been implemented in middle school and high school settings, colleges, the U.S. military, professional sports, and prisons.

# MVP STRATEGIES

MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

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## Gender Violence Prevention Education & Training



MVP Programs



MVP Global



MVP Trainings

Acts of violence and hate are a problem in this country.

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**Agree**

**Unsure**

**Disagree**

## What will it take to end harassment and violence?

You are walking with a friend when a man and a woman standing in the street near a parked car erupt in an argument. He is very close to her and shouting. Your friend continues walking quickly past the man and woman. There are other people on the sidewalk, but they ignore what is happening.

## What keeps people from stepping up?



# Barriers to Bystander Intervention

- Social Influence
- Fear of Embarrassment
- Fear of Retaliation
- Pluralistic Ignorance
- Diffusion of Responsibility

Source: Mentors for Violence Prevention

- **Pluralistic Ignorance** - bystanders base their reaction to a situation **by gauging other onlookers' responses** to the incident.
- **Diffusion of responsibility** - simply implies that bystanders do not react because **they feel that other bystanders will respond** to the emergency situation and provide assistance.

Source: Mentors for Violence Prevention

**Helper Effect** - In the presence of more people, as long as **one** person takes action, *others are more likely to take action.*

***If a small group of people act amongst a sea of others, the others are more likely to do the same.***

Source: Ken Brown UI TEDx

Simply **being aware of the bystander's tendency to conform** is the *greatest* way to break the cycle.

When faced with a situation requiring action, **understand** how the Bystander Effect might be **holding you back**.

**Consciously** taking steps to overcome the Bystander Effect can help. However, this *does not mean* you should place yourself in danger.

Source: Mentors for Violence Prevention

# Stages of Active Bystander Behavior

- Notice the event
- Interpret it as a problem
- Feel responsible for dealing with it
- Possess the necessary skills to act

Source: Mentors for Violence Prevention

It's okay to call someone a "bitch" if it is in a joking manner.

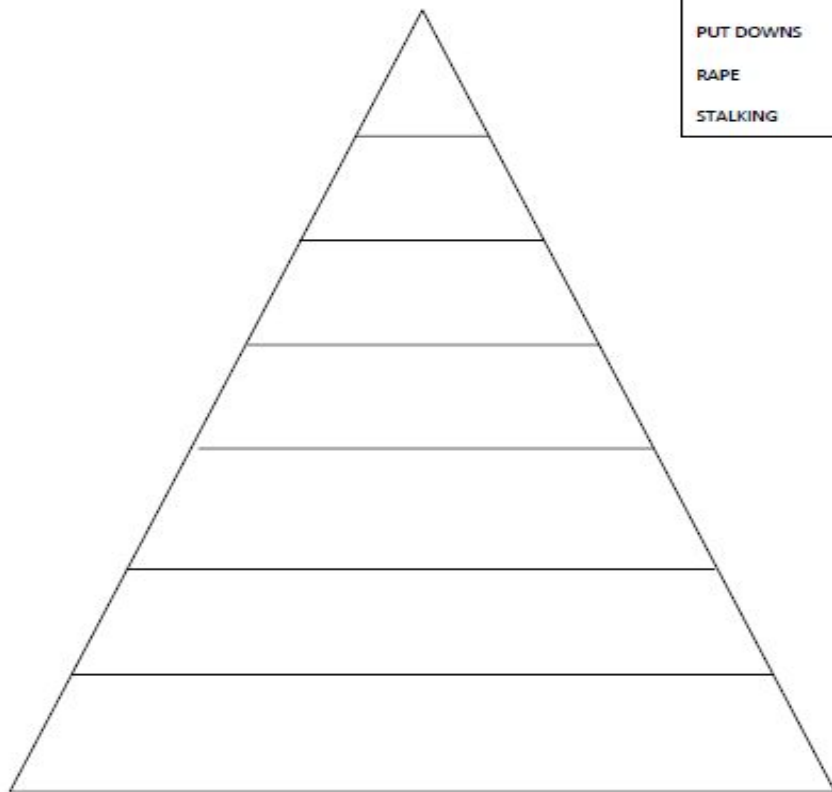
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**Agree**

**Unsure**

**Disagree**

*Pyramid of Violence*



VERBAL THREATS

SEXIST JOKES

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

PHYSICAL ABUSE

PUT DOWNS

RAPE

STALKING

If a friend of mine is being abusive, it's none of my business.

