TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR INTERVENING IN POTENTIALLY ABUSIVE SITUATIONS
Panthers’ INTERVENTION PLAYBOOK

Direct • Distract • Delay • Delegate

Created by SCC’s Campus Intervention and Health Services in collaboration with WEAVE
What is the Panthers’ Intervention Playbook?

Inside the Panthers’ Intervention Playbook, you will find practical tips and strategies for stepping in when you come across a potentially dangerous situation. This playbook includes 14 different intervention methods, or “plays,” along with helpful examples and sample dialogues which can be used to keep yourself and others safe in real-life situations. Find a comprehensive list of support resources on the inside of the back cover.

Stand up! Don’t stand by!

Players Aren’t The Only Ones Who Need to Know How To Play The Game

Whether you are a fan of sports or really don’t understand them, the Panthers’ Intervention Playbook provides you with simple and practical ways to intervene in difficult situations. The fundamental approach is the same whether the situation involves bullying, stalking, sexual assault, or relationship violence. In athletics, a playbook is a resource for coaches and athletes which provide instructions, as well as the best way to execute their roles. It shows how to be successful and who must do what in that given situation to be successful. Athletes study and practice the playbook so that in the heat of competition, they can focus on taking action. Deliberate action can often be the dividing line between success and something else. In order to stand up, we need to study and practice our Intervention Playbook. In sports as well as in life, the importance of knowing what to do cannot be understated.

The “I” Word

Intervention can take many forms and can use a variety of resources. At its most basic level, intervening is about taking action to become involved in a situation which is or has the potential to cause harm. Unfortunately, research shows that the presence of more people (bystanders) actually decreases the likelihood that someone will intervene. In order for us to be a safe community, we cannot STAND BY, WE MUST STAND UP against bullying, relationship violence, sexual assault, and other dangerous, hurtful or damaging behaviors. When we do, we have the opportunity to create a community and world that are stronger, safer, and more supportive... a place where the dignity of each person is honored, respected and cherished.
What It Takes

It’s not easy. Intervening as a bystander requires a level of care and concern about the involved parties that goes beyond your relationship with either party. It also requires us to:

- **Take action** – Do something to help others by stopping or preventing the behavior
- **Be strong** – State why the behavior is wrong and why it must stop
- **Be courageous** – Take action even if in the presence of fear or uncertainty
- **Care about others** – Do unto others as they would want done to them
- **Be a leader** – Act and get others to follow you

Next Steps

You are ready to be a “Intervener,” someone that recognizes and accepts that you might be the ONLY person willing to act on behalf of others. As an intervener, you must ALWAYS assess the situation and take measures to intervene in such a way that also ensures your safety and well-being. To help prepare you, we share the “plays” and this booklet in support of our “Interveners” like you who:

- **Direct** – Instruct others on how to behave and/or get involved
- **Distract** – Redirecting people’s attention to something else.
- **Delay** – Slow down, stop, prevent, or hinder things for a time.
- **Delegate** – Using the strength of numbers…You don’t have to do it alone!

Finally, we all have a role to play when presented with an opportunity to STAND UP. YOUJR action has the ability to prevent someone from becoming a victim of sexual assault, domestic violence, bullying, stalking, physical assault or suicide.

“One of the most important things you can do on this earth is let people know they're not alone.”

— Shannon L.
DEFENSIVE SPLIT

Direct: Approach both parties, share your concerns, let them know you’re acting in everyone’s best interest, and ask them to separate.

DEFENSIVE SPLIT

Also known as “divide and conquer,” instead of making people disagree and fight with one another, your goal is to separate those involved understanding that individuals have less power than a group and are less likely to be triggered by each other. Key phrases include:

“I don’t think anything good is going to come from this conversation, so let’s just walk away.”

“I don’t like what I see from over here, John I want you to speak with Jane while I speak with Sally to determine what has happened.”

“This has gone too far and you both are becoming agitated; I need you to separate now.”
Delay: Before making a decision, determine the best move. Intervene yourself, or pitch it to someone else (alert friends).

THE OPTION

Moving from inaction to action means you must consider all of your options. Your options are only as limited as your thinking, but FIRST, you must start by taking care of yourself. Begin by asking:

- Should I intervene? Am I the right person?
- Do I need to involve others?
- Who else can I involve?
- What’s the best approach (what’s the best play)?

