
Tips for Interrupting Street Harassment

Attention bystanders! Together we can make our community safe...

by-stand-er: noun: a person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part. Synonyms: onlooker, looker-on, passerby, nonparticipant, observer, spectator, eyewitness, witness.



Will intervening endanger my safety?

Could my intervention cause the victim to be less safe?

*Choose your bystander intervention based upon your answers to these questions. Always prioritize safety! What action you take can depend on a variety of circumstances. Do the victim and harasser know each other? Is the harasser in a group and the victim is alone? Is the victim in a group? Is someone else already intervening? **There is no one approach for every situation.** Get creative! Your goal is to interrupt that moment of harassment, to allow yourself the chance to check in with the victim and see if they need more support. What follows is a list of some options...add your own ideas to the list. It's best to have some ideas for what you would do when you see harassment before you are in that situation.*

Always pay attention to any cues the victim is giving you...let their reaction be your guide.

Intervene by Distracting

This involves interrupting the moment of harassment by making up a story to separate the victim and harasser...

- Pretend you know the victim and approach them with a big smile, start a conversation and steer them away from the harasser
- Approach the victim and harasser, and start a conversation (ex. pretend you are lost and ask for directions, ask for the time, or ask any other thing that comes to mind)
- Approach the harasser and say "Hey! I think your car is being towed!"

Intervene by Delegating to Someone Else

If it is not safe for you to personally intervene, or someone else would do a better job (i.e. someone who knows the harasser, someone bigger than you and/or someone with more power than you)...

- If you know someone who would feel safe interrupting a situation you don't personally feel you are safe to get involved with, quickly ask them for help.
- When dealing with dangerous situation, you always have the option of calling 911.

Intervene Through Direct Confrontation

If it feels safe to do so, and you know it will not cause the victim to suffer a future escalation, you may choose to...

- Approach the harasser and say that what that person is doing IS NOT OK. Make sure you speak on behalf of yourself and not the victim, and address yourself to the harasser directly.

Even if you cannot do any of these, check in with the victim after the harassment if you can approach that person alone and not in the presence of the harasser. Ask if they are ok. Let them know that you are concerned about what you saw and that you support them...knowing someone saw what happened and think it's not ok can go a long way.