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**Agree**

**Unsure**

**Disagree**



# Active Bystander Intervention

- Direct
- Indirect or Distraction
- Engage Friends or Allies
- After the Fact or Next Day
- Protocol/Institutional Practice

Source: Mentors for Violence Prevention

# Unnecessary Roughness

A good friend of yours treats their partner badly. They constantly put them down, even in public, telling them what to do, what to wear, how to act... You've never seen them physically abuse their partner, but you are concerned about what might be going on in private.

## Train of Thought

Should ***I say something*** to my friend? Is their relationship **any of my business?**....I know they wouldn't be happy me about saying something...But if I don't, doesn't that mean that **I'm silently supporting the behavior?** I don't want to do that...Is there something I can say to my friend or their partner? What if they get **mad at me?** Then again maybe they need someone to step in....

**What should I do in this situation?**

#### Direct:

Talk to the person who is making comments and tell them you don't feel comfortable with what they are saying.

#### Distraction:

Start showing the person making comments pictures on your phone.

Start singing a song and get people involved.

Invite one of them to step outside to help with a task

#### Engage an Ally:

Ask another member of the group to help you separate the two people into different activities to deescalate the situation.

#### After the Fact/Next Day:

Check in with the person who is the receiver of the comments and ask if they need support.

Talk with the person making comments and tell them you feel uncomfortable with what they are saying.

Talk with another member of the group and make a plan to intervene next time it happens.

#### Protocol/Institutional Practice:

Talk with a trusted friend or professional and see if there is more you can do.

# Red Card

You are walking with a friend when a man and a woman near a parked car erupt in an argument in the street. He is very close to her and shouting. Your friend continues walking quickly past the man and woman. There are other people on the sidewalk, but they ignore what is happening.

## Train of Thought

***This is intense.*** Is this ***any of my business?***....I am afraid if I saying something it will ***escalate...***  
What can ***I possibly do?*** Maybe it's no big deal....Then again maybe they need someone to step in before ***someone gets hurt....***

**What should I do in this situation?**

Direct:

Approach the man and woman and ask if they need support.

Call out from a distance, if it feels safer.

Go in and escort the woman (or man) away.

Distraction:

Make a loud sound (whistling loudly if you can).

Start singing a song and dancing.

Engage an Ally:

Point out to others what is happening.

Scan the group for someone else who notices.

After the Fact/Next Day:

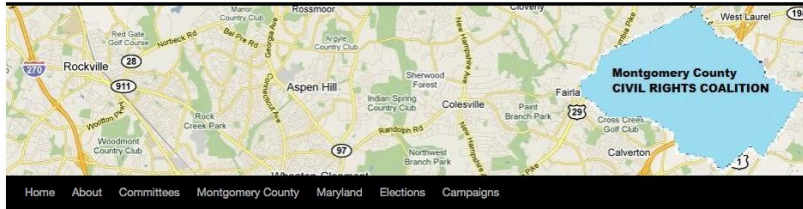
This one isn't likely to apply if you don't know the people, but if you do, check in with them.

Protocol/Institutional Practice:

If violence occurs, call the police.

# Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition

Protecting civil rights and liberties everywhere by protecting them at home



← We stand with our neighbors! Rockville turns out for sanctuary hearing

Mythbusting Rockville's Sanctuary Ordinance →

## Bystander Intervention Training Materials here!

Posted on March 7, 2017 by kithsonn

In the wake of the disastrous election of 2016 and the rise of hate crimes and harassment in our community, those of us in the Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition (MCCRC) have provided Bystander Intervention trainings to almost 2,500 activists in Maryland and around the Washington, D.C. metro area in only two months. We're proud that this included some 1700 people who were trained on January 20th (Inauguration Day) through Swamp Revolt by 70 trainers we taught, in advance of the Women's March on Washington on January 21st.



"Hassle line" at Bystander Intervention Training, Jan 4, Takoma Park

Our Bystander Intervention training was created so that communities could do two things:

1. To provide a community service that would increase the likelihood that people will step up to support any community member who is being harassed. We do this by grounding our training in nonviolence, de-escalation, and compassion for others.
2. To use the trainings to provide a conduit for people to become interested in becoming progressive political activists and to help them find community groups who are doing

- Mailing list**
- Sign up today!