REMEMBER: Your safety is most important! You can’t help anyone if you’re hurt.
Distract: The ultimate in trickery! Get the group to go one direction ("let’s go get some food!"), while you move yourself and one of the involved parties away.

THE REVERSE

In addition to there being safety in numbers, a group offers the opportunity for individuals to discreetly separate and find safety. Additionally, the group can serve as a source of support and a place to recruit additional help. Don’t forget these key intervention strategies:

1. "I" Statements – Focuses on your feelings rather than criticizing the other person. First, state your feelings. Second, name the behavior. Third, state how you want the person to respond.
2. Humor – It’s like cooking with curry...A Little can go a long way! When done correctly, it has the potential to reduce the tension of an intervention and makes it easier for the person to hear you.
3. Make it Personal – Connect the person to their behavior, for example, “Is that how you would want someone to talk to your (fill in) like that?”
4. Friend Zone It - “We’re friends, right?” “Then do this for me as your friend.” “I’m your friend, so you know I only want the best for you.”
Delegate: You don’t have to address the issue alone. Start the intervention and bring in a friend to help.

THE DOUBLE PLAY

In any given situation, some bystanders know what has happened, some know what is happening, while others can see what *may* happen. Recruit those individuals to assist you! Regardless of your role, none of you have to do it all. Together you have the ability stop what is occurring and help whoever is being affected.

Approach bystanders by informing them that you need their help: “I need you to come with me and share what you’ve seen.”

Delegate who is going to do what: “When we get over there, I’m going to start the conversation and then you will share...”
Delegate: Just because you started the intervention doesn’t mean you have to go the distance. Bring in a relief “intervener” to finish strong.

RELIEF PITCHER

Good active bystanders know their limits. While your voice and the act of intervening can be very powerful, at the same time, we have all have limits. Effective, active bystanders understand when they have done everything they can and when their efforts are no longer effective. All community members have a role they can play during an intervention. Do not be afraid to call someone else in to finish the process.
VISIT THE MOUND

Delay: Take the time to check in with the person to make sure they are ok, comfortable with what’s happening, and good enough to continue on.

VISIT THE MOUND

Just because someone else may be the primary intervener, that doesn’t mean “the work” OR “your work” is done! As we’ve shared, every active bystander has their limit and every community member plays a role. With that understanding, feel free to check in or “visit the mound” to make sure the primary intervener doesn’t need any help. Use phrases like:

“Is there anything I can do to be helpful?”
“Do you need any assistance?”
“Do you need me to step in?”
Direct: Approach one of the parties and instruct them to “take a walk.” be clear that you are only interested in them taking a walk...not a discussion!

**INTENTIONAL WALK**

Sometimes, the best intervention is to separate the parties. Personal space is a priority. Time and space have a way of clearing minds, calming emotions and gaining perspective. While in the middle of a crisis or incident, it is very hard for parties involved to see the full impact of their behavior or how their behavior may be problematic. Separate the parties in hopes of having a better conversation in the future. It’s important that your instructions are clear, that you are asking them to separate for the sake of making things better.
Direct: Recruit the help of others to make sure you have “interveners” spread throughout the area.

What’s better than one active bystander, multiple active bystanders. Don’t do it by yourself. Bring other people in to help, particularly when you are going to address a group. Groups can be intimidating and are subject to “group think,” which is where individuals will put aside their beliefs and change their behaviors in order to match the group. Instead of having your group engage another group, use your groups to separate them into individuals. One-on-one people tend to be more rational and less emotional.
BLIND SIDE RUN

Similar to “The Reverse,” this is about confronting an individual with the goal of creating an opportunity for the other party to leave. Consider using these steps:

1. Approach as a friend: “I’m getting involved because I’m concerned about you.”
2. Be direct and share your concern: “I’m concerned that you may not be fully aware of what is happening and it’s impact.”
3. Share how it makes you feel: “I’m feeling really uncomfortable with what I’ve seen.”
4. Listen and give respectful attention: “Can you tell me what happened?”
5. Consider options: “Where do you think we should go from here?”

