

# UPSTANDER BEHAVIOR

*Use this document as a guide to help think through situations before they occur.*

**1. Notice the event.** Be aware of your surroundings and what is happening around you.

**2. Interpret the event as a problem.** Sometimes, we are not sure what we are witnessing. For example, if you see someone lying on the ground after a bonfire at 2:00 am. Is the person simply sleeping? But, what if the person is not sleeping and is actually having a medical emergency? Step 2 encourages individuals to trust their instincts. If something does not seem right, it probably is not. If a situation catches your attention and seems a bit off, interpret it is a problem.

**3. Assume personal responsibility.** Bystander research shows people are less likely to help if they are in a large group or in a crowd. Why? Often we think someone else will help, or if everyone else is not helping, then it must not be a problem. Be that someone who does something. If not you, then who?

**4. Know how to help.** The key to intervening effectively is knowing how and when to help, and more importantly, knowing how to help safely. The Step Up program uses SEEK; for examples visit: [Strategies for Effective Helping](#)

**Safe Responding.** Do not put yourself in a dangerous situation. For example, if you witness an altercation, it may be safer to call for help (other adults/ law enforcement) rather than approaching the individuals involved. *Step Up!* method teaches to be a lifeguard, not a superhero.

**Early Intervention.** Intervening early can avoid a small problem from growing into an even bigger, more harmful problem. For example, it is easier and safer to convince your friend to not have alcohol than it is to handle what happens if they had too much to drink and is experiencing alcohol overdose- alcohol poisoning.

**Effective Helping.** Effective helping is any helping.

**Kind** Consider what the person in distress would want, if in doubt you can ask them how you can help.

## 5. Implement the help. Step Up!

**Direct. Distract. Delegate. Delay. Document.**

- **Direct – Directly addressing the situation.**

For example, if someone is trying to take an intoxicated student to a room, you can directly intervene by taking the person aside and saying, “Hey man, she looks drunk. I do not think that’s a good idea.”

For example, if someone doesn’t believe that most students would rather not drink when hanging out with friends, you can ask them about what they did this past weekend with their friends. You can share the survey data and what students are saying they would rather do.

- **Distract – Making a simple or elaborate distraction to diffuse the situation.**

For example, if a couple is arguing and things are getting heated, you can call one of the person’s cellphone or walk up to them and tell one of them that someone is urgently looking for him/her.

- **Delegate – Finding someone else to address the concern.**

This is a good option if you do not feel safe directly intervening, you are not sure what to do, or you simply do not want to get directly involved. Examples include, if you are concerned about a friend’s well-being, you can tell a teacher, advisor, or a school counselor. If you are at a party and someone is trying to get someone else intoxicated, you can alert the party host or get help from a parent or other caring adult.

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