

WHAT IS A BYSTANDER?



In the prevention field a bystander refers to anyone who plays some role in an act of harassment,

abuse or violence -- but is neither the perpetrator nor the victim. They are someone who is present and thus potentially in a position to discourage, prevent, or interrupt an incident. They are a member of a peer culture who has relationships with others who might be perpetrators or victims, or perhaps vulnerable to becoming one. A bystander could also be a teacher, coach, military commander or school administrator who is in a position to respond assertively to incidents once they've occurred — or to initiate prevention programs before something bad happens.

A bystander is a person who observes a conflict or unacceptable behavior. It might be something serious or minor, one-time or repeated, but the bystander knows that the behavior is destructive or likely to make a bad situation worse. Bystanders may or may not know what to do, or may expect others to do something to help. Research shows that educating and engaging bystanders is a promising way to help prevent the widespread problem of violence within communities.

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.

ACTIVE BYSTANDERS

An active bystander takes steps that make a difference. Without individuals willing to stand up, step in and speak out, violence, racism, hate, bullying and those of its ilk will continue to propagate. Active bystanders intervening when they see a small injustice, can subvert larger more horrendous crimes.

An active bystander lets both the offending person and the potentially offended person where the larger community stands. If one person does something to another that contravenes community norms or values, such as making a racist remark, and a bystander ignores it, then the offending person may think that such behavior is actually acceptable.

BYSTANDER TRAINING



Alcohol can be used as a weapon by rapists.

This training is based on a national model called, "Bringing in the Bystander™," from the University of New Hampshire that has been implemented on college campuses. The training includes a brief history of research

about bystander behavior, real examples of violent incidents where bystanders were present but didn't act, real case examples of positive bystander behavior and what it takes to be an active bystander. The training includes important definitions and statistics about

BYSTANDER TRAINING



domestic violence and sexual assault as well as information that will help participants to better understand and support survivors of violence.

One of the goals in offering this training is to help make Meadville a safer community where all citizens feel empowered to intervene in safe, effective and helpful ways when they encounter incidents of harassment or assault. The training is offered by teams of trained Women's Services' staff and volunteers.

The bigger goal is to change the culture around harassment, bullying, racism, hate, intolerance and violence. Ultimately it's about changing social norms. The training is adaptable and can be tailored to your specific needs or areas of concern. Ultimately, the training gives individuals the tools and skills to help them actively confront and challenge all forms of harassment and discrimination.

Women's Services



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LOCAL IMPACT

Victims of intimate-partner violence lose a total of nearly 8 million days of paid work per year, the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs, and the cost of domestic violence to the economy is more than \$8.3 billion.¹ Violence against women is widespread and pervasive with **1 in 3** women and girls in the world experiencing physical or sexual violence during her lifetime, usually by someone she knows - a husband, a boyfriend, or friend. It is a global health problem of epidemic proportions², and *it's happening in our neighborhoods too!*

In 2012, a 20-year-old woman was brutally beaten, bludgeoned with a shovel and buried alive in the woods near the Cochran home of her two accused perpetrators.

In 2011, a 26-year-old man shot 31-year-old Nobilee Forro at point-blank range inside her apartment in front of her two children and then turned the gun on himself.

In 2010, A 63-year-old Conneautville man was fatally shot in the chest with a 12-gauge shotgun in the bedroom of the home he shared with his 53-year-old wife.

Also in 2010, a 23-year-old Titusville woman died of asphyxiation due to blunt force trauma to her throat. She was found buried in the snow behind her apartment complex. Her 35-year-old boyfriend confessed to police that he killed her after a fight at her apartment. He died of liver failure five days after he was charged with the murder. He had ingested 200 Tylenol pills in a suicide attempt before being jailed on the murder charge.

¹US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

²World Health Organization

EMPLOYERS

Employers face numerous human resource concerns with limited time and money. Often a decision to focus on a specific problem is not made until the problem becomes significant and costly. Problems with a social stigma tend to be less likely to receive attention as employers and employees may be reluctant to acknowledge that these problems exist.

Domestic violence was a hidden concern that did not show up on the public's radar screen until relatively recently. Some employers are addressing it but many more are not. Some compelling reasons that employers should take action on this issue are:

- At least one million women and 371,000 men are victims of stalking in the U.S. each year. Stalkers often follow the victim to the workplace.
- 94% of corporate security directors surveyed rank domestic violence as a high security problem at their company.
- The national health care costs of domestic violence amount to nearly \$4.1 billion a year for direct medical and mental health care services for victims of domestic violence.
- In a 2002 survey of senior corporate executives, 91% said that domestic violence affects both the private and working lives of their employees.
- More than 56% of those surveyed were aware of employees who have been affected by domestic violence.

WSI can also work with your business to define and implement a violence in the workplace policy. These policies demonstrate the priority a business places on employee safety and its intolerance of violence in the workplace.

WOMEN'S SERVICES

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BRINGING IN THE BYSTANDER

A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY
EFFORT FOR ENDING VIOLENCE

NO MORE | TOGETHER WE CAN END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT