



# From Bystander to Upstander

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[www.mwi.org/psai-workshop](http://www.mwi.org/psai-workshop)

# Presenter Introduction



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# Agenda

Define “upstander”

What are the barriers to upstanding?

5 strategies to be an upstander

Scenario practice/discussion

# Scenarios

1. You are on a committee reviewing nominations for a leadership role. After discussing one of the candidates, a qualified woman, another committee member says, “She seems capable, but I’m not sure she’d be comfortable in such a male-dominated group. She might not be a good fit.”
2. During an informal gathering after a committee meeting, a long-time volunteer, Morgan, who holds a respected leadership role, makes inappropriate comments to another attendee. The person targeted doesn’t react in the moment, but you know this isn’t the first time the behavior has happened, and you’re unsure whether to speak up, address it privately, or report it.
3. In a committee meeting, Juan, who recently joined from Mexico, is sharing a proposal for improving training standards. Sam interrupts him, mocking his ideas and saying, “That’s not how we do things here.” Sam becomes increasingly dismissive and personal in his tone, undermining Juan in front of the group.

## UPSTANDER

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“A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.”

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Oxford Dictionary

## UPSTANDER

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“A person who takes action, particularly when the easiest or most acceptable course is to do nothing.”

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# Barriers to Taking Action

- I want people to like me
- I don't want to make the offender feel bad/mad
- I don't want to speak for someone else
- I don't want to make the target feel embarrassed or upset
- I don't want to make it a big deal if it's not a big deal to others
- I don't want to make the situation worse
- I don't want to be nosey
- It could ruin my reputation
- I have done/said the same thing before
- It's not my problem
- Nothing will change, so why try?
- I could lose my status
- I am concerned for my and others' safety
- I don't want to become the target
- I have spoken up before, and it didn't go well
- I'm too [angry, upset, emotional...]
- I don't know how

So why do it?

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“The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people.”

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**Martin Luther King Jr.**

# Upstander Strategies



# Upstander Strategies- 5 D's

Distract

Defy

Delay

Disarm

Document

# Distract

- Physically interrupt behavior

Calling someone over to you who looks like they are in an uncomfortable situation.

Standing up to draw attention away from the target/perpetrator.

- Redirect conversation

“I am curious to hear more about (other topic).”

“I know we all want to get out of here on time, can we get back to the agenda?”





# Defy

Interrupt

Question

Educate

Echo

# Defy

## **Interrupt**

“Can we go back to what you just said?”

“I noticed you just said....”

“I don’t think that aligns with what we value here.”

“I don’t find that funny.”

## **Question**

“Can you tell me more about what you mean by that?”

“When you said/did.....it seemed like you think..... is that what you meant?”

“Did you make that comment because you think...?”

## **Educate**

“That is actually a harmful stereotype.”

“That can make others feel uncomfortable.”

“I see it very differently – can I tell you my perspective?”

## **Echo**

“I agree with what [upstander] said.”

# Delay

- Lower emotions
- Check in with those impacted
  - “How are you doing?”
  - “How did that comment land with you?”
  - “I am thinking about [insert action] what would you think about that?”
- Seek help/input from others
  - The ombuds, someone with more power, someone else who was there, someone who wasn't there, etc.
- Gather information





# Disarm

- Call in vs. call out
- Invite into private discussion
- Assume the best
- Separate impact from intent
- Use tentative language
- Call people to their better selves
- Consider timing/context



# Disarm

## Examples:

“Could I talk with you about something that came up the other day....”

“I am not sure you meant it like this but it came across...”

“I don’t know if this was your intent, but....”

“Next time you might want to consider...”

“I know you care about [value]/[person]...”

# Document

- Note date, context, language/behavior, witnesses
- Become familiar with policies, reporting options, etc.



# Upstander Strategies- 5 D's

Distract

Defy

Delay

Disarm

Document

# Case Study Discussion

# Scenario Options

1. You are on a committee reviewing nominations for a leadership role. After discussing one of the candidates, a qualified woman, another committee member says, “She seems capable, but I’m not sure she’d be comfortable in such a male-dominated group. She might not be a good fit.”
2. During an informal gathering after a committee meeting, a long-time volunteer, Morgan, who holds a respected leadership role makes inappropriate comments to another attendee. The person targeted doesn’t react in the moment, but you know this isn’t the first time the behavior has happened, and you’re unsure whether to speak up, address it privately, or report it.
3. Your colleague, Juan, who recently moved here from Mexico, is giving a presentation and is interrupted by another colleague, Sam. Sam starts belittling Juan, telling him that his research is silly and useless and that it’s “not the way we do it in this country.” Sam continues to rant and attack Juan’s work and character.

# Scenario 1

You are on a committee reviewing nominations for a leadership role. After discussing one of the candidates, a qualified woman, another committee member says, “She seems capable, but I’m not sure she’d be comfortable in such a male-dominated group. She might not be a good fit.”

## **How would it impact your approach if:**

- a) You have a good relationship with this committee member.
- b) You don’t know this committee member well.
- c) This committee member is more senior than you and has influence over your professional career.
- d) Your superior is on the committee as well and agreed with this committee member.

# Scenario 2

During an informal gathering after a committee meeting, a long-time volunteer, Morgan, who holds a respected leadership role makes inappropriate comments to another attendee. The person targeted doesn't react in the moment, but you know this isn't the first time the behavior has happened, and you're unsure whether to speak up, address it privately, or report it.

## How would it impact your approach if:

- a) You know Morgan well.
- b) You don't know Morgan well.
- c) You know the attendee well.
- d) You don't know the attendee well.

# Scenario 3

Your colleague, Juan, who recently moved here from Mexico, is giving a presentation and is interrupted by another colleague, Sam. Sam starts belittling Juan, telling him that his research is silly and useless and that it's "not the way we do it in this country." Sam continues to rant and attack Juan's work and character.

## **How would it impact your approach if:**

- a) You are friends with Sam, and this is out of character for him.
- b) Sam has done the same thing to you and others in the past.
- c) You are friends with Juan and are also Mexican.
- d) Juan and Sam are distant colleagues of yours who you don't know very well and don't work closely with.

# Workshop Resources

[www.mwi.org/psai-workshop](http://www.mwi.org/psai-workshop)

- Program Slides
- Articles
- Tools
- Books
- Videos