Distract: While you speak with one individual, have a teammate sneak the other person outside of field of sight.
Direct: Used when one individual engages in blatant fouls, abusive language, or repeated bad behavior. Advise the person to change their behavior or you’ll be forced to involve the authorities.

YELLOW CARD

In soccer, yellow cards are used to caution a player for misconduct. This tool can also be used in an intervention. There are a variety of ways and phrases an active bystander can use in these situations, start with one of these statements:

- **Direct**: “Do you know what this looks like to me?” “Do you hear yourself?” “What if someone spoke to your _____ like that?”
- **Distract**: “Have I ever told you about the time I was in a situation like this?”
- **Delay**: “I think things have the potential to get out of control if we don’t pause for a moment.” “I would like for you to take a moment and reflect.”
- **Delegate**: Have someone prepared to help or get help if needed. “I’m coming to you directly in hopes of not having to call...(LRPD, Police, etc).”

Regardless of the approach or phrases you use, the ultimate goal is to make the person aware of their problematic behavior in hopes of it not becoming a “Red Card” situation.
Direct: Reserved for the worst possible behavior. When someone engages in unsportsmanlike conduct, violent play, or multiple offenses, contact LRPD at: (916-558-2221) or call local authorities.

**RED CARD**

These are emergency situations that happened quickly and often require immediate action. Personal safety is critical here! Do not be afraid to contact police or other authorities.

If you respond, remember to:
- Make sure the environment is safe
- Look for exit strategies
- Be clear and direct with your requests
- Engage the help of others

If you are responding to a victim:
- Secure the area
- Get help
- Calm the person
- Provide support
- Offer resources
Direct: Recruit the help of others to get the “odds” in your favor. 
Engage as a team. Teamwork makes the dream work!

FULL COURT PRESS

Great in urgent or emergency situations. Recruit the help of others and promptly respond to the incident. Before acting as a group, try to develop a plan of action: determine the primary goal; what will be said; who will say it; and what to do if it doesn’t work.

Consider opening the conversation with:
“We’ve come over here because we are uncomfortable with what we’ve seen this far.”
“From our vantage point, this seems to be getting out of control.”

Try separating the group with statements like:
“We understand that that things are not always as they look, so I would like to speak with you (pick someone) alone to learn what happened.”
“Instead of everyone trying to speak at the same time, we would like to split up and have everyone share what happened.”
“I think it would be better if we talked over there (pick somewhere away from the group) to talk.”
Distract: Say to one of the parties, can you help me with something?" or “I need some fresh air. I’d feel safer if you came with me.” or “Something just happened and I really need to speak with you in private.”

PICK AND ROLL

This approach works with the initiator of the behavior OR the target. As the intervener, select the person you believe that will be the most agreeable.

If you select the initiator, focus the conversation on their behavior, its impact and potential ramifications. Make sure you use many of the techniques previously discussed, such as: approaching as a friend, being a good listener, be direct, etc.

If you select the target, focus your conversation on their well-being and safety. If you’ve used a phrase like, “Let’s step outside and talk” or “Let’s take a walk and talk.” This is a perfect opportunity to simply escape the environment for safety.
Delay: Keep the initiator from “scoring” by setting up a wall of defenders where everyone works together to protect the “basket.”

ZONE DEFENSE

A variation of the “buddy system.” Instead of focusing on making sure everyone goes home together, the Zone Defense understands that predators are often looking for someone that appears to be vulnerable and tries to separate them. While enjoying your time out, make sure your group is always on the lookout for one another and “covering” an area to make sure everyone in the group is safe. If everyone takes the responsibility to watch out for everyone else, you all will be safer. Even if your friend feels that they don’t need it, it’s about showing your friends that you value and care about them. It’s about showing that you will not stand by, watch or allow something bad to happen to them.
Additional TIPS, TRICKS, & STRATEGIES
# The 5 Point Formula and Script

