

Active Bystander Training:
Doing nothing is not an option
19 april 2024
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Services provided by **Amal.**

1. Non-native speaking ***Ghentians***

- Individual guidance
- Social orientation
- Learning Dutch
- Referral to work or education
- Building own network

2. For target group that require ***specific attention***

- Youth
- People without legal residence
- Social and educational services at the pull-through site

3. ***Organisations***

- Training
- Ambassadors
- Advice and guidance
- Social interpreting and translations
- Sharing good practices

4. All ***Ghentians***

- Antiracism and antidiscrimination
- Volunteering
- Positive perception regarding co-existing in diversity

5. The ***policy***

- Advice regarding inclusiveness in policy and services



“90% of young people
between 16 & 26 want
to intervene but 40%
does not know how”

<https://www.sensoa.be/sensoa-flemish-expertise-centre-sexual-health>

90%

Goals

Understand what an active bystander is and how to become an active bystander

Getting to know the 4 intervention strategies and how to apply them (providing skills)

Fostering a culture of responsibility to recognize your role in creating safer and more inclusive environments

Who is a bystander?

- Distinction between bystander, target/victim & perpetrator/messenger

What is inappropriate behaviour?

Ranging from an inappropriate joke or microaggression to stereotypes and biases to discrimination and violence.

The sooner you intervene, the better ! (prejudice scale/continuum)

Boundaries ?

- Boundaries by society : legislation

Discrimination : treating another person unequally or unfairly based on personal characteristics (in Belgium : 19 discrimination criteria)

- Boundaries by organization : internal policies
- Personal Boundaries: framework and limits

To intervene or not?

Why do you think people sometimes don't intervene?

The bystander effect!

Why have you sometimes not intervened in a situation?



'Peer pressure to help someone in public 2015'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-5Wvl-Tc3o>

What are barriers?

- Social influence and social norms

“They say it’s just a cultural thing and having some good-natured fun.”

- Public inhibition

“I don’t want to be the only who says something.”

- Distribution of responsibility

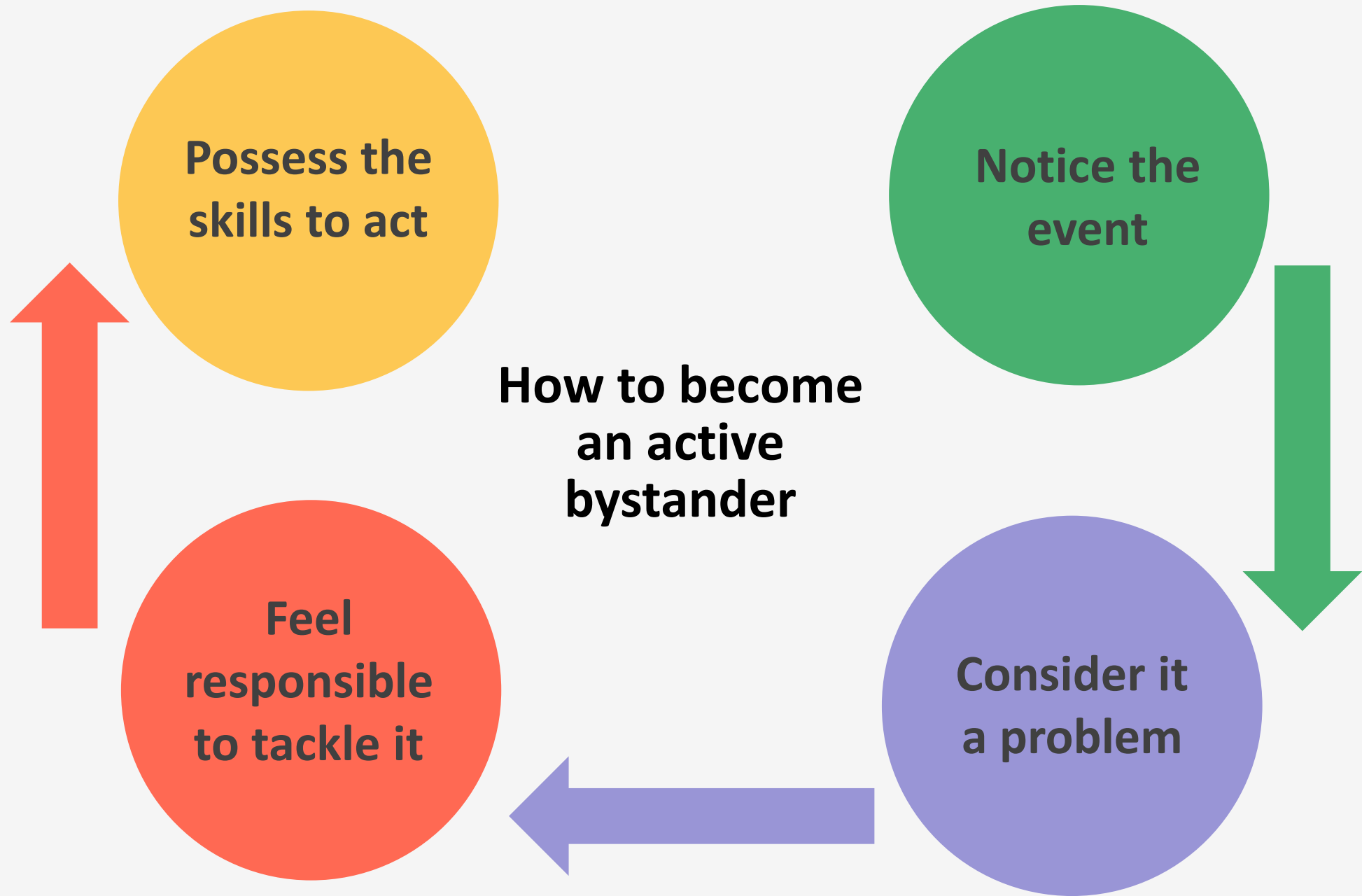
“It’s not my problem. Those in charge know who the bullies are, but they are afraid to deal with them because the bullies are ‘valued institutional good’.”

