



STAND UP, STEP IN

Active Bystander Intervention Guidelines

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WAIHANGA ARA RAU
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TradeCareers®

We all have a part to play in making our workplaces safe, supportive and respectful for everyone.

It takes all of us - bosses, managers, employers, staff, contractors - to create safe, supportive and respectful work environments.

Together we can do better.

This means that if we see or hear something that is not okay, we have the opportunity to do something to change the situation.

It's called active bystander intervention.

It can be hard to stand up and step in, but if we don't stop the bullying, harassment, racism, and sexism in our trades workplaces we won't attract and retain people in our industry. It's not just because it's the "right thing to do." Our industry depends on it.

It's that simple.

Research shows that when someone stands up and steps in, harmful behaviour is likely to stop right away. It's also likely that your workmates feel just as uncomfortable about the harmful behaviour as you do, so you're doing them a favour too.

Every situation is different, so that's why we have created this set of guidelines outlining a range of different ways you can be a great bystander. The important thing is that you do something to help. It'll make a massive difference to the person being harmed.

If you're worried about being the first one to step in, we've got your back. We've given you examples, information, policies and

checklists to help you make the decision that is best for you.

By taking the lead, you'll make it heaps easier for everyone else to be an active bystander too.

Remember, active bystander interventions should never involve you putting yourself or others in a potentially dangerous or risky situation. You should only take bystander interventions when you consider it is safe to do so.

These guidelines have been created to help trades workplaces to:

- develop policies, procedures and a culture that supports staff to take bystander interventions against bullying, harassment, racism and sexism.
- increase staff knowledge and awareness of bullying, harassment, racism and sexism, and the impact these can have on people.
- increase the ability of staff to take positive action bystander interventions.

Win. Win.

Please note: This toolkit is a companion to the "Keep it Decent" resources.

What is bystander intervention?

It's when you witness harmful behaviour and intervene or report it.

You help someone out.

We can be quick to ignore bad behaviour on site - 'he's just joking around,' 'she's tough and seems fine.' But just because they say something that is out of line, doesn't necessarily make them a bad person. Perhaps they didn't intend it to harm, but it still did. Asking them to acknowledge this harm is part of being a good mate.

Stepping in sends a message that harassment will not be tolerated and that everyone has a role to play in maintaining a respectful and professional workplace.

Stepping in can take many forms: speaking up against sexist or trash-talking language and jokes; calling out racism or bullying; or identifying and changing workplace practices and policies that discriminate against women and gender minorities. It can also mean encouraging others to speak out or take action.

Bystander intervention includes action taken before, during or after an incident.

You can become a workplace champion by preventing harm, promoting well-being, and creating a more compassionate and just society and workplace! Not to mention being a decent mate.







Why get behind active bystander intervention?

01. **Prevention of Harm.**

We know that if we can prevent people from experiencing harmful behaviours, then we can stop a lot of stress and increase people's positive mental wellbeing. It helps reduce suicide risks as well.

02. **Culture of support and inclusion.**

When everyone works together to intervene in harmful behaviours, it contributes to the development of a trades culture that values respect, kindness and inclusion.

Bystander intervention is not a single person act. It is lots of small acts by lots of people.

03. **Empowerment of people who are experiencing harassment.**

People experiencing harm often believe they are the ones that are “wrong”, and think they just need to put up with it. By taking action, you can help people who may already feel on the outer to feel welcome, reduce their sense of isolation, and increase their confidence at work.

04. **Social norms and attitude shifts.**

When all of us stand up to harmful behaviours, it can have a ripple effect, which over time has the power to change wider societal attitudes and culture. By challenging harmful practices, we can lead by example and show others that they can do the same.



CASE STUDY

Tranh's story:

I work on a construction site and everyday people make jokes about me, the food I eat, my family, my work, everything. In my culture it is not polite to talk back or question people who are older than you. I feel like people take advantage of me and the fact my English is not so good. One day a new guy Sio started and we started talking in the smoko room. One of the other guys yelled out - *“why are you even talking to him, he is just a chink - no one talks to them.”*

The new guy just said, *“What the? Since when is racism okay? Tranh's a dude.”* I felt so good. No-one had been kind to me about this before.

The other guys all looked really embarrassed. The foreman came up to me later and said he'd heard about what was going on and he was going to talk to the guys about it. Sio and I are mates and he's helped me be part of the work gang.

Sio says, “It just came out, I hate racism cos I have experienced it myself heaps. I figured I'd start the new job strong and let everyone know I am not down with racist bullshit. Plus, I've made a new mate and he is mean on the tools.”

WHY DO PEOPLE OFTEN HESITATE TO STEP IN?

Have you ever wished you'd said something when someone was being bullied but instead you remained silent?

