National Guard Bureau
Bystander Intervention Training

Options for Early Bystander Intervention

The best way bystanders can assist in creating an empowering climate free of sexual assault is to diffuse or shut down problem behaviors very early on, before they escalate.

As a bystander, you can accomplish this by choosing from any number of possible actions—including the 35 sample ideas* on this list.

Use these ideas to get you started—but don't stop there. What others can you come up with?

And remember: when choosing the most effective action to take, always make sure it is an action that will also keep you safe from harm.

1. Educate yourself about sexual violence and what you can do about it.
2. Share information about sexual assault and violence with your friends.
3. Confront friends who make excuses for other people's abusive behavior.
4. Speak up against racist, sexist, and homophobic jokes or remarks. Indicate your displeasure.
5. Speak up against commercials, television shows, and movies that depict violence or sexism against women, or sexual violence against men or women.
6. Speak up if you hear someone say, "She/he deserved it," when talking about sexual assault."
7. Speak up if a person says that women are asking to be raped.
8. Express your disapproval if a friend tells you that he or she had sex with someone who was passed out or who didn't give consent.
9. Watch your drinks and your friends' drinks at parties.
10. Make sure you leave the party with the same people you came with.
11. At a party or bar, talk to the friends of a drunk person to make sure they don't leave their friend behind.
12. Offer to walk home with someone at a party who has had too much to drink so he or she can go to sleep.
13. Make sure to walk an intoxicated friend home from a party to keep him or her safe. Also take responsibility to help protect someone who is intoxicated that you don't know well.
14. If you see someone's drink get spiked with drugs or alcohol, tell that person—even if you don't know him or her.

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* This list was adapted with permission from Victoria L. Banyard from the report "Rape Prevention Through Bystander Education: Bringing a Broader Community Perspective to Sexual Violence Prevention" by Victoria L. Banyard, Elizabethe G. Plante, Mary M. Moynihan, 2005. The report can be found online at http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/208701.pdf.

15. If you saw that someone slipped something into someone else's drink, grab the cup and pour out the tainted drink.
16. If you suspect a friend or stranger has been drugged at a party or elsewhere, call your chain of command, the military police (MPs) or Security Police (SPs), or 911.
17. Get help if you hear someone yelling and fighting.
18. Call 911, MPs, or SPs if you hear someone calling for help and/or investigate yourself if your safety is not at risk.
19. If you see a friend grabbing, pushing, or insulting his or her partner, confront him or her directly, or get help from other friends or your command.
20. If you see a friend or a stranger taking a very intoxicated person upstairs to an empty room, say something—ask that person what he or she is doing.
21. If you see several strangers dragging a passed-out woman or man to their room, get help and try to intervene in a way that is safe.
22. If you hear an acquaintance talking about forcing someone to have sex with him or her, speak up against that activity and express concern for the victim.
23. If you see a person being shoved or yelled at by another person, ask him or her if he or she needs help.
24. If you hear what sounds like yelling and fighting going on in another room, either knock on the door to see if everything is okay or immediately contact your sergeant, supervisor, or some other authority who can help.
25. Ask a friend, acquaintance, or stranger who seems upset or uncomfortable if he or she is okay or needs help.
26. Express concern if a fellow Guardsman says that he or she had an unwanted sexual experience but he or she doesn't call it "rape."
27. If a friend, acquaintance, or stranger tells you he or she was sexually assaulted, call a rape crisis center or talk to a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) or Victim Advocate (VA) for help and advice.
28. Let a friend that is in an abusive relationship know that you're available to listen and find help..
29. Let a friend you suspect has been sexually assaulted know that you are available to listen without judging him or her and will help find professional support through the SARC or VA.
30. Inform a friend you suspect has been sexually assaulted about the Guard's SARC or VA support services.
31. Obtain verbal consent before engaging in any type of sexual behavior.
32. Ask for verbal consent when you are intimate with a partner, even if you are in a long-term relationship.
33. Stop sexual activity when asked to, even if you are already sexually aroused.
34. If you hear that a fellow Guardsman has been accused of sexual violence, don't keep information you may have to yourself—even if pressured by your peers to keep silent. Tell your chain of command or other authorities what you know in case it is helpful.
35. NEVER suggest to anyone who says he or she has had unwanted sexual experiences that he or she keep quiet so others don't get in trouble.