

## Bystander Intervention Models

### Final Project Section

Since 2010, when the first bystander training programs were created and implemented at institutions across the United States, bystander intervention models have become some of the most prevalent strategies for combatting the pervasive issue of sexual assault, particularly on college campuses. Shortly after these first policies emerged, academics began to compile an expansive body of research on the efficacy thereof. Based on these data, we know that bystander intervention models are some of the most effective and well-received sexual assault campaigns on campuses throughout the country<sup>1</sup>. Further, while many scholars found that early training programs were rather ineffective because of their scope, more recent courses have gained popularity and have, subsequently, increased their effectiveness significantly<sup>2</sup>.

While defining “bystander intervention” has been a difficult task for American universities – of the 32 school policies I reviewed, each one has a different set of stated definitions, intentions, and goals for their individual bystander training programs – state laws provide a helpful, succinct set of definitions for us to more fully understand what bystander intervention is. Most states define effective bystander intervention as, “the act of feeling empowered and equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively assist in the prevention of sexual violence”<sup>3</sup>. In practice, bystander intervention programming is typically broken down into two types: intervention training and campaigns intended to encourage intervention. Almost 2/3 of Universities receiving federal funding the United States reports having some kind of bystander intervention training, with another 12% set to implement a new program in the next 3 years<sup>4</sup>. Further, almost every college receiving federal funding reports having some type of bystander intervention programming, either in the form of training or campaigning.

Gender violence organizations around the country have stated their support for bystander intervention training because it works. It achieves its stated goals, begins to shift campus cultures, and effectively equips individuals to act to prevent gender violence<sup>5</sup>. Many campuses that have bystander intervention programs also produce reports attesting to the efficacy thereof, and these data are nothing short of encouraging as well. Some campuses and academics suggest that separating prevention strategies by gender would increase the effectiveness of these strategies, and there is some data to support this contention, but there is currently no reason to believe that co-educational bystander intervention training and programs are *ineffective* to any extent<sup>6</sup>. In sum, bystander intervention models do appear to be quite effective in empowering individuals within a community to act, though it is difficult if not impossible to measure how these programs are actually affecting the amount of sexual harassment and gender violence on college campuses.

---

<sup>1</sup> WCSAP Partners in Social Change 2010.

<sup>2</sup> National Sexual Violence Resource Center 2017.

<sup>3</sup> State of New York Department of Health and Wellness 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Emory University Office of Campus Life 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Jouriles, et al. 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Newland and O’Donohue 2016.

## Works Cited

- Emory University Office of Campus Life. 2017. "Office of Health Promotion: Overview of Bystander Intervention on College Campuses in the U.S." *Emory University*. September 1. Accessed February 27, 2018.
- Jouriles, Ernest N., Alison Krauss, Nicole L. Vu, Victoria L. Banyard, and Renee McDonald. 2018. "Bystander Programs Addressing Sexual Violence on College Campuses: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Program Outcomes and Delivery Methods." *Journal of American College Health*. February 6. Accessed February 27, 2018.
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center. 2017. "Bystander Intervention Resources." *NSVRC Resources*. April 9. Accessed February 27, 2018.
- Newlands, Rory, and William O'Donohue. 2016. "A Critical Review of Sexual Violence Prevention on College Campuses." *iMedPub Journals*. April 2. Accessed February 27, 2018.
- State of New York Department of Health and Wellness. 2016. "STOP Sexual Violence: A Sexual Violence Bystander Intervention Toolkit." *NY Health*. June 21. Accessed February 27, 2018.
- WCSAP Partners in Social Change. 2010. "Bystanders: Agents of Primary Prevention." *NSVRC Resources*. December 1. Accessed February 27, 2018.