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## INTERVENTION STORIES FROM YALE STUDENTS

I was in the kitchen at a party, talking with a guy I used to see, and he was getting very touchy and inappropriate. I didn't want to cut him off—it had been a long time since we talked—but it felt awful. One of my friends noticed, and interrupted to invite me out for pizza. I was so thankful!

I was at a party off-campus, very late, talking with a few women in the hallway. A drunk guy joined us, flirted for a minute, then, started kissing one of them. I was about to make a tactful exit when I saw her eyes—they were wide and panicked. I tapped on his shoulder and said, "Hey, I don't think she likes that," but he brushed me off. I had to run to get a friend of his, who literally pulled him off her. I would have done it myself, but the guy was too drunk and too big.

A grad student was pursuing my friend. She made it clear she wasn't interested, but he wouldn't let it go. It was scary. She agreed I could talk to my dean without using her name, which got things rolling. My friend ended up talking to SHARE and the Title IX Coordinator. It was good that she got help.

A group of us were goofing around setting up for an event, telling jokes at the microphone. It was fun until one guy told a rape joke. I was too shocked to say anything then, but I felt horrible all day. Eventually, I went to his room to talk. It was a tough conversation, but he got it—he actually started crying when it sank in. Later, he thanked me for being so honest.

I heard a neighbor saying "no" repeatedly to what sounded like unwanted sexual advances. I went out into the entryway, knocked on her door, and asked if everything was alright. She was angry at the interruption and said everything was okay—but the next day she went out of her way to thank me: "It means a lot to know that people are looking out for you."

My friend was making out with another guy at a party, and I thought they would go home together. But then he caught my eye and kind of signaled. So I went up to them and pretended to be really drunk and needy. The other guy was bummed, but understood—when your friend is falling-down-drunk, you have to take him home.

# Bystander Intervention

## Breaking the Script of Sexual Violence

SEXUAL VIOLENCE DOESN'T COME OUT OF NOWHERE.

It's supported by cultural patterns of disrespect and pressure — patterns that too often let aggression pass unchecked. Working together, we can change those patterns. Our alliances will be stronger. Our campus will be safer. Our community will thrive.

**cce** communication  
and consent  
educators

Look for us on Facebook as 'Yale CCEs' or at [www.yale.edu/cce](http://www.yale.edu/cce)  
Contact us at [cce@yale.edu](mailto:cce@yale.edu)

NEED HELP RIGHT NOW?

*Call anytime, day or night.*

SHARE 203 432 2000 | YALE POLICE 203 432 4400

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## Steps to Action

### PAY ATTENTION

*Be alert to things that make you feel uncomfortable.*

- Signs of sexual pressure, unwanted attention, or disrespect?
- Someone who's way too drunk?
- Worried looks? Anyone who seems scared or confused?

*Keep an eye on anything that's worrying. Don't ignore the 'little' stuff.*

### DECIDE

*Should someone intervene?*

- Is the situation heading in a bad direction?
- Does someone need help? If you can, check in with whomever you are aiming to help – but if you can't, trust your instincts.

### MAKE A PLAN

*Fit your intervention to the situation.*

- Who's in the best position to act? Call on friends, allies, hosts, authority figures – or do something yourself.
- When's the best moment? Now? Later? Do you need time to plan or to organize others?
- Be creative and strategic.

### MAKE IT HAPPEN

*Stay calm. Follow your plan. Be ready to get help if you need it.*

- Look for allies. Be alert for others trying to help, too.
- Start by using the lightest touch you can.
- Act even if you feel awkward or nervous.

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## Techniques to Try

### THINK SMALL.

Small interventions can be the most effective. Use humor and creativity. Act early. Act often.

### OFFER HELP.

Signal your concern and willingness to act. It's okay if you are turned down at first or altogether. Simply offering to help changes the dynamics.

### DE-ESCALATE.

Be calm, respectful. Shift the focus away from the problem.

### THINK BIG.

Most interventions are small. But some problems are so deeply entrenched that they require sustained action. Find allies and make plans.

### DISRUPT THE SITUATION.

Intrude. Make a joke. Change the topic. Spill something. Be a third wheel.

### MAKE SPACE.

Separate the person at risk from the source of danger. Set some alternative plan in motion, or create a diversion.

### NAME THE PROBLEM.

Acknowledging that things aren't right can go a long way.

### SLOW THINGS DOWN.

Give people time to extricate themselves, if that's what they want.

### BE SAFE.

If you think you are in danger, step back and get help.

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## Why does this work so well?

Sexual violence often operates through “scripts” – patterns that are surprisingly coercive for those cast in the central roles. As a bystander, you're an extra, standing by as the plot unfolds. Simply by stepping into the action, you break the script. You're like that kid in 3rd grade who walked onstage at the wrong cue and messed everything up. This time, that's exactly what you're after!