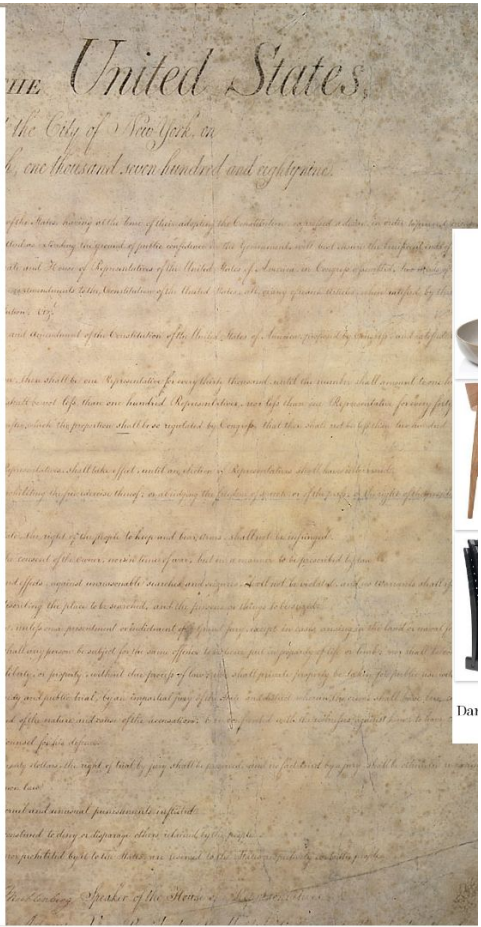
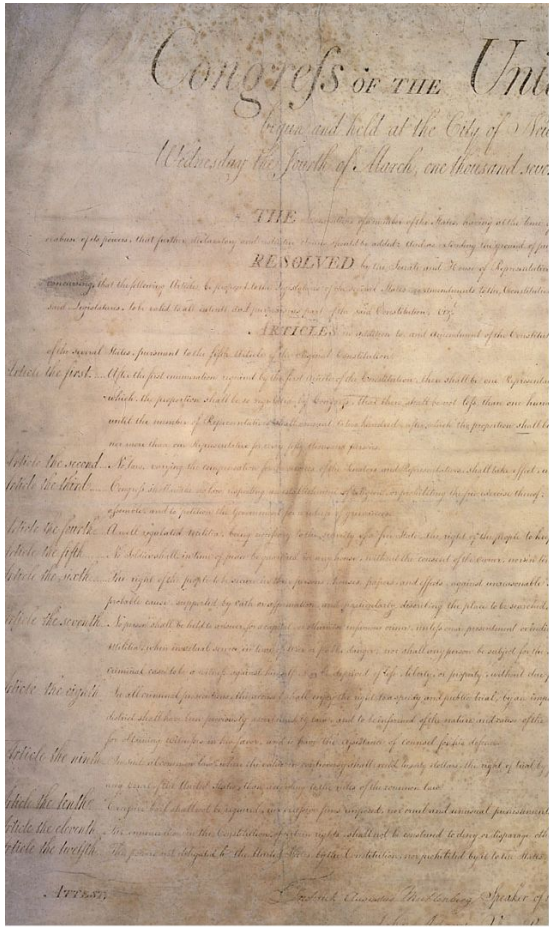


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1. We have an ethical, social obligation to help each other when we are in the position to do so (situationally and psychologically).
2. Stepping up to act in solidarity with others can **help reduce the impact** of the situation.
3. The best way to respond as a Bystander is through **de-escalation**.
4. Bystanders support what the **Target** wants.
5. Through **practice in responding** we learn to move through our hesitations. Our practice will enable us to step up when we observe the need to support another person.

Source: Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition (State of Maryland)

Should you call the police?

- As bystanders, **we are here to support the targeted person.** This means the target gets to have a say about whether the police are called.
- Consider privilege of race or class.
- Police presence can trigger escalation.
- Call police if there is violence.

**ASK** -- does the targeted person think police intervention will be helpful? Follow their lead.

Source: Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition (State of Maryland)



## How to be Ready to Be a Bystander Who Intervenes

- Be **aware** of what's happening around you.
- Really **pay attention**.
- **Do not assume** someone else will do something.
- **Point out** the situation to people around you.
- When you first approach the **targeted person**, introduce yourself and quietly explain you saw what is happening and want to offer support. If the person says they are fine and don't want support, move back, and **MONITOR** the situation.

Source: Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition (State of Maryland)

# Empowerment

- Our goal is to empower the targeted person.
- Empowering means that the targeted person feels that they can alter the course of the situation and take back some control.

Source: Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition (State of Maryland)

## What to do if you are witnessing Islamophobic harassment

A bystander's guide to help  
the person who's being targeted



- 1 Engage conversation.**  
Go to them, sit beside them and say hello.  
Try to appear calm, collected and welcoming.  
**IGNORE THE ATTACKER.**

- 2 Pick a random subject and start discussing it.**  
It can be anything: a movie you liked,  
the weather, saying you like something  
they wear and asking where they got it...