Yep, lots of us have done this. It's called the bystander effect.

The bystander effect is when people see an emergency or harmful situation, but don't do anything to help. It's even been shown that the more people who are present as witnesses, the less likely it is that any one person will intervene.

It is based on the belief that if others are present, someone else will take responsibility and provide assistance, which leads to a watering-down of responsibility among the bystanders.

We also think that other people's inaction means that the harmful behaviour is okay. This means that even though we know something is wrong, we do nothing.

Several things contribute to why we often hesitate to intervene:

01. **Someone else's problem.**

We think that, as long as there are other people around, they'll handle it and we don't have to bother. It's like we all share the responsibility, so it feels less urgent and we're less likely to do anything about it.

02. **Social influence and conformity.**

When we see others not taking action, we tend to follow their lead and do nothing too. We look to them for guidance on how to behave, and if nobody is stepping in, we assume it's not necessary to intervene.

03. **Evaluation apprehension.**

Sometimes we hesitate to get involved because we're worried about what others will think of us. We're afraid of being judged, facing social backlash, or not knowing the right thing to do. This fear of evaluation stops us from taking action.

04. **Pluralistic ignorance.**

We often rely on how others react to determine how serious a situation is. If everyone seems calm and unresponsive, we assume that there's no real problem and we shouldn't get involved either.

05. **Fear of harm or retaliation.**

Sometimes we avoid stepping in because we're scared of getting hurt or facing revenge from the person causing trouble. Our own safety becomes a major reason why we choose not to take action. No one should intervene if they feel unsafe.

CASE STUDY

Kelly's story:

I get so sick of it. As a woman in a male-dominated industry, everyday I have some kind of situation where men run me down.


Last week a guy came on site and wanted to speak to the site manager - that's me. I said that. He looked right past me and started talking all about the job to the guy behind me, named Dan. Dan is a big guy and he is actually a first-year apprentice. I answered the guy who was talking, but he still refused to acknowledge me and was waiting for Dan to speak.

Dan could tell I was getting pretty pissed off. Some days I can deal with it and other days, like this day, we had a lot on and I didn't have time for this sort of thing. I was just really over it and was about to launch into telling the guy where he can go. But Dan stepped in. He was great, he told the other guy that I know a thousand times more than he did and that I was the site supervisor. He had my back and didn't go into any joking mates behaviour, he was super respectful of my experience and the fact that I am his boss. We also have guidelines about supporting each other in our workplace and I was delighted to see them take place in real life.

The other guy looked stunned but took it; he apologised and said he was at fault and that he was shocked to see a woman in the role but that he would rethink his attitude. He won't be making the same mistake again and it was great to see Dan step up. On a personal level I really appreciated it.







HOW TO BECOME AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

What's the deal?

Employers.

As a boss you get to set the standard.

You have an obligation to keep your workplace safe and inclusive for all people.

A key part of creating a safe and inclusive workplace is to make sure all staff know when to step in if they see or hear bullying, harassment, racism and sexism taking place.

It shows your commitment to the 'Keep it Decent' industry guidelines, encourages your teams to do the same, and gives you the authority to step in when things go wrong.

You need to inform your employees about the specific behaviours that will not be tolerated in the workplace.

You can do that by having policies and procedures to ensure employees understand what is expected of them while they are at work, and the consequences of noncompliance for behaviours such as:

- harassment and sexual harassment
- bullying
- discrimination
- using sexist or racist language or behaviour
- victimisation
- using other offensive language or actions.

Another important aspect of promoting active bystander intervention is providing access to additional support services for victims of harassment and resources for coping with the impact of the harassment.

You can educate staff and others about bystander action in a number of ways, including:

- making sure you have policies and procedures in place
- discussing bystander action over smoko or at a toolbox session
- talking to new staff when they start - so they know what is and isn't expected of them.
- providing information in the staff handbook (if you have one).

All of us.

A solid crew will always have each others' backs.

That means saying something when one of your mates is being harassed, but it also means pulling your mates up if they're harassing someone else. Your mates don't always realise when they are out of line, and as a mate you can help them change their harmful behaviour.

Remember: sometimes just one action or comment can make the difference.

- **What's up** - Notice the event. Be observant, keep an eye out for each other.
- **Listen up** - Interpret the situation as a problem - trust your senses. If it seems off, it probably is.
- **Stand up** - Assume personal responsibility. If not you, then who? The risk of checking in or intervening is relatively low for you, but the risk of not doing anything can be extremely high for someone else.
- **Step up** - Know how to help. Determine how to help. Use the 5Ds - direct, distract, delegate, delay, document.
- **Follow up** - Check in with your mates a few days later.

