

**DON'T DO
NOTHING!**

Be an Active Bystander

Why/How/When

The behaviour we walk past, is the behaviour we accept.

DON'T DO NOTHING! STEP UP! SAY SOMETHING! TELL SOMEONE!

Don't do Nothing – Active Bystander Campaign.

Context

This single lesson focuses on positive choices that young people could make and have made to be an active bystander. It will therefore enhance work on personal safety and risk management or lessons which have introduced topics related to bullying, inappropriate language and behaviour in relationships, and knives. It aims to challenge misconceptions students may have about not reporting behaviours which they think are not acceptable and so encourage more of them to be active bystanders. This is not designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

Learning objective

We are learning:

- To effectively identify language and behaviour that is unacceptable
- How young people can take steps to challenge behaviour and be a good friend or leader amongst their peers

Intended learning outcomes

- I understand what sometimes people don't act when they see or hear something which is not acceptable
- I can explain how to make decisions, and how unacceptable language or behaviour can be challenged

Resources required

Don't Do Nothing (DDN) video campaign – 3 themes (bullying, domestic abuse, knife crime)

DDN posters

DDN factsheet

Fearless 'Snitching vs Reporting' guide

'No Way' – active bystander and knife crime resource (optional)

4 steps HEAR your friend <https://yourbestfriend.org.uk/friendscantell> (optional)

All resources are available through the Violence Reduction Unit website which is at the bottom of this resource

Climate for learning

Make sure you are familiar with the school's safeguarding and behaviour policies.

- Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. Prior notice that this issue will be covered may be advisable. Notice should be given to pastoral and other relevant staff.
- Local and national support groups or helplines should be signposted.
- Invite pupils to write down any questions they have anonymously at any time and collect them in using an anonymous question box or envelope, which should be accessible both in and after every lesson. Establish or reinforce existing ground rules. Add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson, such as not using personal stories and not making assumptions.

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Key words

Bullying, domestic abuse, knife, active bystander, reporting

Beginning the lesson

Introduction

Revisit or negotiate ground rules and remind students of the importance of respecting each other's ideas and opinions. Draw attention to the anonymous question box and remind them that they can submit questions at any time during or after the lesson.

Share the learning objectives and outcomes with students. Explain that today they will be thinking about what they see and experience, and why sometimes those things which are not acceptable are not reported to others.

Active bystander education worksheet.

Why be an active bystander

The more society knows about the impact of the bystander effect, the easier it will be to overcome. By doing so, we create opportunities for people to invent wise ways to counter the effect and intervene safely to prevent and support victims.

The goal of this approach is to provide a platform to change social norms in peer cultures at all levels. Encouraging people to speak out in the face of abusive behaviour before, during, or after an incident. To support a peer culture where abusive or harmful behaviour is seen as wrong and unacceptable.

Ultimately the objective is to provide opportunity for individuals to identify that others in their peer network more often than not share their healthy values. Learning how to be an Active Bystander helps to raise self-esteem, improve trusted relationships and the confidence in Children and Young People to make better choices.

Teacher Notes. The Bystander Effect - why/when do people not intervene?

The bystander effect, also known as bystander apathy, refers to a phenomenon in which the greater the number of people there are present, the less likely people are to help a person in distress. When only one person is present to witness someone else in trouble, they are more likely to act.

The main reasons for this are:

First, the presence of other people creates a diffusion of responsibility. Because there are other observers, individuals do not feel as much pressure to take action. The responsibility to act is thought to be shared among all of those present, and each individual will expect someone else to intervene. This has a ripple effect and means that no-one intervenes.

The second reason is the need to behave in correct and socially acceptable ways. When other observers fail to react, individuals often take this as a signal that a response is not needed or not

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appropriate. The individual may feel that everyone else in the crowd thinks that the behaviour is acceptable and they are the only one to be concerned.

Other reasons include the fear that the person who intervenes might be harmed in some way by offering support to a vulnerable person, and in particular if the vulnerable person is being threatened by someone else.

What do we mean by 'active bystander'?

