

# Parents in the Know: A Program for Engaging Parents

## Activity: Group Brainstorm (20 minutes)

**Goals:** To provide parents an opportunity to collectively list the experiences individuals may witness that require intervention and outline the process an individual may go through to decide if, when, and how to intervene.

**Theory to Practice:** Adults who recognize questionable adult behavior and follow through by engaging with those adults send a public message that sexual abuse of children will not be tolerated. It brings the topic into the open and promotes the responsibility of all adults to intervene, question and protect children. If the questionable behavior has a reasonable explanation and no additional warning signs are noticed, the necessity for all adults to be involved in protecting children is reinforced. If inappropriate or abusive behavior is occurring, intervention and support can be provided to the victim and authorities should be notified.

### **Directions:**

- Prepare flip chart paper with the following questions:
- What is a bystander?
- When witnessing an event, what options does a bystander have?
- Why might a bystander chose to get involved?
- Why might a bystander chose not to get involved?

### **Sample responses:**

#### ***What is a bystander?***

- A witness.
- An individual who sees something taking place that they are not a part of.
- An individual standing by or going along with.
- An individual who speaks up and gets involved.



## ***When witnessing an event, what options does a bystander have?***

- Walk away.
- Call the police.
- Call Child Protective Services (CPS).
- Walk over and try to stop the behavior.
- Do nothing.
- Try to change the subject.
- Pull the victim to the side.
- Pull the perpetrator to the side.
- Talk to victim/perpetrator individually afterwards.
- Pretend not to see/ignore it.
- Yell or say something from afar.
- Tell someone else or ask someone else for help.

## ***Why might a bystander get involved?***

- She/he knows the victim.
- She/he want to do the right thing — protect, help.
- She/he had a similar experience.
- She/he feels confident in how to help. She/he feels it will make a difference.

## ***Why might a bystander chose not to get involved?***

- She/he is scared/afraid.
- She/he thinks situation may be different than it appears.
- She/he doesn't want to make it worse.
- She/he is in an unfamiliar location/situation.
- There are other people around so hesitant to get involved.
- Don't want to cause a scene.
- She/he doesn't know the victim.
- She/he knows the perpetrator.
- She/he thinks someone else will help.
- She/he doesn't know what to do.
- She/he doesn't feel confident/comfortable intervening.

Ask participants to turn to page 8 of the Parent Journal which summarizes positive bystander behaviors.

Remind participants that intervening does not necessarily require immediate aggressive confrontation. Participants may intervene through distraction, confusion, excuses, involving others, anonymously calling authorities, just moving closer — individual safety is important. Let's watch how some adults safely intervened and the decisions that promoted safety.

## **Activity: Video presentation of “ABC 20/20: What Would You Do” (30 minutes):**

**Goals:** Attendees will examine the motivations and circumstances which influence bystanders to become involved when adults are behaving inappropriately with children and discuss how they chose to intervene.

**Theory to Practice:** Teaching children about their bodies and sexual development sets boundaries for appropriate behaviors. It also models respect and the importance of being educated about the human body just as being educated about math and reading. Many adults may struggle with naming and discussing age appropriate sexual development and behaviors. It is vital to increase adults comfort and skills in talking with their children about age appropriate sexual development and behaviors.

### **Potential themes:**

It is too complicated for children to decipher and respond to adults; it is the adults’ responsibility to protect children and question adults. It is important to remember questioning can be done assertively to discourage escalation of the situation.

### **Directions:**

Show the video, “ABC 20/20: What Would You Do?”

20/20 ABC What Would You Do?

Man tries to lure away a child <http://abcnews.go.com/WhatWouldYouDo/video?id=6877113>

### **Discussion Questions:** “ABC 20/20 What Would You Do?”

After watching the video clipping featuring five different bystanders and two potential offenders, discuss the following questions.

### **Sample answers:**

#### ***Why did individuals get involved?***

- Fear for child.
- Wanted to help.

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## ***How did individuals chose to get involved?***

- Called the police.
- Asked Katie to swing with his daughter.
- Asked Katie to wait for her nanny and not to go with the adult.
- Questioned the adult about why he was asking a child to help him.

## ***Were there other options for interventions beyond those on the video?***

- Involve other adults.
- Explain you overheard adult was looking for a dog and offer to help or launch into a story about your lost dog.
- Pretend you hurt yourself and create a scene drawing other adults.

## ***How might the outcome have changed if individuals had not gotten involved?***

- Katie might have gotten kidnapped.
- Katie might have left with the adult.
- Katie might have gotten hurt.

## ***Could reaction of perpetrator have been different?***

- He could have gotten angry and escalated his behavior.
- He could have screamed.
- He could have gotten physical or threatening with you or the child.

## ***What if the situation did not appear so “drastic” or “dangerous?”***

- Less motivated to get involved.
- Might have said something but not gotten physically involved.
- Wouldn't have “bothered” the police.
- More likely to feel that it isn't my business.



***Summary points:***

- Lack of intervention/response: only 12 out of 50 individuals intervened
- Vulnerability of children: 7 out of 10 children will leave with a stranger