The 5Ds of bystander action (more on these soon) are a set of steps that you can follow when intervening as a bystander in potentially harmful situations. When choosing which step to use, always observe the situation and assess your safety.

These steps are designed to provide a framework for effective, safe and responsible intervention.



CASE STUDY

Jax's story:

A woman in the company I worked at really had it in for me. I don't know why, maybe because she had always been the only woman in the company? She worked in the office and called the guys on site 'her boys', anyway she didn't like that I was on the tools and outside with the guys. She would often say I was distracting the guys, that my work was average, ask me about when I was having babies, belittle me and tell me I should be ashamed of myself for taking a man's job. All that kinda stuff. It was really weird. One day at smoko she was going through the post and a supplier had sent a nude calendar - she held it up and said, "Oh well Jax won't want this in here - she's such a bore." Honestly, I didn't want it put up but I really didn't like her singling me out.

Dave, one of my colleagues who is an older guy and had been with the company for about 30 years, stepped in and said, "That's enough Lorraine, Jax is doing a great job and I don't want to see that kinda thing hung up here anymore either." He didn't say much but it meant a lot. Lorraine looked a bit shocked but she's stopped being nasty to me.

The 5Ds are:

You can use any of the 5Ds in any order depending on the specific situation and the level of risk involved.

01. Distract.

Create a diversion or distraction to diffuse the situation. This can also provide an opportunity for the person being harassed to remove themselves from the situation.

You could ask the person being harassed if they want a coffee or where a particular tool is, or you could simply ask, *“Hey, could you help me get something out of the van?”* Anything that draws attention away from the person who is experiencing harm.

02. Direct.

Speak up about disrespectful behaviour when it’s happening. There are three ways of doing this:

Name the behaviour - *“That’s disrespectful!”* or *“Hey, we don’t use that language here!”*

Name what you observe - *“She looks uncomfortable. Why don’t you leave her alone?”*

Ask a question to give the harasser a chance to understand their unacceptable behaviour and self-correct - *“What do you mean by saying ‘She’s just a chick?’ or ‘I don’t think that’s how we treat people here - do you think it’s respectful?’*

03. Delay.

First, check in on the person that has been harmed. You can intervene after the immediate danger has passed. If it is not safe or practical to intervene in the moment, you can choose to wait for a safer opportunity to address the situation. You can ask: *“Do you need anything?”*, *“Want me to sit/walk with you?”*, or *“Want me to stay here for a while?”*. If you don’t feel comfortable saying something in real life, you can always send a direct message or give them a call. The important thing is to let them know that you’ve noticed the bullying or harassment, you think it’s not acceptable, and you’ve got their back whenever they need it.

Second, have a ‘calling in’ conversation with the person who’s been harassing someone. By directly addressing the person, you can express disapproval and potentially discourage their actions. Try to speak in a way that is mana-enhancing for everyone. When you confront a person who’s harassing someone, they may feel ashamed and upset since their attempt to appear powerful and in control has failed. Do everything you can to help the person who was doing the harassing save face and have time to think about their actions without being publicly humiliated themselves. If you’re witnessing cyberbullying, you can send the harasser a private message that says you know what’s going on and that they need to stop.

04. Document.

If someone is already helping, document the incident so that there’s proof of it. Try to write down what happened as soon as possible after the event. Our recollection of events often changes as time passes.

- Include the names of other witnesses, the date and time of the event, and the location.
- Try to include what each individual said and did leading up to and during the event.
- Consider asking other witnesses to tell you what they observed and write that down too.

05. Delegate.

Seek help from your manager or other individuals who have the power or expertise to intervene. You can also delegate to another colleague. You can delegate a diversion/ distraction too *“You go ask them to help unload the truck mate, and I will go check on Jamie to see if they are ok.”*

BUILDING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

What can you do?

The idea of bystander intervention could be new to many of your staff. To encourage staff to take action, it helps to specifically include bystander interventions in your policies and procedures. They should explain what bystander interventions are, why they are important and how they are supported in your workplace.

Here is a list of policies you can develop.

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Protected Disclosures Policy
- Discrimination Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Cultural and Racial Diversity Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Drug and Alcohol Policy
- From Whoa to Go
- Privacy Policy
- Casual Individual Employment Agreement
- Standard Individual Employment Agreement
- Fixed-term Individual Employment Agreement
- Contractor Agreement



CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist to help you implement bystander accountability interventions into your workplaces.

