

# Communities of Resistance

NEXT Workshop 2018

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Bystander Intervention is based in the principles of nonviolence, like those used by Martin Luther King and Gandhi. Dr. King laid out six principles:

1. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.
2. Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.
3. Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice not people.
4. Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform.  
(Note that this one is more applicable to Dr. King's nonviolent direct actions)
5. Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.
6. Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.

Nonviolence is the most courageous way to respond -- it's easy to lash out, but it is very difficult to hold your emotions and act from a principled place. You may not yet be in a place where you feel you can do this, but this training will help.

Bystander Intervention Training assumes that:

1. We have an ethical, social and political obligation to help each other, when we are in a position (situationally and psychologically) to do so.
2. Stepping up to act in solidarity with others can help to reduce the impact of a problematic situation.
3. The best way of responding as a bystander is through de-escalation.
4. As a bystander, you are there to support what the targeted person wants.
5. Practicing how to respond helps us to get past our hesitations so we can step up when necessary.

## Principles of Bystander Intervention

We recognize that we are dealing with an unfamiliar situation with people we don't know. This means that direct confrontation of an attacker by us as bystanders is not the best way to respond.

We want to show moral courage:

- by acting from a centered place despite our fears
- by choosing principles over emotion (anxiety, anger, self-righteousness)

We want to engage in de-escalation:

- by limiting the ability of a situation to become more intense
- by reducing the drama in the situation

We want to shift the attention in the situation:

- by interacting as much as we can only with the targeted person
- by ignoring the attacker (freeze them out, even if they escalate verbally)
- by creating a safer space for the targeted person
- by bringing in other people for additional support and varied responses

We want to reach out to the targeted person:

- by being present as an ally and an equal
- by not taking away the ability of the targeted person to respond
- by asking if they want our help
- by asking before we touch them
- by asking how we can best help them
- by offering possible solutions (that the targeted person may reject)
- by offering emotional support and empathy (befriending/connect)

**REMEMBER:** you are there in solidarity, not as a savior!