

Bystander Intervention is not enough

Reimagining how we approach community care and prevention

Objectives for today

- Participants will increase knowledge on the history of bystander intervention
- Participants will increase knowledge about critiques of modern bystander intervention education
- Participants will leave with at least one reimagined option for community care that does not rely on harmful systems

Community Agreements

- Space for learning and listening, but remember impact
- Move forward, move back
- Confidentiality
- I Statements
- Anti-Oppression is centered

Definitions

- Bystander Intervention
 - Harvard Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: “a social science model that predicts that most people are unlikely to help others in certain situations” designed to “teach people to overcome their resistance to checking in and helping out.”
- Bystander Effect
 - Britannica: “the inhibiting influence of the presence of others on a person’s willingness to help someone in need.”
- Green Dot
 - A bystander intervention training program that targets popular opinion leaders and uses diffusion theories for culture change
- Bringing in the Bystander
 - A bystander intervention training program that uses a community responsibility approach

The River Metaphor



What words or phrases come to mind when we say bystander intervention?

Activity

"It's been a really great and effective way to get students involved in preventing sexual violence in the community. ... An active bystander is someone who sees these types of interpersonal violence and takes action to change or stop the behavior from happening."

*Safe Passage & Friends, A Podcast about
Creating a Community Free from Violence*

Activity

"Green Dot pulls away the idea that someone is all good or all bad. ... Students can distract, directly intervene, or delegate."

More to the Story, by A Voice for the Innocent

Activity

In a tweet, [Lauren Chief Elk] refers to the “social and legal consequences that everyone seems to not mention when promoting the bystander ideology, particularly on college campuses” (November 20, 2013, 9:34am). “Especially on campus, if you intervene in a situation that involves an athlete, people are N.O.T. going to be happy with you” (@ChiefElk, November 20, 2013, 9:43am). “I’ve seen bystanders get their phone bills subpoenaed, put on house arrest, been monitored & followed, threatened, harassed, put on trial” (@ChiefElk, November 20, 2013, 9:38am).

Carrie A. Rentschler (2017): Bystander intervention, feminist hashtag activism, and the anti-carceral politics of care, *Feminist Media Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2017.1326556 (quoting Lauren Chief Elk).

Activity

Bystander intervention was initially developed by the national movement to end sexual assault as a means of response to emergencies. But what is defined as an emergency? While acts of sexual violence are often rhetorically treated as if they were extraordinary incidents, in practice they are normalized as everyday interactions.

LAUREN CHIEF ELK AND SHAADI DEVEREAUX, THE FAILURE OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION, THE NEW INQUIRY (DECEMBER 23, 2014), [HTTPS://THENEWINQUIRY.COM/FAILURE-OF-BYSTANDER-INTERVENTION/](https://thenewinquiry.com/failure-of-bystander-intervention/)

Bystander Intervention + its history

- Kitty Genovese and Winston Moseley
 - <https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2012/09/tall-tales>
 - <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/witness/>
 - 1964
- White Women Less Likely to Help SV Victim if They're Black
 - <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qvdvpw/white-women-less-likely-to-help-sexual-assault-victim-if-shes-black>
- Bystander Effect may not be as strong as we think
 - <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2011-08829-001>
- Modern Examples
 - Jacob Blake
 - <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/timeline-the-jacob-blake-shooting-and-the-unrest-that-followed/2329811/>
 - Charles Kinsey
 - Survivors imprisoned for self-defense against abusers
- Overreliance on police for code of conduct, escalate into police brutality
 - Amy Cooper
- Overreliance on individual education

Critiques of Modern Bystander Intervention

- <https://thenewinquiry.com/failure-of-bystander-intervention/> (The Failure of Bystander Intervention): "Bystander intervention is less a weapon in the fight against sexual assault and more an evolved form of victim blaming."
- Critiques about carceral feminist frameworks of bystander intervention since 2013 at least
- Bringing In The Bystander, Green Dot all studied at predominantly white institutions
- Green Dot research on students of color

Reimagining Community Care + Responding to Critiques

Responses to Critiques and Alternatives

- <https://transitcenter.org/publication/safety-for-all/>
- <https://www.soteriasolutions.org/blog-posts/anti-blackness>
- <http://chimi.biz/bout-that-life/>

How can we reimagine community care that does not rely on harmful systems OR perpetuating oppression?

Check Out

From Ericka A. Dixon

- Head: What are you thinking about?
 - This could be a comment someone said in the space, something that came up for you, a memory or a plan
- Heart: What are you feeling?
 - This could be related to how you are feeling physically, warm, cold, tense, relaxed, it could be related to how you're feeling emotionally, spiritually, etc.
- Hand: What are you going to do?