Every day we witness many things (both good and not so good). This makes us all bystanders. We also make decisions about how to respond to what we see. Our choices can turn us into active bystanders.

An active bystander witnesses an act that is harmful to someone else (such as name-calling, derogatory joke-telling, rumors, property damage or physical violence) and doesn’t just passively observe or walk away.

An active bystander DOES SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

WHEN WE TAKE ACTION, WE …
• positively impact not only the people experiencing, but also those committing, a harmful act.
• help give others the confidence to speak up or act.
• contribute to creating a community where people care about and help each other.
• improve our own lives by supporting a culture that values healthy relationships and offers help when needed.

WHEN WE …
• stay silent
• do nothing
• look the other way
• say, “It’s none of my business”
• think, “someone else will deal with it”
• we support hurtful behavior and unequal treatment.
• we participate in a system that allows violence, discrimination and suffering.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ACT?
Taking action early – before a situation escalates – can be effective and safer for everyone involved.

HOW DO I BECOME AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?

CONSIDER THE 3Ds

1. DIRECT
Step in and interrupt a harmful situation by pointing out the problem and engaging participants in conversation about better alternatives.

Say things like:
• “That’s not funny!”
• “What you said (or did) isn’t cool.”
• “That type of language (or behavior) isn’t OK.”

Ask:
• “Is this person bothering you?”
• “Is there anything I can do to help?”

• Stand next to someone so they know they are not alone.
• Look disapprovingly at a person who is harassing someone else.
• Don’t join in or laugh.
• Tell someone (either right then or later on) why you thought what they did or said was uncool.
• If a person is mistreated, tell them it wasn’t okay and you’re sorry it happened.

2. DISTRACT
If you aren’t comfortable calling out the problematic behavior, try interrupting a risky situation by distracting and redirecting the people involved.

If things get out of hand, call 911.

• Approach everyone as a friend
• Do not be antagonistic
• Avoid using violence
• Be honest and direct whenever possible
• Recruit other bystanders for joint action
• Get help from various authorities, if necessary
• Keep yourself safe

3. DELEGATE
If you can’t do it alone, involve others.

• Ask an unrelated question about a class assignment, a TV show or even the weather. The goal is simply to change the subject!
• Tell them you think someone is looking for them.
• Ask them to show you where the bathroom is.
• Say something positive (like, “Hey, nice shirt!”) to anyone involved.

• Attract “allies in action.” (Call attention to the situation and get others to help you speak up, prevent or interrupt.)
• Tell your RA, RD or another staff person right away.
• In an emergency, always call 911.

WHEN INTERVENING...

• Approaches everyone as a friend
• Do not be antagonistic
• Avoid using violence
• Be honest and direct whenever possible
• Recruit other bystanders for joint action
• Get help from various authorities, if necessary
• Keep yourself safe

ACADEMIC RESOURCES
Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies www.umass.edu/wost
The Psychology of Peace and Violence Program www.umass.edu/peacepsychology
Legal Studies Program http://polsci.umass.edu/legal
Department of Public Health www.umass.edu/ph/public-health
Department of Communications www.umass.edu/communication/undergrad/academicsmajor
College of Education – Social Justice Education www.umass.edu/education/academic/socialjustice

CAMPUS RESOURCES
• UMass Amherst Police Department (413) 545-2121 Emergency: 911
• Anonymous TIPS line: 413-577-TIPS (8477)
• University Health Services (413) 577-5000
• Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (413) 545-2377 After-hours Emergencies (413) 577-5000
• Center for Women and Community (413) 545-0883 Rape Crisis: (413) 545-0800
• Dean of Students Office (413) 545-2848
• Center for Health Promotion (413) 577-5181
• Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success (CMASS) (413) 545-2517
• Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (413) 545-3464
• Stonewall Center (413) 545-4824
• Psychological Services Center (413) 545-0041
• Disability Services (413) 545-0892