Bystander Intervention

Time Required: 1 hr.

Learning Objectives:

- Discussing the importance of bystander intervention and learning the different forms of intervening when witnessing violent and problematic situations
- Fostering the skills to advance equity, inclusion and bystander intervention to challenge sexist behaviour, objectification of women and different types of violence including sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation
- Connecting their responsibilities as citizens to contribute to the common good through intervention

Notes for educators:

This lesson focuses on how bystanders can intervene to support others facing a variety of challenges, including gender-based violence, sexism at conversational and behavioural levels, and homophobia. Bystander Intervention is a term with a broad scope – and this lesson will look at examples that include "before", "during", and "after" the worrisome, unsafe, or illegal behaviour. The lesson provides multiple entry points for discussion and problem-solving and draws from learning around consent, bullying, allyship, child sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.

It may be useful to talk about the *perpetrator* (who is causing the problem), the *facilitator* (who is enabling the perpetrator), and the *apathetic bystander* (who is watching, and therefore letting it happen), to build the moral imperative for students to take action.

Please note that discussing bystander intervention might trigger emotional trauma in students who have had relatable experiences. It is important that the students are given tools/tips to not only to support the person who is disclosing the abuse, but to support themselves afterwards.

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Materials:

- Dry erase board or chalkboard
- *Anticipation Guide: Bystander Intervention Student Handout* (found at the end of this document)
- *Anticipation Guide: Big Ideas - Educator Guide*

Reflection:

Write or post the following for students to reflect on prior to the lesson. Give students about 5 minutes to jot down ideas.

The parable of the Good Samaritan calls us to "love our neighbours as ourselves." Why is this relevant when talking about witnessing violent or problematic situations? (answer, prove, extend)

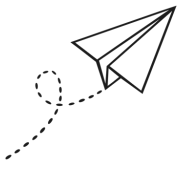
Activity One

The activity focuses on the *Anticipation Guide: Bystander Intervention Student Handout* that accompanies this lesson in which students will use a Likert Scale (1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree) to indicate their reactions to some scenarios. There are many strategies that can be used with it – here are three possibilities.

Option 1: Independent Work. Have students complete the *Anticipation Guide: Bystander Intervention Student Handout* independently, making a judgment for each statement using the Likert Scale. Ask students to circle words they are unsure of. After, debrief the guide with students by asking questions such as:

- What statement generated the most "feels" for you (in general, this would be a statement marked with a 1 or a 5). Give students a chance to respond, and perhaps explain their thinking on the answer.
- What real-life connections can you make to a statement? Have you been in a situation that one of the statements reminds you of?
- What statement most challenges your thinking? Why?

Option 2: Work in pairs. Have students complete the *Anticipation Guide: Bystander Intervention Student Handout* in pairs by making a judgment for each statement



using the Likert Scale. They should use the "Ideas, Questions, Notes" column to add words or phrases to describe any statement where there was disagreement between the partners. Ask students to circle words they are unsure of. After, debrief the guide by asking questions such as:

- What statement(s) generated disagreement between you and your partner. What was the basis of the disagreement? Were you able to resolve it through conversation?
- What real-life connections can you make to a statement? Have you been in a situation that one of the statements reminds you of?
- What statement most challenges your thinking? Why?

Option 3: Work with the entire class. Complete the *Anticipation Guide: Bystander Intervention Student Handout* as a class by having the teacher read the statement, and having students move to different points in the room in response. Each corner could represent a different Likert Response, with the middle of the classroom representing neutral. After each statement, debrief the class reaction by asking questions such as:

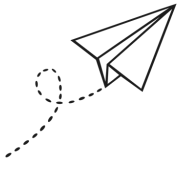
- Does this statement require much thought? Why or why not?
- What do you observe about the class response?
- What do you observe about who responded in what way?
- Does this statement challenge your thinking? Why

Use the *Anticipation Guide: Big Ideas - Educator Guide* to guide the facilitation of this activity.

Activity Two

Bystander intervention requires people to take action. There are many different frameworks to help students. This model uses the 5Ds: DECIDE, DIRECT, DELEGATE, DISTRACT, DOCUMENT.

Write each one of the 5D's on the board and ask students to help you define each one based on what they think these mean as intervention methods. They may identify the 5Ds, but if not, group their words as best as possible under the following. Note that the process starts with a decision, but the three other steps don't necessarily follow in a linear sequence.



Decide: Action requires decision. If you feel like you "should" do something, and it is safe to do so, you probably need to do something. Remember, inaction is also an action – but the consequences of inaction may be far more damaging. You don't need to decide on your own – you can look to those around you.

Delegate: You don't have to intervene on your own. You can look to your friends, or others who are around who can help. Who is near that can help? A friend? A trusted adult? Employees in an establishment?

- "I think she needs our help, but I don't know what to do. Have any ideas?"
- "Will you watch while I go chat with them?"

Direct: Approach either the person being targeted or the person doing the harassing and be direct.

- "Are you OK?"
- "Can I help you?"
- "That's not OK."
- "You need to stop."

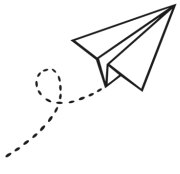
Distract: Think of a way to distract the folks involved in the situation: either the person being targeted or the person doing the harassing.

- "Can you take a pic of my friends and I?"
- "What time is it?"
- "Where's the washrooms?"
- "That's a FAB outfit! Where did you get it?"
- "My friend's gone missing. Can you help me find them?"

Document: Make a record or keep your eye on the situation in case it escalates.

Remind the students of the spectrum of intervention –before, during, after – but note that the 5D model doesn't really work in the "after" stage. Ask them how they can practice "bystander intervention" in a situation after the fact. You could ask the students for an example, or use this:

Someone was just physically assaulted on public transportation. The perpetrator leaves the bus before anyone can do anything.



The response here is to help the attacked person, and take necessary steps to ensure that they are safe and supported. It is likely a good point to remind students of in-school support – make sure they know who the trusted adult(s) are.

Activity three:

Split the class in different groups and distribute one of the following scenarios with each group:

- You are on the bus and someone is being sexually harassed;
- You are at a party and a guy is trying to take advantage of a drunk girl;
- You witness a physical confrontation between romantic partners;
- One of your friends makes an objectifying comment about women;
- Your best friend is in a relationship that seems toxic;
- Your friend's boyfriend is asking her to have sexual relationships with others to economically support himself

Ask students to think about how they could intervene on the scenarios.

Mention that it is important to consider ways of intervening that do not put themselves at risk of any harm.

Have students identify all possible "tools" of intervention they may have access to. Examples may include:

- Friends and others around them';
- Phones and devices;
- Their voice;
- Their presence;
- Other items that may distract.

Ask each group to read their scenario out loud, describe what could be one or more ways of intervening, what "tools" would be useful, and what risks should they be mindful of.

Note that when covering the last scenario ("your friend's boyfriend is asking her to have sexual relationships with others to economically support himself") it is important to make clear that students recognize this as a common form of child sexual exploitation and to seek support from specialized services. Go to the Canadian

Human Trafficking Hotline and find local resources and share their information with the class.

Wrap up

Write the following statement on the board and ask students to consider whether or not they agree with it and how it relates to the activities they just completed and the lessons in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

"Kindness can save lives"

This is a good time to remind students that intervention can come in many forms. Sometimes it might happen at a conversational level and sometimes at a level that requires more than only words.

Also remind them that their own personal safety and wellbeing must be factored into their response.

