

Tips for Being an Engaged Bystander

If you become aware that a situation is potentially problematic or risky and recognize that someone else could be in trouble, you may feel you have the ability to be part of the solution. If so, you can be an active/engaged bystander. Below you will find some helpful tips to help you be a part of the solution and know when to act:

- Be aware of comments and behaviors from others that would indicate they are intent on having sexual intercourse or contact even if the partner is unwilling.
- Notice if someone is getting ready to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact with a partner who is incapacitated (such as being impaired from using alcohol or drugs).
- Trust your intuition. If you don't trust someone, there may be a reason for this mistrust.
- Publicly support an individual that is being harassed by making it clear that the community does not condone such behavior.
- Distract the harassing individual. *Example: Ask a man who is harassing a woman on the street for directions or the time.*
- Involve the group in intervening by suggesting the group head home for the night. This will remove the individual that is in a risky situation without confrontation.
- Be honest and direct whenever possible and address the specific behavior that you have observed.
- Approach everyone as a friend; remaining calm will help keep the situation from escalating.
- Many perpetrators are unaware that what they have done is a crime. (The perpetrator may say, "Yeah, that was messed up, but it was fun.") Let that person know that what he/she did was not right and was against the law.
- Know when it's time to call for help. The important thing is to get help when it is needed, not to be a hero.