The responsibility for sexual violence rests solely with the perpetrator of violence. It is important to remember that each of us will see situations where our actions can prevent harm to another person. One of the strategies that can be used in these moments is bystander intervention.

**Bystander Intervention is a strategy for prevention of various types of violence, including bullying, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and relationship violence. The techniques we use to prevent sexual violence can also be used to prevent other types of behavior that targets people based on their identity.**

One of the reasons that Bystander Intervention is effective is based on the fact that people often make decisions and act in particular ways based on the reactions of other people. When we speak up when we see behavior that is harming or could harm another person, we can stop it from continuing in the moment, and possibly in the future.

The idea that these reactions to someone’s words or behavior could prevent violence is helpful only to the extent that the individuals realize their power, notices the problem behaviors and attitudes, feels responsible, and respond. Any one of us is a bystander any time we are interacting or observing others— we can either promote positive and healthy attitudes and behaviors, or harmful ones.

**What is Bystander Intervention?**

Bystander Intervention is about making a choice to take action, to *Do Something*, when you see behavior that puts other at risk for violence, victimization or perpetration. This includes speaking out against rape myths and sexist language, supporting survivors and intervening in potentially violent situations.

**Bystander Intervention:**
Every day we are making a choice whether to do something about what we see and hear. Bystander Intervention is about RECOGNIZING what is happening around us, THINKING about the impact it’s having on others and TAKING ACTION. It’s DOING SOMETHING.

When we *DO SOMETHING*, we are making a statement about the community we want to create. There are many different ways to intervene. At Amherst we talk about bystander intervention as using the 4 Ds.

**DIRECT**

When you take action to interrupt or stop the behavior. This can include pointing out the problem or engaging participants in conversation about better alternatives.

Some examples could include:

* Asking someone who seems uncomfortable, unsure or frightened if they are ok.

* Taking someone away from someone who is pushing drinks on them
Telling someone that the joke they just told was offensive/ not funny/ hurtful.

Ask, is that person bothering you?

Ask if someone needs help

Stand next to someone so they know they aren’t alone

Don’t join in or laugh

**DISTRACT**

Sometimes directly calling out behavior or intervening directly can feel unsafe or you may feel that you don’t have the skills to diffuse a situation. In those instances, distraction can be a good tool.

Some examples could include:

- Asking if someone could let you into your building because you lost your ID
- Accidentally spilling your drink
- Asking for help finding the bathroom
- Tell them you think someone is looking for them
- Give them a compliment
- Ask about a shared activity that you are in or something you both like (ex. How about that game last night?)

**DELEGATE**

This is about rallying your resources. It may be engaging others who are near you or getting the help from someone who is better equipped to respond. Who is around that you can get some help from?

Examples include:

- Point out the behavior to others and ask them what they think you both should do
- Is there an RC, team captain, party host or someone else that could help you?
- Ask the person who is being targeted friends to help you out
- Ask the friends of the person who is being inappropriate or harmful to help you
DELAY

Sometimes you think back on something that happened and wish that you could have done something or said something. It's not too late. Following up on something that bothered you is important way to change community when someone may be more willing to hear what you have to say. If drugs or alcohol is involved it is really important to follow up later.

Examples include:

* Explain your concerns one-on-one
* Follow-up with someone once they are sober
* Check-in with someone who you are concerned about to see if they are ok
* Ask how you can offer them support

Things to Consider

* It's Hard
  * It gets easier the more you intervene
  * There are many options to intervene
* Trust yourself and your gut
  * Rally your resources, ask others to help
  * Consider your safety

REMEMBER: When you stay silent, when you look the other way, when you think it's none of my business. You are supporting harmful behavior. You are participating in a system that allows violence and discrimination to flourish.
Next Steps & Resources

- Attend a program by the Peer Advocates for Sexual Respect Education
- Get connected to the Peer Advocates: peeradvocate@amherst.edu
  - Facebook: @peeradvocateamherstcollege | Instagram: @amherst_pa
- Reach out to Sexual Respect Education to request a workshop or learn more about topics of bystander intervention and sexual respect (lakelly@amherst.edu)
- Share information with your teammates and friends
- Put it into practice: use this information and skills to intervene in any situation when there is a concern for someone else
- Support those who have been impacted by sexual violence
- Promote sexual respect at Amherst!

Contact Lauren Kelly, Sexual Respect Educator in the Department of Health Education by email lakelly@amherst.edu or phone 413-542-2760