An active bystander (or upstander) means being aware of when someone's behaviour is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to intervene and offer assistance. When one individual intervenes by calling out unacceptable behaviour or supporting someone then others will join in. This can create a positive environment where others then feel more able to call out unacceptable language and behaviour.

Lesson Plan

Set the scene:

Questions for the class. If you saw someone struggling with some heavy bags of shopping, would you be more likely to offer to help if:

- a) You were with a group of friends
- b) You were on your own
- c) It doesn't matter

The answer is that individuals are more likely to offer to help when there are fewer people around. The link below is for a video of approximately 5 minutes which demonstrates the Bystander effect.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wy6eUTLzcU4>

Discussion. Think about your journey to and from school, and your day in school. Identify times when someone you know or someone you travel with might need help from you but hasn't asked for any help.

Examples might include: someone being bullied, someone walking past a group who make offensive comments to them, someone who has repeatedly hidden your bag as a 'joke' but is actually targeting you, someone who has shared an inappropriate image or meme that humiliates a friend of yours, gossiping about someone when you don't know if it's true or not

Discuss the findings. How often has the class witnessed these types of events? Daily, weekly, monthly etc. Why don't people intervene? Possible reasons include:

- They think someone else will do it
- They're scared and think they might be in danger if they do
- They are embarrassed to speak up
- They're not a snitch
- They might lose friends by calling out poor behaviour
- It's not their job

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Consider – all these examples of when someone needed some help or assistance. They needed someone to be an 'Active Bystander'. This is particularly important when someone is being harmed by the words or actions of others.

Explain. The formal definition of a bystander: A witness who is in a position to know what is happening and in a position to take action.

In a school context an Active Bystander is someone who notices that something isn't right such as bullying, a toxic or abusive relationship, or a friend carrying a knife and does something to try to change it.

It means saying that something is not OK and then taking action to stop it happening.

Why act? Because the behaviour we ignore, is the behaviour we accept.

Use the Don't Do Nothing! poster to reinforce the message.

Consider: Ask the class what are the consequences if no-one acts or intervenes? Use an example that the class has given you. Inaction has as many consequences as an action

Teacher Notes: there are three videos from the Don't Do Nothing campaign. These are on bullying, domestic abuse and knife crime. You should select which video you wish to play and use the video as the basis for the class discussion. Each video is approximately 2 minutes long.

Questions to ask after the video has been watched.

- Why might people choose to be silent in this situation or not get involved? Are they being good friends by not saying anything?
- What is the potential impact on the victim if no-one intervenes in this situation?
- What could their friends have done to keep them safe?

Teacher note. There are five main ways in which someone can be an active bystander. Talk with the class about what the ways are and explain them. The information below is also summarised on the Active Bystander fact sheet which should be displayed alongside the posters and shared with the class.

The different options are referred to as the 5 D's

1 – DIRECT intervention when appropriate (do not put yourself at risk) **Emphasise - Only intervene when safe to do so and that using violence as a response to violence will only lead to a negative outcome**

There are different ways to take direct action, such as:

- **Asking if the person affected is OK.**
- **Saying that you're both heading the same way and asking if they want to walk with you**
- **Saying that you need some advice on a personal matter so can you have a word in private**

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All of these are ways to intervene that can help defuse the situation but without getting into an argument. Direct action does not mean confronting the bully or abuser and this should never be done as it might put the person intervening at risk.

2 – DISTRACT Find an alternative activity or think about how you can help distract a friend from potential harm

3 – DELEGATE Identify best-placed person to report this to who can safely intervene/discuss concerns

4 – DOCUMENT Record concerns: patterns or frequency to help demonstrate concerns to others

5 – DELAY Tactics to slow things down. Talk to your friend at key moments to disrupt their response to a potentially harmful situation. Provide opportunity to talk on what's making them feel unsafe

Class discussion. When thinking about the video that has been watched, which of these would have been the best or most appropriate way to be an Active Bystander?

Agree – Disagree – Discuss

The questions below can be used to prompt a discussion within the classroom. It is recommended that resources on any of the specific topics (knife crime, bullying or domestic abuse) are viewed in advance of the lesson so that any discussion is informed by the most relevant information and guidance.

