



SCOPE Tip of the Week Member Newsletter

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Bystander Intervention

You have likely heard the phrase “bystander intervention” trending in recent years- on listservs, in research, as part of legislation, at conferences and more. What is it and how can it contribute to a healthy and safe campus?

Bystander intervention is best understood as a philosophical approach, rather than a specific type of program. It’s a meta-process, rather than a content area. It’s about inspiring community members to come together to address a specific behavior that causes injury to peers.

Imagine a herd of gazelles; one stumbles and falls behind. A lion sees this and pounces in for the kill. The fit, strong gazelles run off and leave the hurt gazelle to be devoured.

Or picture two friends swimming in the ocean when they see a shark. They both start swimming faster and one says, “There’s no way we are going to outswim this shark.” The other says, “Well, no, but I just have to swim faster than you.”

Bystander intervention is about **not** being the gazelle that would leave your fellow animal to become prey. It’s about **not** being that individual who tries to outswim his friend. Instead, bystander intervention is about standing up for what is right and coming together as a community to support those who are being harassed, hazed, intimidated or are in danger.

There’s no amount of mandated education, workshops or training seminars that will change the minds of those who could benefit the most. It’s essential to encourage the community to take responsibility and step up to address problems when they occur. Part of the corrective action is the community seeing this behavior as something that affects the entire group, not just the one person unlucky enough to be the victim.

Learn more about bystander intervention:

www.unh.edu/preventioninnovations/

www.stepupprogram.org/

www.itgetsbetter.org

www.mvpnational.org

www.wegiveadamn.org/

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