- Fear of retaliation

“I don’t want to get involved.”

Danger of collective indecision & false consensus





Four intervention strategies

Direct action
*Do something
now*

Distraction
Shift the focus

**Feel responsible
& use the 4**

DDDDs!

Delay
*Do something
later*

Delegation
*Tell it to
someone else*

Direct action

- Name/acknowledge/focus attention to the situation and explain why it's **NOT** ok. You set your own boundary: *'This is not ok for me.'* *'This has gone too far.'*
- You can ask open questions: *'Can you explain that joke to me?'* - *'What exactly do you mean by that?'*
- Calm strong emotions and stimulate dialogue
- Involve another bystander (safety/new group)
- Non-verbal communication



Distraction

- Shift the focus
- Intervene indirectly e.g., de-escalate by interrupting or changing the topic or by shifting the focus of the conversation
- Remove the target from the situation
- Interrupt the behaviour via another distraction: *'Why don't we take a coffee break first.'*
- A useful method when direct action can be harmful for the target or the bystander



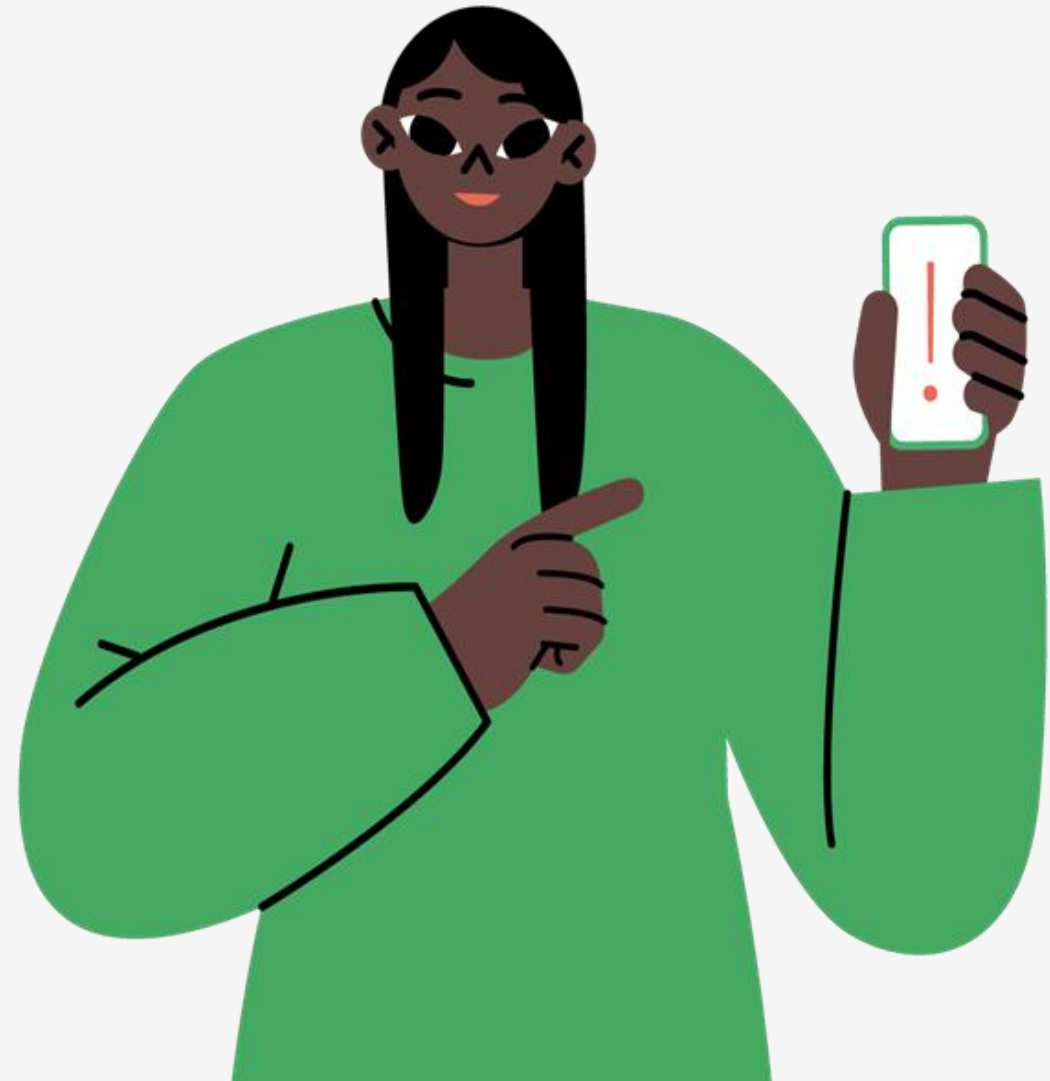
Delay

- Do something later
- Talk about it with the target/perpetrator/bystander in a calm and safe environment
- Talk about it with others
- **It's never too late to act!**



Delegation

- Find support with others – don't be left alone with your story
- Talk about it with someone with (social) influence or a person from your social circle (e.g., person of trust, manager, employee hotline/point of contact, etc.)
- Interest groups
Tenants Association, union, etc.
- Report it to Authorities
 - Belgium
 - [Vlaams Mensenrechteninstituut | Start pagina](#) (in Dutch)
 - Unia Region East-Flanders, Woodrow Wilsonplein 5 9000 Ghent, OostVlaanderen@unia.be, <https://unia.be> (in English)
 - The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men: <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/en> (in English)
- Police in case of unsafe emergency situations



Support the target

Don't just think about the perpetrator when intervening

Your safety and that of the target are paramount

Acknowledge the experience of the target.

Show proximity, but don't speak on behalf of the target

Only intervene when it is safe

Possible to combine strategies

**What suits you?
(circumstances & context)**

**For all strategies
the following
applies**

Non-violent communication

Discuss a case