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<th>FORMULA</th>
<th>SCRIPT</th>
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| **I Care**
Let the person know you care about him/her and that because of the significance of the relationship you need to discuss something very important. Both starting and ending the discussion with an emphasis that you are doing this out of genuine concern. | **I Care**
“John, do you have a minute? Because you’re such a good friend and I care about you, I want to talk to you about something very important.” |
| **I See**
Report/review actual events, as you perceive them. You are evaluating the behavior, not the person. Try to limit your statements to observable, irrefutable facts. | **I See**
“I’ve been noticing that you are not going to class as much and your grades are sliding. From my perspective, you don’t seem to be yourself…” |
| **I Feel**
Tell the person your feelings using “I” statements to reveal your feelings. | **I Feel**
“I’m worried about how it is affecting you (personally, emotionally, etc.). To be honest I’m afraid about what could happen to you.” |
| **I Want**
Tell the person what you would like to see happen. | **I Want**
“John, I want what’s best for you. I’d like to see you get some help, sooner rather than later. Maybe speaking with someone like the Coach or our Counseling Center might help? I would hate for something bad to happen because of this.” |
| **I Will**
Specify what you will or will not do. Only set ultimatums if you can and will, stick to them. | **I Will**
“I’d be willing to go with you if you want. I want to support you every way I can because you are very important to me. At the same time, I will not lie to you. I will not watch you make what seems to me like unhealthy choices. I’m really concerned about you John.” |

Adapted from University of Massachusetts, Amherst Health Services, Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program, and The BACCHUS Network and Step Up! (http://stepupprogram.org)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Approach gently...Approach friendly...You can start off softly and then increase firmness as needed.</td>
<td>“Hello, I came over because I was concerned that this situation was increasing in intensity and I didn’t want either of you to do something in the moment that you may regret.”</td>
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<td>2. Be direct, but don’t be a jerk!</td>
<td>“I understand where you’re coming from, at the same time, I am asking you to walk away so I can speak with Sally for a few moments alone.”</td>
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<td>3. Communicate, communicate, communicate!</td>
<td>“I understand that you are upset and I’m glad you are speaking with me, because I really want to help. Would you like for me to help?”</td>
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<td>4. Avoid argumentation.</td>
<td>“My goal isn’t to go back and forth, I only want...”</td>
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<td>5. Don’t take it personally AND don’t make it personal.</td>
<td>“What you think or say about me does not matter at this moment. My only concern is....”</td>
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<td>6. Roll with resistance.</td>
<td>PERSON A: “You’re not going to help me, no one ever wants to help me.” YOU: “That may have been your experience, but you’re talking to me now and I am 100% certain that I am committed to helping you. How about you give me a chance to show you?”</td>
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<td>7. Set clear expectations.</td>
<td>I don’t want to involve other people (friends, supervisor, Police), but if ____ doesn’t happen, I will have no other option. I do not want to be in that situation or forced to do that, so please work with me. Can you do this?”</td>
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Please remember that these steps DO NOT matter if it means compromising your safety. Being an active bystander or de-escalating a situation means doing whatever you can while still keeping yourself safe.
“I” STATEMENTS

“I“ statements/messages are designed to focus the speaker’s words, feelings and beliefs of themselves as opposed to the other person. Focusing on your feelings tends to refocus the conversation about your experience instead of arguing about the other person’s behavior. Consider these examples:

“You’re really scary when you raise your voice”
vs
“I feel really afraid when voices become elevated.”

While the first statement may be accurate, it creates an opportunity for the listener to argue that they aren’t scary or that you are overreacting. In contrast, “I feel really afraid when voices become elevated” requires the listener to acknowledge the IMPACT of their behavior and not their INTENT.

In some practical ways, “I” statements are similar to using verbal judo. Meaning, saying to your partner, “I feel fearful and worried when I don’t know you’re going to be home late” as opposed to, “You’re so inconsiderate when you don’t call when you’re going to be late. It’s like my fears and worries don’t matter.” I statements allow you to share feelings and the impact without directly accusing the other person which may lead to defensiveness.

Simply starting a sentence with “I” does not make it an I statement.
Don’t say things like:

• “I feel like you’re acting like a jerk.”

• “I hate it when you do not listen to me.”

• “I think you’re being difficult on purpose.”
EXAMPLES OF “I” STATEMENTS

When it comes to “I” statements, practice does make perfect as these are typically not a normal part of our communication pattern. Below are some examples:

“I feel very unsafe when I hear aggressive words or phrases because they scare me.”

“I am upset because I feel that my personal boundaries were not respected which makes it hard for me to trust.”

