

NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

APRIL 10, 2024



Our Voices Have Power. Together, We Can Build Safe & Respectful Communities.

Building Connected Communities is the 2024 campaign theme for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). This month, let's work together to draw attention to the prevalence of sexual assault and educate ourselves and our campus communities about how to prevent it.

ENHANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE: PRACTICE ACTIVE BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

Everyone has a role to play in preventing sexual assault and there are many different ways you can step up to make a difference, notably by practicing active bystander intervention. An active bystander is someone who interrupts a potentially harmful situation, especially when it comes to sexual violence. They may not be directly involved but they do have the choice and opportunity to speak up and intervene.

CREATE A DISTRACTION Distracting is a subtle and innovative way of intervening. The purpose of distraction is to interrupt the incident, safely, by communicating with the individual at risk and giving them an opportunity to safely exit the potentially dangerous situation. This technique can be used to de-escalate the situation and re-direct the attention of the aggressor or the individual at risk to something else. Creating a conversation with the individual at risk is helpful. At this moment, make sure not to leave them alone. This technique can be used to dilute the tension before it escalates to further danger.

ASK DIRECTLY Asking the individual at risk can help you determine if an action needs to be taken immediately to ensure a safe environment. You can address the individual at risk directly: "Do you need help?" or "Would you like me to stay with you?" or "Would you like to get out of here and go somewhere safe?" Make sure to ask the question when the perpetrator is not listening or nearby in order to de-escalate the situation from turning into a crisis. Asking them if they need any support or assistance at the moment can help you determine if an authority needs to be contacted.

RALLY OTHERS It can be intimidating to approach a situation alone. If you need to, enlist another person to support you. When it comes to expressing concern, sometimes there is power in numbers. Ask someone to intervene in your place. 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?" Sometimes the safest way to intervene is to enlist an authority figure like a bartender, bouncer, or security guard. This option will allow you to have others on your side and can offer additional safety from the perpetrator.

EXTEND SUPPORT After experiencing such a situation, the individual at risk may feel panicked and be unsure about what to do next. Extending a helping hand and empathetic ear can make a huge difference. Offer them appropriate resources and options for how you can support them. You can ask: "Do you want me to walk with you to your destination?" or "Is there anything I can do to support you?"

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. If you suspect that someone you know has been sexually assaulted, there are steps you can take to support that person and show you care.

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