Being an Active Bystander

We want everyone to feel that they belong at the University of Bristol. The key to building a culture of inclusion and belonging is calling out and addressing harmful and exclusionary behaviour.

When we signal to people that their behaviour is unacceptable, we are reinforcing the standards we want to uphold. Intervention might be as simple as not laughing at a ‘joke’ that is racist or undermining of an individual, or offering support to colleagues who find themselves isolated or mistreated.

We need all staff to stand up and speak out. We need all staff to become active bystanders.

When you witness something that is not right, do not ignore it; intervene appropriately and only when safe to do so.

## How to be an active bystander

To be an active bystander, be NICE. The acronym NICE means:

Notice the situation.

Interpret it as a problem.

Consider yourself responsible for intervening.

Evaluate the best way to intervene.

## What can I do?

Apply one or more of the 4 Ds of bystander interventions to help guide your actions. The 4 Ds are distract, delegate, delay and direct.

Distract

Interrupt the behaviour: de-escalate by distracting the people involved. You could say “Do you want to go and grab a coffee?” or “Hi, can I get your advice on something?”

Delegate

Get help to intervene: check it is ok with the target of unacceptable behaviour and find a person who has greater authority and escalate. You could say “That didn’t feel right, and I really want to raise this with my manager, are you ok with that?” or “I need help to make sure they are ok and that this does not happen again. Can you please step in?”

Delay

Follow up with the target of unacceptable behaviour: note the incident with them and offer support. You could say “I noticed the way they spoke to you; how are you feeling?” or “I didn’t think that was acceptable; what can I do to help?”

### Direct

Call it out: challenge the unacceptable behaviour in the moment in a calm and measured way. You could say “that’s not an appropriate way to speak to a colleague.” or “The language you’re using is making me feel uncomfortable.”

Remember the 4 Ds of bystander interventions: distract, delegate, delay, direct.

We are all responsible for building a culture of belonging. Let’s make sure our university is a safe and inclusive place to work for all of us.

Stand up and speak out to become an active bystander in the workplace.