

Bystander Information: What Can I Do?

Adapted from New Hampshire's "[Bringing in the Bystander](#)."

An active bystander is someone who intervenes to interrupt behaviors in social situations that could lead to sexual violence. Effective intervention is the community responsibility of every person. Individuals are encouraged to speak out against attitudes that promote sexual violence and become more supportive of survivors. Confronting sexual violence can help change the social norms of a community and society as a whole.

Active bystanders take the initiative to help someone who may be targeted for a sexual assault by a predator. He or she may also take the initiative to help friends who aren't thinking clearly from becoming perpetrators of a crime. Intervention does not mean that you only step in to stop a crime in progress, but rather before the crime begins.

Active Bystander Intervention takes a number of forms:

- Talking to a friend to ensure he or she is doing OK
- Making up an excuse to help the friend get away from someone
- Calling the police
- Recommending to a bartender or party host that someone has had too much to drink
- Pointing out someone's disrespectful behavior in a safe and respectful manner that tends to de-escalate the situation
- Removing a friend from a risky situation quickly

Your personal safety is key. Before you act, you should think about the following:

- How can you keep yourself safe in this situation?
- What are all the options available to you?
- Who else might be able to assist you in this situation?
- What are the pros and cons of acting?
- Decide how to help
- Approach everyone as a friend
- Be firm
- Avoid violence

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