

RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BIAS

RESTATE OR PARAPHRASE. “I think I heard you saying _____ (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?”

ASK FOR CLARIFICATION OR MORE INFORMATION. “Could you say more about what you mean by that?” “How have you come to think that?”

ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEELINGS BEHIND THE STATEMENT. Express empathy and compassion. “It sounds like you’re really frustrated/nervous/angry.....” “I can understand that you’re upset when you feel disrespected.”

SEPARATE INTENT FROM IMPACT. “I know you didn’t realize this, but when you _____ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because _____. Instead you could _____ (different language or behavior.)”

SHARE YOUR OWN PROCESS. “I noticed that you _____ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I learned _____.”

EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS. “When you _____ (comment/behavior), I felt _____ (feeling) and I would like you to _____.”

CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPE. Give information, share your own experience and/or offer alternative perspectives. “Actually, in my experience _____.” “I think that’s a stereotype. I’ve learned that _____.” “Another way to look at it is _____.”

APPEAL TO VALUES AND PRINCIPLES. “I know you really care about _____. Acting in this way really undermines those intentions.”

PROMOTE EMPATHY. Ask how they would feel if someone said something like that about their group, or their friend/partner/child. “I know you don’t like the stereotypes about _____ (their group), how do you think he feels when he hears those things about his group?” “How would you feel if someone said that about/did that to your sister or girlfriend?”

TELL THEM THEY’RE TOO SMART OR TOO GOOD TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT. “Come on. You’re too smart to say something so ignorant/offensive.”

PRETEND YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND. As people try to explain their comments, they often realize how silly they sound. “I don’t get it.....” “Why is that funny?”

USE HUMOR. Exaggerate comment, use gentle sarcasm. “She plays like a girl?” You mean she plays like Serena Williams?” Or Mia Hamm?

POINT OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE OTHER PERSON. “I’m tired of hearing your Muslim jokes. Do you know he’s also studying _____ and likes to _____? You may want to talk with him about that. You actually have a lot in common.”

W.I.I.F.T. (What’s in it for them). Explain why diversity or that individual/group can be helpful/valuable. “I know you’re not comfortable with _____ but they can help us reach out to/better serve other groups on campus/in the community.” “In the real world, we are going to have to work with all sorts of people, so might as well learn how to do it here.”



Bystander Intervention Strategies

Approaches

There are two basic approaches to any intervention strategy. You can use either one or a combination depending on what might feel more comfortable given the circumstances and variables in the specific moment of intervention.

Indirect Intervention: This is the most common intervention and is used to distract or interrupt harm when direct communication is not safe or appropriate.

- “What time is it?”
- “Can I ask you for directions?”
- “Nice shoes!”
- Spill your drink
- Silent stare / make the people involved aware that they were observed.

Direct Intervention: This intervention asks you to directly address the violence or harm you believe is happening.

- “Are you okay?”
- “Do you need help?”
- “That’s not cool.”
- “Leave her alone!”
- “Cut it out!”

Staged Intervention Approach Bystander intervention can take place at different times, places, and settings.

Before: Bystander intervention can be used before direct harm has occurred to prevent harm/violence from happening in the first place.

During: Bystander intervention can be used during a situation where harm is occurring to mitigate the harm.

After: Bystander intervention can be used after harm has been caused to reduce recidivism or more harm in the future.

Five steps before intervening

Notice the Event

Be aware of your surroundings.

- Look for red flags.
- Observe others' reactions - does anyone appear uncomfortable?
- Sometimes we choose to look away, or keep our headphones in, focus on our phones, etc. Sometimes we will even completely ignore a problem.
- Can include things on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. – does not have to literally be face-to-face.

Interpret it as a Problem

- If you don't see an event as problematic, you'll just mentally "keep going."
- Often, you need to find out more information to make an accurate assessment.
- Investigate ambiguity – do I have a clear understanding of what is really going on here?
- Look deeper even if others appear unconcerned.
- Perspective taking – imagine how the other person thinks and feels.
- Does the situation need an immediate response?

Assume Personal Responsibility

- Acknowledge that if you don't intervene it's possible nobody else will.
- Say you'll help – OUT LOUD. Verbalizing your intentions makes follow through more likely.
- Take a small step outside your comfort zone – you don't need to make a scene or embarrass others. Do whatever you can to help (directly or indirectly).
- Enlist others to intervene – I'll do A, you do B.
- BE THE FIRST!

Know How to Help

- Increase skills and knowledge – (toolbox means getting trained on different topics using different intervention skills and methods)
- Identify the appropriate and most effective tools and resources – know the experts who are available to help you.
- Understand DIRECT and INDIRECT ways of helping. Emphasize that helping does not need to be direct. Being an active bystander often means getting the right people to help – you don't have to do it all yourself!
- Tell the right people, call 911 in an emergency or utilize a resource like the Counseling Center, to be an active bystander.
- Realize the Importance of practicing intervention steps – which we will do later in the presentation.

Intervene

The final stage is implementing the help.

- If a person is able to do the necessary things in the previous stages, they are able to effectively implement the help.

But you still need to make sure it is SAFE (for you and for the other person/people) to intervene – carefully assess the situation and know your limits.