

What is a bystander?

A bystander is a person who is present but not involved in a situation or event. Someone who sees or knows about unwanted, threatening or inappropriate behaviour happening to someone else.

The bystander isn't the target of the harassment, bullying or discrimination, but rather a witness that can take action to interrupt the situation, prevent harm and report the incident.

You may be a bystander when you...

- Overhear inappropriate jokes, comments or banter
- Notice a team member being talked over, dismissed or undermined during meetings or discussions
- Become aware of gossip, rumours or negative talk about a colleague who is not present
- See someone being excluded from meetings or team activities without clear reason
- Observe bullying, harassment or misuse of power
- Hear about concerning behaviour after the event

Why take action?

Many people don't report bullying, discrimination or sexual harassment because they fear things will get worse or they won't be taken seriously.

That's why a bystander matters. Speaking up or showing support can send a powerful message about what's acceptable and help someone feel more confident to deal with the matter.

Ways to intervene:

Bystander action doesn't have to be confrontational. The **5D's** below provide a range of safe, practical ways to step in when something isn't right.



DISTRACT the participants to interrupt the incident



DELEGATE by recruiting others to help



DOCUMENT what is happening



DELAY stepping in until the incident is over (let the person know you saw what happened and it wasn't ok)



DIRECT approach (use caution with this one) - Assess the situation first to decide whether you and the person being harassed are safe before speaking out

It takes courage to speak up but don't underestimate the positive impact that calling out workplace bullying, harassment, or discrimination can have