

What Can We Do?

STEPS TO STOPPING HARASSMENT



RECOGNIZE

If you observe or hear of incidents that might constitute or contribute to sexual harassment or other sexual misconduct, you have options. If a situation appears to involve unwanted sexual attention or advances, or gender discrimination, ask yourself if anyone involved may need help.



RECRUIT

Seeking the perspective of a friend or colleague may help you to avoid acting on unconscious biases. If you notice a situation and are unsure whether to take action, ask for another bystander's viewpoint to better understand context. Together, you can navigate available options.



RESPOND

If it is safe to do so, you may try to:

- respond directly to the potentially harmful behavior.
- delegate to someone in a trained role, such as an event host, supervisor, academic leader, or Title IX Resource Coordinator.
- create a distraction, such as interrupting the incident or conversation to ask for assistance with a task.
- delay your exit from the space and simply be present with the other person if other options do not feel accessible.



REMOVE

If you are able to connect with the person who is potentially being harmed, check in to see what they may need. If the person wishes to remove themselves from the situation, you may offer to connect them with a trusted colleague, friend, or supportive resources.



REPEAT

Remember that every time you choose to be an active bystander, you are modeling a positive approach for others. Being an active bystander not only helps one person— it establishes norms for the entire community and improves the climate around you.

You Might Ask

WHY BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?

FROM ACTION TO INCLUSION



- Bystander Intervention is a type of response to situations we interpret as being potentially harmful to another person. It requires recognizing the potential for harm and understanding the role we can play in reducing harm by taking action.
- The information included here is not a call to action, but an invitation. Every member of the Harvard community has unique identities and backgrounds that inform how safe and appropriate it may feel to be an active bystander. It is important to honor this.
- We encourage you to reflect on what feels accessible to you and what strategies you can come up with to work for you.

WHY WE REFRAIN FROM INTERVENING



- We may have biases that prevent us from perceiving the incident as a problem.
- We assume someone else will step in and help instead of us.
- We are unsure of how to be helpful.
- We may not feel we have the power needed to effect change.
- We may have concerns for our own safety.

BEING A BYSTANDER AT HARVARD



“Recently on a Harvard shuttle, a man embarked claiming he was an employee. He sat down and started talking inappropriately to a woman nearby. The person started saying how pretty she was, offering her money and telling her lewd stories about himself. I caught her eye and asked if she was okay.

I told him that he was being inappropriate. He then started saying explicit things to the bus driver, who eventually kicked him off. I know the intention of this training isn't to make us do this, but I felt it was my obligation to jump in, as everyone around was in shock and didn't know what to do. So, thank you!”

— José, Harvard Employee