- 3** **Keep building the safe space.** Keep eye contact with them and don't acknowledge the attacker's presence: the absence of response from you two will push them to leave the area shortly.



- 4** **Continue the conversation until the attacker leaves & escort them to a safe place if necessary.** Bring them to a neutral area where they can recollect themselves; respect their wishes if they tell you they're ok and just want to go.



# Principles of Bystander Intervention

We want to show ***moral courage***:

- by acting from a centered place despite our fears
- by choosing principles over emotion (anxiety, anger, self-righteousness)

We want to engage in ***de-escalation***:

- by limiting the ability of a situation to become more intense
- by reducing the drama in the situation

We want to ***shift the attention*** in the situation:

- by interacting as much as we can only with the targeted person
- by ignoring the attacker (freeze them out, even if they escalate verbally)
- by creating a safer space for the targeted person
- by bringing in other people for additional support and varied responses

## Principles of Bystander Intervention - continued

We want to ***reach out*** to the targeted person:

- by being present as an ally and an equal
- by not taking away the ability of the targeted person to respond
- by asking if they want our help
- by asking before we touch them
- by asking how we can best help them
- by offering possible solutions (that the targeted person may reject)
- by offering emotional support and empathy (befriending/connect)

## Ignore the Attacker

- **Attention** -- the Bystander ignores unless the Attacker becomes physical.
- **Hold your impulses** - step aside from any impulse to speak up in the name of justice.
- **Challenging to ignore** - we are choosing to defend our principles through honoring the Target and ignoring the Attacker. This is not the venue for debate.
- **“What if the attacker sees my intervention as provocation?”**  
An Attacker may use any response to escalate, a better approach is to focus on the Target.

# Target: Spanish Speaker Communicating with Clerk in a Convenience Store

- Approach the target, especially if you speak Spanish.
- Ignore the attacker (and anyone who “piles on”).
- Don’t worry about losing your place in line.
- Find the manager and ask that the attacker be told to leave the store.



# TARGET: Transwoman entering a bathroom

The Target is stopped, harassed, while entering bathroom.

- Approach the Target and offer to go into the bathroom with her.
- Ignore the Attacker.
- Approach the Target and offer to stand outside the bathroom while she is using it.

# TARGET: Person of Color on Public Street

- The Target is being yelled at from a car driving slowly alongside them as they proceed down the street.
- You're on the street and observe the incident.
- Approach the Target and offer to walk with them.
- If you are with other people in a group, ask if you can create a human barrier between the Attacker and the targeted person. Turn around and walk in the opposite direction from the car.
- Take a photo of the auto's license plate and model of the car, in case you decide to make a report.

# Local Place of Worship is Defaced - What could you do?

- Banners of support.
- Chalk loving comments.
- Attend services to connect with community.
- Contact local media.
- Contact local police, legislators, state and federal legislators and insist that perpetrators be found and brought to justice.

# Witnessing Civil Disobedience

While standing on the side of a political action, you witness activists sit down together in an act of civil disobedience. The police arrive and use excessive force as they start to arrest the protesters. **Do not interfere** with an official police action, but you can:

- **Video** the harsh treatment and document the identities of the police behaving inappropriately. Send video to the ACLU, local media.
- Since this was a public action, you can **post the video** without asking permission of the activists first.
- Call for medical help, if appropriate.

Consider:

When and where would you integrate empathy or other NVC skills?

- As an Active Bystander
- In a Training Situation

Discernment:

- Avoid offering empathy to Attacker in presence of the Target.
- If you address the Attacker, speak from YOUR perspective. Speak about your feelings and needs. Do not speak for the Target.

[Bystander Effect Explained - Heroic Imagination Project](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4S1LLrSzVE>

[Jackson Katz, PhD TedX](#)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/jackson\\_katz\\_violence\\_against\\_women\\_it\\_s\\_a\\_mens\\_issue?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/jackson_katz_violence_against_women_it_s_a_mens_issue?language=en)

<https://www.mvpstrat.com/>

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[Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition \(Maryland\) Bystander Training Materials](#)

<https://mocoivilrights.wordpress.com/2017/03/07/bystander-intervention-training-materials-here/>

[Ken Brown, Tedx Ulowa Helper Effect](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ufs8cKyzLvg>

[How to Start a Movement TedX Derek Sivers](#)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/derek\\_sivers\\_how\\_to\\_start\\_a\\_movement?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement?language=en)