Case 1: You're on the bus and notice that the bus driver doesn't stop at a bus stop where several young people of migrant background were waiting.

Case 2: You've just started a new job. You're shocked: a colleague swears a lot, makes inappropriate jokes, and says very hurtful things about certain cultures and religions. ("They're all taking our jobs and our money.") Other colleagues don't react (it seems normal), or some even join in.

Case 3: You're at a festival with a friend who has a physical disability. She's in a wheelchair. She was applying sunscreen when a man approached her with open hands. However, then he started applying sunscreen on her. She always remains very friendly and started laughing. But you know her well and know that she definitely didn't like this.

Case 4: A new colleague has started, and a welcome drinks event has been organized. While you're talking with the new colleague, another colleague joins and says jokingly, "you're too beautiful to work here, sexy animal." The new colleague clearly feels uncomfortable with this remark.

- No guarantee that immediate change in the behaviour of the perpetrator will happen, but don't underestimate the impact of your intervention on the perpetrator, the target, or other bystanders.



More: Learning

Training [Dealing with racist behaviour in a powerful way as a target](#) and campaign [React to racism](#), Orbit vzw (in Dutch)



Campaign [Reacting to sexual misconduct](#), Sensoa vzw (in Dutch)

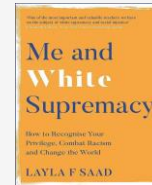


Bystander training for personnel of the City of Ghent & educational staff, City of Ghent



More: Reading

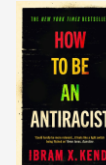
Me and White Supremacy, Layla F. Saad



The Good Ally, Nova Reid



How to be an Antiracist, Ibram X. Kendi



Uncomfortable conversations with a Black man, Emmanuel Acho



More: Watching

When They See Us (Netflix)

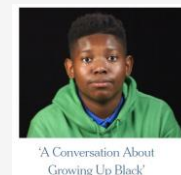
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyoSErErnCE>

BlacKkKlansman:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQNZhs0QKq0>

A Conversation on Race (Short Films Series about Identity in America):

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/your-stories/conversations-on-race>



More: Doing

What do you take away from this training?

Doing nothing is not an option (anymore)

You make an impact!

**A thank you for
*listening.***

Questions?

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