

Bystander Intervention Theory, Research and Skills for Peru State College Students, Faculty and Staff

Alan Berkowitz - April, 16, 2013

What we know about bystanders (feeling uncomfortable but not acting):

- most people want to intervene but don't
- bystander behavior goes through the following stages:
 - notice the event
 - interpret it as a problem
 - feel responsible dealing with it
 - have the necessary skills to act
- bystanders don't intervene because they:
 - assume it isn't a problem because other's don't intervene
 - fear of embarrassment
 - think other's aren't bothered
 - fear retaliation or negative outcomes
- the presence of other's inhibits the desire to help

Social Norms and violence:

- pluralistic ignorance
- false consensus
- false uniqueness

Intervention options:

- Direct versus indirect
- Now or later
- Confrontation, shifting the focus, shifting the person

Intervention skills:

- Confrontation, i.e.
 - impose authority
 - express feelings
- Shifting the focus (indirect intervention), i.e.
 - non-participation.
 - Deflection/distraction
 - shift the focus/address underlying assumption
- Shifting the person
 - helps the person understand *why* the behavior is problematic
 - is non-confrontational
 - fosters deeper change
 - reduces defensiveness
 - engage in “open talk”
 - identify the “ouch”

The goal is to have more options for intervening in order to be able to express in some way one’s desire to intervene and help.

Alan Berkowitz is an independent consultant with expertise in culture change, gender issues, behavioral health, ending men’s violence, and fostering social justice. He has received five national awards for his scholarship and innovative programs on substance abuse and sexual assault prevention, men’s role in ending violence against women, gender issues, bystander intervention theory and skills, and diversity. He developed one of the nation’s first rape prevention programs for men that was recently evaluated and found to reduce actual sexual assaults by 75% at 4-month follow-up. Alan is a frequent keynote speaker at national conferences, a co-founder of the social norms approach, the author of a book on bystander intervention theory and skills. He is a frequent consultant to institutions of higher education and currently serves as a sexual assault prevention and bystander intervention subject matter expert for the US Military. He received his Ph.D. in Psychology from Cornell University and is a licensed psychologist. For more information go to www.alanberkowitz.com.