

ACTIVE BYSTANDER

DON'T  
JUST  
STAND  
THERE!



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE  
AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?

A bystander is someone who is a witness to an event but is not directly involved. An **Active Bystander** is a witness to behavior that is violent or unfair and speaks up against it. Being an active bystander means you are making a commitment to speak out against violence and make a difference.

TURNING POINT, INC.  
SERVICES TO END  
DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE  
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## TOOLS FOR BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

### **See violence for what it is.**

A lot of times, we don't want to admit that violence is happening. We often choose to ignore the situation, look away, or call it something else. It is important to remember that no one has the right to be violent, even if two people are dating. Examples of violence are grabbing someone, hitting, pushing, yelling, or calling names.

### **Violence doesn't stop violence - use words!**

If someone is being abusive, threatening or trying to fight the abusive person is only going to make the situation worse. Instead, ask questions like "Is everything ok?" while looking at both people. It's a way to interrupt the fight without causing more drama and putting yourself in danger.

### **Learn from the situation.**

What could have been different? Did you respect the victim's rights? Did you avoid violence? Talk to your friends and get their perspective on the situation. They may think of other options we would never think of.

### **Don't silence or ignore the victim.**

Be sure that you don't put all the focus on the abuser. The victim's voice should be heard and respected. Ignoring victims makes it seem like their feelings - and voice - don't matter. Make sure to check in with the victim to see how they are doing.

### **Remember, violence doesn't end after one action.**

Sometimes the violence will continue, or the people will stay together. This can be frustrating, but it's important to remember that while you can't control what another person is going to do, you can take a stand against violence. Plus, other people have seen you take a stand against violence, and they may have the courage to follow your example next time they see violence happening!



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE REASONS WE DON'T INTERRUPT VIOLENCE?

### **"It isn't my problem."**

Violence is EVERYONE'S problem. We are all affected by violence in our schools and community.

### **"It isn't going to change anything."**

Your action is going to help others see that they can take a stand against violence. It also shows the victim that she or he is not alone.

### **"It's normal for people to fight."**

While it is normal for people to disagree, violence is NOT normal and it is NOT okay.

### **"It may make things worse, or the abuser might turn on me."**

The point of being an active bystander is to help the situation calm down, not create more violence. It is important to remember the Tools in order to make sure that a bad situation doesn't become worse.

### **"Maybe I'm making a big deal out of nothing."**

Any kind of violence IS a big deal, even grabbing someone's arm or yelling in their face or calling someone names. If it seems wrong, it probably is!

### **"She might have started it or deserved it."**

No one chooses to be abused and no one ever deserves it. Excuses are made everyday for why violence happens but we know that violence is a choice and the responsibility falls on the person who chooses to abuse.

### **"I'm not a rat."**

Being an active bystander does not mean you're being a "rat" or that you're weak. Being a "rat" or "tattletale" is telling to get someone in trouble but an active bystander is telling when someone is in trouble and needs help. It means that you want a safe community.

### **"No one else cares that this is happening, why should I?"**

Many people want to see an end to violence, but are unsure of how or when to speak up. It takes courage to speak up but it is also our responsibility.