“I feel frustrated and annoyed when I am told what I should think or feel.”

- “I” statements tell how I feel, what I want, or how I think.
- When you use an “I” Message, you are talking about yourself, NOT THEM!
- They communicate a deeper sense of awareness and accountability for what you are experiencing.
- Keeps you from attacking the other person.
- Communicates feelings without blaming...I feel like...

MORE EXAMPLES:
- “I feel disrespected when...”
- “I can’t help but feel disregarded when...”
- “I want to feel like my feelings are considered, appreciated and valued.”
- “I appreciate and like it when I feel heard and validated.”

“FALSE” I MESSAGES:
- “I feel you need to stop being disrespectful.”
- “I feel like you’re a jerk for not caring about my feelings.”
- “I feel like you’re a jerk for not listening to me.”
Similar to the martial art Judo, verbal judo is about using or “rolling with” the person’s energy to gain better control over the situation. Ultimately, your goal is to create an environment where the individual begins to cooperate and you gain voluntary compliance through the use of persuasion and not force. While useful in all facets of life, these tactics are especially useful when dealing with individuals that are angry, upset, disruptive, or distressed.

**Verbal Judo starts with:**
- Reframing how we view and approach conflict. We all must remember the words of Max Lucado, “Conflict is inevitable, combat is optional.”
- Responding to situations and NOT reacting to personal feelings.
- Understanding that our words and phrases have the ability to completely reshape a situation depending on how they are used.

Multiple authors and researchers in the area of verbal self-defense and defensive communication styles offer several different techniques for defusing potentially volatile and/or abusive situations of conflict.

**Awareness and Avoidance**
Being aware of situations, be aware of your approach, particularly in situations that will likely lead to verbal conflict or abuse and making an effort to avoid them.

**Project Empathy**
The ability to connect with the other person’s perspective and try to honor it. Acknowledging and understanding the person’s motivation provides a window into the person which can be used to develop connection and trust.

**Treat People With Respect**
If for nothing else, do it because it’s the right thing to do! Giving respect can lead to the other person responding in kind. It also leads to them not feeling the need to justify their feelings.

**Silence The “Cocked tongue” by:**
- Using words to redirect the negative force of others.
- Practicing mind-mouth harmony. Just because you think it, doesn’t mean you need to say it!
- Taking control of situations without escalating stress and frustration.

**Withdrawing**
Once engaged in a discussion, situation, conflict, or when being verbally attacked, making an excuse and exiting the area. Arguing with someone is like wrestling with a “pig,” you get dirty and the pig enjoys it.

**Deflecting**
Changing topic or focus on the interaction as a means of avoiding any disagreement or negative reaction on the part of the aggressor.

**Compromise**
Openly offering ideas and seeking ways to placate the attacker and/or their reasons for the abusive communication.
**VERBAL JUDO DO’S AND DON’TS**

The do’s and don’t are about avoiding phrases that tend to cause a knee-jerk antagonistic reaction from the receiver.

*Don’t say:* “That’s the rule!”
**Do:** Explain why the rule is in place, it’s purpose and your purpose.

*Don’t Say:* “Calm down.”
**Do:** Use calming phrases like, “Let’s talk.” “Explain what’s going on?” “I want to hear what’s going on with you.” As stated in the poem, “Please Just Listen:”

When I ask you to listen to me
And you begin to tell me why
I shouldn’t feel that way,
You are trampling on my feelings.

But when you accept as a simple fact
No matter how irrational (I feel),
Then I can stop trying to convince
You and get about this business
Of understanding what’s behind
This irrational feeling.

*Don’t Say:* “Be reasonable.”
**Do:** Understand that the person is likely to believe their feelings or behaviors are reasonable. Not to mention that reasonable can be in the eye of the beholder. With this understanding, try connecting with the person’s message. Remember the poem above, specifically that accepting someone’s feelings leads to a discovery of what’s behind them.

*Don’t Say:* “Your feelings are wrong.”
**Do:** Offer acknowledgment of what the person believes they are experiencing. “I can see how you would feel that way.” “I hear and appreciate your perspective.” Once you acknowledge the feelings, then you can gently offer other perspectives or possibilities.