Is it OK for someone to control their boyfriend or girlfriend and tell them who they can see?

It is OK for someone to carry a knife for protection?

Is it OK for any pupil to feel scared of another pupil?

The overarching 5 key Active Bystander questions to take forwards whatever the situation:

1. Is what I'm seeing or hearing OK
2. If it's not OK, who needs help?
3. What happens if I do nothing?
4. What are my options?
5. Now what will I do?

(Refer back to the 5 D's for options but use meaningful discussion to tweak these and/o identify a new D)

Teacher Note: In terms of DA, asking why people stay in a domestic abuse relationship is placing blame on the person experiencing the abuse. Always highlight that the person responsible for the abusive situation is the perpetrator.

Closing Questions

Emphasise to the class - If you think something isn't right, or something doesn't sound right, it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and remind yourself; *'the behaviour you ignore, is the behaviour you accept'*. Everyone can be a part of the solution and not part of the problem.

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The video link below is from the comedian Romesh Ranganathan talking about how to call out unacceptable language towards women and provides an example of how to be an active bystander amongst friends. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1fduTS0fR8>

Possible follow up activities for the class:

Identify one thing that you will do to be an Active Bystander.

Design an anti-bullying poster or media campaign to tackle the issue of bullying that promotes people being an Active Bystander.

Research where the idea of being an active bystander has come from and where it has been implemented.

Produce a piece of creative writing around the feelings and experiences from the perspective of a victim, the perpetrator and the person who intervenes to one of these themes.

Further discussion

If you and your school be part of a national campaign to tackle sexism and sexual harassment then the National Education Union have resources called It's Not OK: Ten top tips on using a bystander intervention model.

<https://neu.org.uk/latest/library/its-not-ok-ten-top-tips-using-bystander-intervention-model>

Signposting:

If anyone is affected by the discussions or are worried for others who may be at risk of potential harm then your school's safeguarding policy should be followed, including a discussion with the school Designated Safeguarding Lead. There is also further support and advice available below

Fearless.org

[Give information about crime 100% anonymously | Fearless | Crimestoppers \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](#)
access non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality with a facility to report information 100% anonymously.

Childline

[Get Support | Childline](#) a free, private and confidential service where children and young people can talk about anything. You can call 0800 111 or contact them online.

Kent Police

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If you're concerned about peers being at risk of DA, knife crime, exploitation, please call 101. If it's an emergency, please call **999**. If you're deaf or hard of hearing, a textphone service is also available on 60066. You can also talk to Kent Police on Live Chat which is available 24/7.

British Transport Police

If you're on a train, you can text the British Transport Police on 61016. Information on routes of travel, addresses, appearances and behaviour of a vulnerable person can help to protect them.

Activities for Young People

[Early Help \(support for families\) - Kent County Council](#)

For information on youth services, groups and activities in your local Kent area

[Duke of Edinburgh's \(DofE\) Award | Youth programmes in Medway | Medway Council](#)

For information on youth services, groups and activities in your local Medway area

<https://student.kooth.com/>

Knife Crime

For knife crime specifically, additional resources are available from <https://benkinsella.org.uk> and <https://noknivesbetterlives.com> and <https://www.kentandmedwayvru.co.uk/resources/>

Domestic Abuse

For domestic abuse specifically, additional advice is available from Victim Support on 0808 168-9111 or talk via [Live Chat](#). You can also use this link to [Find your local support services](#).

KELSI has a teaching resource recommended to be used in schools. It can be found here:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news/14-to-25/unstuck-teaching-resource>

Other resources are below:

[Additional resources around DA and healthy relationships are available from](#)

[https://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/16-Days-End-Domestic-Abuse-How-to-ask.mp4?_ =1](https://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/16-Days-End-Domestic-Abuse-How-to-ask.mp4?_=1)

[Friends Can Tell \(yourbestfriend.org.uk\)](#)

Don't Do Nothing Resources are available:

<https://www.kentandmedwayvru.co.uk/project/dontdonothing/>