



The Five "Ds" of Upstander Intervention

If you observe someone being targeted with bullying or harassment of any kind, you can make a choice to actively stand up against this abusive behavior. Below are 5 different methods you can use to support your peers and become an upstander instead of a bystander. Remember to use your awareness to fully assess any potential threats to your safety before taking action.

Direct Intervention

Use your voice to address the specific behavior that is inappropriate, offensive, or violent. In the heat of the moment, a person causing harm might not be aware of how abusive they are acting.

- Approach the aggressor from the front or side. Don't approach the aggressor from behind, or get directly in their face, as this may escalate the situation.
- Take a non-violent posture with both hands up and palms facing forward.
- Use "I" statements to voice your feelings and wishes without expressing a judgment. Starting a sentence with "you" may be interpreted as a judgment and put the person causing harm on the defensive.
- Use "we" statements to turn yourself and the aggressor into a "we" in order to foster a sense of unity. When you create a "we," the person causing harm is less likely to direct their anger towards you.
- To avoid giving the impression that you are trying to quiet or "shush" the person causing harm, you might choose to initially match their vocal intensity. The goal after that would be to slowly speak in an increasingly calm tone. The person causing harm may follow your lead without even knowing that they are doing it.

Distraction

Divert attention away from the aggressor, the victim or both. Distraction is a subtle and creative way to intervene. The aim is simply to derail the incident by interrupting it. Below are several methods of distraction:

- Ignore the aggressor and engage directly with the victim. In this case, don't talk about the abusive situation. Instead, talk about something completely unrelated. You can try to pretend to be lost, ask for the time, or pretend you previously knew the victim and strike up a random conversation.
- Accidentally-on-purpose spill your coffee, your pocket change, or make some other kind of commotion.
- Get in the way. Continue what you were doing, but physically get between the harasser and the target. This method should only be used in the case of verbal harassment.



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Delegation

Acquire assistance from a third party.

- Find a nearby support or authority figure and ask them to intervene. This may include teachers, coaches, parents, employees, law enforcement or other emergency response personnel.
- Speak directly to someone else who notices what's happening and work together to directly intervene or use a method of distraction.
- Call 311 or 911 to request help.

Documentation

If someone is already helping a person who is in crisis, you may choose to document the situation by recording on your phone, or taking notes. Never post or share a video without the consent of the victim. Posting a video or a picture online can open you and/or the victim up to additional harassment or other continued harm. If the situation ends while you're present, ask the person harmed if they'd like a copy of the video and let them decide what to do with it.

Delayed Intervention

If you're unable to act in the moment, you can make a difference for the person who has been harassed by checking in on them after the fact. Many types of harassment happen in passing or very quickly, in which case you may not have time to intervene immediately. If you approach a victim after an abusive incident has occurred, you can do the following:

- Ask them if they're okay and ask if there's any way you can support them.
- If the victim is injured, you may offer first aid if you are qualified. You can also seek out medical assistance or call 911 if the situation merits it.
- Offer to accompany them to their destination or sit with them until additional help arrives.
- Share resources with them and offer to help them file a police report.