

Be Active and Interrupt: Empowering You To Step In When It Counts

Bystander Intervention Information to Create Safe Spaces at Pride UP 2023

<https://felivelife.org/event/pride-up-2023/>
<https://www.facebook.com/events/185632644313378>



Everyone attending a Pride celebration is part of creating a fun, positive and safe experience. This resource shares bystander intervention information to help us reflect on the different ways we may choose to respond to potentially harmful interactions during these inclusive community celebrations. *Note: A person or group clearly trying to intimidate with hostile and violent behavior requires involvement with Ironwood Public Safety, please call 906-932-1213 or 911; direct approaches by Pride participants is not advised.*

Key Words:

Inclusion: A sense of belonging, feeling respected, valued, and being seen for who you are and valued as a contributing member of the group.

Microaggressions: Everyday verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs or insults - whether intentional or unintentional - which communicate hostility, derogatory or negative messages to people based solely upon their social identities. [How microaggressions are like mosquito bites](#) (2-minute YouTube video)

Bystander: Anyone who sees or hears a potentially harmful situation or interaction, but is not directly involved. Bystanders face the choice of getting involved to improve the situation or not.

Bystander Intervention: The act of recognizing a potentially harmful situation or interaction and choosing to respond in a way that could positively influence the outcome.

Interrupting a potentially harmful situation or interaction takes knowledge, reflection and practice. There's a lot of reasons why it can be hard to step in, like our current state of mind, our social influences or even how many people are also present.





Bystander intervention outlines a process for deciding if and how to interrupt. It starts with some foundational points to serve the intention to positively influence the outcome:

- Curious, problem-solving attitude
- Making our presence as witnesses known.
- Avoid escalating the situation by making assumptions.

As bystanders we become as aware as we can of the situation as we can. This includes:

- Surveying the physical, psychological and emotional safety aspects.
- Being aware of what we see, hear and feel.
- Avoiding assumptions, interpretations or conclusions.
- Knowing how our social identities influence our understanding of the world around us.
 - Have you reflected on your social identities? Graphics like [Wheel of Power/Privilege](#) aim to help us see systemic marginalization, the unequal balances of power and influence.
 - How does your social identity and personal history influence how you engage in community events?

If we choose to interrupt a potentially harmful situation or interaction, the **Four Ds Model of Bystander Intervention** outlines key strategies to do so:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">•  Direct - Naming what we are seeing and/or uncomfortable with, either to the person being harmed or the person causing harm, which could initiate a conversation about better alternatives. | <p><i>“Are you ok?”</i></p> <p><i>“That type of language feels harmful, what do you mean by that?”</i></p> <p>Making eye contact and repeating back what we heard.</p> |
| <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•  Distract - If we’re not comfortable directly naming what we’re seeing, we can create a distraction to redirect and deescalate those involved. | <hr/> <p>Changing the subject</p> <p>Using humor</p> <p>Asking questions, like borrowing a phone or asking for directions.</p> |
| <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•  Delay - After the situation, checking in with the person we think may need support, letting them know what we saw, listening empathetically, and inquiring if there’s a way we can help. | <hr/> <p><i>“I overheard the conversation earlier and was wondering how you were feeling about it.”</i></p> <p>Exchanging phone numbers to connect later.</p> |
| <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•  Delegate - Involving others to engage in interrupting the situation. | <hr/> <p>Asking friends or other witnesses for help.</p> <p>Asking someone closer to the person doing harm to talk to them.</p> <p>Reaching out to someone with more authority, like an event coordinator.</p> |

Interrupting a situation may require using a few strategies. There is also another D that plays a role: **Document**, being ready to somehow record what was seen happening. This relates back to the foundation point of making our presence as witnesses known.

Check out the [SPLC’s Guide to Bystander Intervention](#), for more examples of these strategies, tips and reflections to help prepare us to be active bystanders.

Reflections:

- What is your awareness and confidence in being a part of a positive and safe event?
 - What considerations of the surroundings do you take into account when deciding to interrupt a potentially harmful situation or not?
 - Which bystander intervention strategies are you more likely to use, and when?
- Who are your people when you are participating in a community celebration like a Pride event?
 - Do you know who you would reach out to if you were seeking help?

Thank you for taking time to read, reflect, and be engaged! Happy Pride Month! 🏳️‍🌈

“In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”