*Don’t Say:* “Come here.”
**Do:** Persuade the individual to comply with statements like, “I would like to speak to you over here for a few moments?” “I’d really like an opportunity to listen to you over here away from everyone else.” “Would you like for me to listen to you? Let’s do it over here away from everyone else.”

*Don’t Say:* “What’s your problem?”
**Do:** Show that you care and want to help with phrases like, “I’d like to help, what’s going on?” “What can I do to be helpful?” “Explain to me what just happened.”
How can I play a role in preventing sexual assault?
The key to keeping your friends safe is learning how to intervene in a way that fits the situation and your comfort level. Having this knowledge on hand can give you the confidence to step in when something isn’t right. Stepping in can make all the difference, but it should never put your own safety at risk.

Create a distraction
Do what you can to interrupt the situation. A distraction can give the person at risk a chance to get to a safe place.
- Cut off the conversation with a diversion like, “Let’s get pizza, I’m starving,” or “This party is lame. Let’s try somewhere else.”
- Bring out fresh food or drinks and offer them to everyone at the party, including the people you are concerned about.
- Start an activity that is draws other people in, like a game, a debate, or a dance party.

Ask directly
Talk directly to the person who might be in trouble.
- Ask questions like “Who did you come here with?” or “Would you like me to stay with you?”

Refer to an authority
Sometimes the safest way to intervene is to refer to a neutral party with the authority to change the situation, like an RA or security guard.
- Talk to a security guard, bartender, or another employee about your concerns. It’s in their best interest to ensure that their patrons are safe, and they will usually be willing to step in.
- Don’t hesitate to call 911 if you are concerned for someone else’s safety.

Enlist others
It can be intimidating to approach a situation alone. Enlist another person to support you.
- Ask someone to come with you to approach the person at risk. When it comes to expressing concern, sometimes there is power in numbers.
- Ask someone to intervene in your place. For example, you could ask someone who knows the person at risk to escort them to the bathroom.
- Enlist the friend of the person you’re concerned about. “Your friend looks like they’ve had a lot to drink. Can you check on them?”

Your actions matter
Whether or not you were able to change the outcome, by stepping in you are helping to change the way people think about their role in preventing sexual assault.

Document can be found on RAINN’s Website at: https://www.rainn.org/news/show-you-care-four-ways-keep-your-friends-safe
RESOURCES

Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence

SCC WEAVE Confidential Advocate - www.weaveinc.org
Provide crisis intervention services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

My Sister’s House - www.my-sisters-house.org

RAINN (800) 656-4673 - www.rainn.org

IT’S ON US - www.itsonus.org

NO MORE - www.nomore.org

LOVE IS RESPECT - www.loveisrespect.org

General Support

Campus Police (916)558-2221 - https://police.losrios.edu
Assists students to achieve academic goals by encouraging a balance of health and well-being.

Health Center (916)558-2367 - hwww.scc.losrios.edu/healthservices
Assists students to achieve academic goals by encouraging a balance of health and well-being.

Counseling Department (916)558-2204 - www.scc.losrios.edu/counseling

AuntBertha.com – www.auntbertha.com

Mental Health, Suicide

24/7 National Suicidal Prevention Lifeline - Call 1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line – Text 741741 - www.crisistextline.org

NOT ALONE - http://changingourcampus.org/about-us/not-alone

Bullying and Stalking

The Center for Violence-Free Relationships - https://thecenternow.org

Stop Bullying - www.stopbullying.gov

1 IS 2 MANY - https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/1is2many
What is Bystander Intervention Anyway? Does it really work? How do I do it?

The key to being an active bystander lies in your ability to be aware and prepared by having tips, tricks and tools related to intervening, AKA a game plan. We offer this Bystander Intervention Playbook as a collection of approaches (“plays”), tools and resources to assist you in being an active bystander. The pages within are designed to empower you to STAND UP, NOT STAND BY when others need you the most.

Distract: The ultimate in trickery! Get the group to go one direction (“let’s go get some food!”), while you sneak away in the other direction with one of the people.

We are often faced with challenging situations where someone’s behavior could result in harm to themselves or others. In these moments we have to ask ourselves, “Do I say or do something?” “If I do, how can I intervene to make things better?” “How do I keep myself safe?”