	Yes	No	Partly
Education and Training:			
Provide regular training sessions or workshops on bystander accountability interventions, emphasizing its importance and the role of staff in creating a safe and inclusive workplace.			
Educate employees about different forms of harm and situations where intervention may be necessary.			
Offer resources and training materials that outline strategies for effective bystander intervention.			
Establish Policies and Reporting Procedures:			
Develop clear policies that address harassment, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of harm.			
Clearly communicate these policies to all staff members, ensuring they understand their rights and responsibilities.			
Establish confidential and accessible reporting procedures for incidents or concerns, ensuring employees feel safe and supported when coming forward.			
Foster a Supportive Culture:			
Create and promote a culture that values empathy, respect, and inclusion.			
Encourage open communication and active listening among staff members.			
Highlight the importance of supporting one another and intervening when witnessing harm or unfair treatment.			

Lead by Example:

Yes No Partly

Senior leaders and managers should model bystander accountability intervention behaviours by actively intervening and addressing harmful situations.

Encourage leaders to share personal stories or examples of effective bystander intervention.

Recognise and acknowledge employees who demonstrate bystander accountability interventions, creating a positive reinforcement culture.

Provide Resources and Support:

Offer resources such as posters, pamphlets, or online materials that outline the principles of bystander accountability and provide guidance on intervention strategies.

Establish employee assistance programs (EAP) or access to mental health support services to assist staff in dealing with the emotional impact of intervening or reporting incidents. Make sure that these are normalised.

Regular Communication and Reminders:

Include bystander accountability interventions messages in internal communications, newsletters, or company-wide meetings and at toolbox sessions.

Send regular reminders and updates on reporting procedures, available resources, and upcoming training opportunities.

Evaluate and Adjust:

Conduct regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness of bystander accountability interventions initiatives.

Collect feedback from staff to identify any barriers or areas for improvement.

Celebrate Successes:

Publicly acknowledge instances of effective bystander intervention and recognise employees who take responsibility and act as allies. Make sure you do this in a way that doesn't compromise people's privacy.

Share success stories or case studies to inspire and motivate staff to engage in bystander accountability intervention.

CASE STUDY

Sarah's story

I was a young apprentice and I'd recently joined a construction firm to pursue my passion for carpentry. It was okay for a bit, but then Mark, a senior apprentice, started having a go at me.

During my first month on the job, Mark began teasing me, mocking my skills, and intentionally assigning me menial tasks. He was intimidating, always cracking jokes about my period, and made me feel really uncomfortable. I knew I'd get some ribbing when I started but it was everyday, all the time. I felt like I had to quit. It seemed like all the other guys thought it was okay too. I thought I was going crazy.

But then, this other guy, James, a more experienced apprentice who had seen Mark's behaviour towards me, recognised the need for intervention. He told me later that he had been bullied a lot as a young apprentice and swore if he saw that happening to someone else he'd step in.

James says, "I saw what was going on, the bullying, demeaning comments, and the way he kept her out of things. I saw the impact it was having on Sarah's overall wellbeing. So I talked to Sarah during a break and asked if she was okay and that I had seen Mark being rude to her. She said it was really getting her down. I said the next time I saw it I would step in. I didn't have to wait long, it was right after the break! Mark made some crack about her having her period and how she was useless. I had to take a deep breath and then I said to him, "*Did you just say that she is useless 'cos she has periods?*" He was stunned and laughed and said, "*Yeah, I mean she's a chick.*" I said it's not okay to talk to her like that, that it wasn't funny, it was really sexist. The other guys, who were around us, actually piped up too and said that he was being a dick."

I was so grateful to James. Mark was really defensive and made a fuss, but we had documented lots of incidents and the foreman was able to talk to Mark and remind him that the company wouldn't tolerate that kind of behaviour. It actually worked out well, 'cos it sparked a bigger conversation on the site about bullying and harassment and now we have some policies and guidelines and people are all being much nicer. Mark and I sat down and he apologised and now we are sweet.

WHERE TO GET HELP

- **1737, Need to talk?** Free call or text 1737 to talk to a trained counsellor.
- **Anxiety New Zealand** 0800 ANXIETY (0800 269 4389)
- **Depression.org.nz** 0800 111 757 or text 4202
- **Lifeline** 0800 543 354
- **Mental Health Foundation** 09 623 4812, click **here** to access its free resource and information service.
- **Rural Support Trust** 0800 787 254
- **Samaritans** 0800 726 666
- **Suicide Crisis Helpline** 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)
- **Yellow Brick Road** 0800 732 825
- **thelowdown.co.nz** Web chat, email chat or free text 5626
- **What's Up** 0800 942 8787 (for 5 to 18-year-olds). Phone counselling available Monday-Friday, noon-11pm and weekends, 3pm-11pm. Online chat is available 3pm-10pm daily.
- **Youthline** 0800 376 633, free text 234, email **talk@youthline.co.nz**, or find online chat and other support options **here**.
- If it is an emergency, click **here** to find the number for your local crisis assessment team.
- In a life-threatening situation, call 111.

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