

The Good Samaritan

An Example for All of Us

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, a traveler is robbed, beaten, and left along the side of the road to die. Two different men walk past the traveler and neither offers help. A third man, the Samaritan, sees the traveler and stops to dress his wounds. The Samaritan then brings him to a place of safety and makes sure he is well cared for before going on his way.



Are You an **EMPOWERED** **BYSTANDER?**

We Are Called

as members of the University community to be empowered bystanders and to look out for each other. The belief in the inherent dignity of each person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching. We all share responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment which promotes the safety and dignity of each person.

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Barriers to Intervening

Barriers are factors that can reduce the likelihood of intervening. Barriers can be rooted in fear or nervousness, but left unchecked they can prevent us from successfully intervening. The following are examples of how barriers can present themselves:

- I don't have the skills to help.
- Someone else will step in to assist.
- This situation is not my business.
- What if I embarrass myself?
- How will my friends react? Will I lose social capital?
- I don't want to put my safety at risk.

These thoughts and feelings are natural. However, when we recognize our responsibility to be empowered bystanders and effectively work through these barriers, we have the ability to make a difference in our community.

Taking Action

If you see someone in a risky situation, there are many different ways to step in and make a difference. This is known as "bystander intervention." How you intervene can vary based on the situation and your comfort level. Having this knowledge on hand can give you the confidence to take action when your gut tells you something isn't right. Stepping in can make all the difference, but you should never put your own safety at risk.

You Have Options

Many times we do not intervene because we simply do not know what to do. Here are three different strategies, also known as the "3Ds," you can use to take action:

Direct

If you are comfortable you can directly approach either or both parties involved. Let them know your concerns and why you are intervening. Not sure if a friend is in trouble? Just ask! Send a text or step in and say, "Are you OK right now?"

Delegate

Sometimes you may not feel that you are the best person to directly intervene in a situation. Maybe you do not know the person, do not feel safe, or just feel someone else would be more effective. That is OK. Find friends of either party and encourage them to intervene. If you feel the situation is too serious for you to get involved or you are simply unsure, call the Department of Public Safety or find a Resident Assistant.

Distract

Use a distraction to divert attention and redirect the focus somewhere else. A distraction can give the person at risk the chance to get to a safe place. You can diffuse the situation without directly confronting anyone. Step in and change the subject, tell your friend you need to talk to him or her, or commit a party foul.

Five Steps to Intervening

Bystander intervention takes practice and an active commitment to doing the right thing. Here are five steps you can take to effectively intervene in risky situations. By going through these steps you can positively impact a situation:

- 1. Notice the event.** Pay attention to what's going on around you.
- 2. Interpret the event as a problem.** When in doubt trust your gut.
- 3. Take personal responsibility.** If not you, then who?
- 4. Decide how you are going to help.** Develop a plan, but never put your own safety at risk.
- 5. Act!** You have many options to intervene.

Early Interventions

Effective bystander intervention doesn't always have to occur during or after an incident. There are many opportunities to do something or say something before someone is in a risky situation. As empowered bystanders we can step in to diffuse problematic behaviors before they escalate. Here are some examples of behaviors that may indicate a potentially dangerous situation:

- Making someone feel uncomfortable
- Suggestive or harassing remarks
- Inappropriate jokes
- Testing boundaries
- Disregarding set boundaries
- Attempting to isolate someone from their friends
- Pressuring someone to drink
- Aggressive or obsessive behaviors

If you hear something or see something that makes you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts. The person may be in more trouble than you think.

When intervening always remember:

- If you feel the situation is dangerous, call for help.
- Approach everyone as a friend.
- Do not be antagonistic.
- Avoid using violence.
- Be honest and direct whenever possible.
- Recruit help if necessary.

Resources for Help

If you are on campus and need assistance, call the Department of Public Safety at 202-319-5111. If you are off campus and need assistance, call 911.

Take the Next Step

To learn more about Catholic University's bystander intervention training program, or to request a training, please visit the peer educator's website at: peers.catholic.edu