

The Backbone Zone

A Call to Action

Activity Type:	Brainstorming activity
Intended Length:	5-20 minutes, depending on discussion time
Materials Needed:	Flipchart and markers
Source:	National Sexual Violence Resource Center (http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Booklets_Engaging-Bystanders-in-Sexual-Violence-Prevention.pdf)

Activity Objective:

Participants will understand more about what motivates or prevents people to act in certain situations.

Suggested Use:

This exercise is a brainstorm that can be used with a small group of 3-4 people or a larger group of up to 50 participants. It will provide an exploration of why people choose to act or not act in the same situation and whether those decisions are conscious.

Activity Instructions:

Step 1: Begin with a quick brainstorm about why people don't get involved in a given situation. Allow the group some thinking time and encourage their answers, but if they need help getting started, here are a few reasons you could suggest:

- It is not my problem.
- It is not my job.
- It is not my responsibility.
- I just don't want to go there.
- I don't want to make things worse.
- I don't feel safe.
- I don't know what to do or say.
- I don't want to be a snitch.
- I don't get into other people's business.
- I believe in the rights of the individual.

Step 2: Brainstorm a list of reasons people DO get involved. Again, let the group develop their own ideas, but if they need a few ideas, offer a few of these reasons:

- The person involved is someone I care about.
- Someone helped ME once.
- I didn't think about it, I just reacted.

- I was just doing what I would want someone to do for me.
- I knew he was drunk, and I wanted to be sure no one got hurt.

Discussion Points:

This exercise is a launching point for participants to see the complexity of what it means to be a bystander. It will reinforce the concept that we are all bystanders, every day, as a unifying concept. It may also offer an opportunity to talk about hope - hope for mobilizing individuals, communities and institutions to prevent sexual violence before anyone is harmed.

As you examine the various responses with your audience, point out that there are multiple good reasons to get involved and multiple good reasons to be cautious - especially when there is a possibility of violence. If time allows, you may want to explore the multiple times and ways to intervene (e.g., take a particular situation and explore what an intervention would look like if you intervened earlier or later in that day, in that family, or in that person's life.)

Trainer's Note: *Your role is to pose a question and then let people offer their ideas.*