# Everyday Actions that Matter: Bystander Intervention in Practice

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MSU Prevention, Outreach & Education

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# Community Guidelines



- Practice Self Care
- Intent vs Impact
- Both/And Perspective
- Lessons Leave and Stories Stay
- Recognize assumptions

# Policy Review



- Anti-discrimination Policy
- RVSM & Title IX Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy

# MSU Anti-Discrimination Policy

Members of the university **shall not discriminate against or harass** any university community member on the basis of a **protected identity:**

- Age
- Color
- Ethnicity
- Gender (including Gender Identity and Gender Expression)
- Genetic Information
- Disability Status
- Height
- Marital Status
- Political Persuasion
- Pregnancy
- National Origin
- Race
- Religion
- Sex (including Sexual Orientation)
- Military or Veteran Status
- Weight

**Resources available at poe.msu.edu**



Updated 10/2026

# Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) and Title IX Policy

**Sexual Misconduct**

- Harassment
- Assault
- Exploitation

**Relationship Violence**

- Domestic violence
- Dating violence

**Stalking**

**Retaliation**



**Scan to learn more about MSU's RVSM and Title IX Policy**

**Resources available at poe.msu.edu**



Updated 10/2026

# Mandatory Reporting Policy for Relationship Violence, Sexual Misconduct and Stalking



**Resources available at poe.msu.edu**

Updated 10/2026

# Mandatory Reporting Policy for Relationship Violence, Sexual Misconduct and Stalking

Unless otherwise exempt, **all MSU Employees**, including student employees & volunteers, are required to report to Investigation, Support and Resolution, or ISR, in the Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance (OCR) incidents or conduct that may be prohibited by the RVSM and Title IX policy that:

- They observe or learn about in their working or professional capacity; **and**
- Occurred at a University-sponsored event **or** on University property **or** involves a member of the University community with respect to conduct that may have occurred while they were a member of the University community

**Resources available at poe.msu.edu**

# Offices Exempt During the Provision of Services:

## RVSM Crisis Services:

- Center for Survivors
- Safe Place Shelter
- Sexual Assault Crisis Intervention Team

## Counseling and Health Care

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Employee Assistance Program
- Couple and Family Therapy Clinic
- Health Care Inc.
- Psychological Clinic
- Campus Health Services
- MSU Student Athlete-Wellness
- Sexual Assault Healthcare Program

## Non-Crisis Services:

- Gender and Sexuality Campus Center
- Prevention, Outreach and Education (POE)
- OCR Advisor Services
- University Ombudsperson
- Office for Resource and Support Coordination
- ISR Resolution Office, Adaptable Resolution process

Resources available at poe.msu.edu/resources

Updated 10/2026

# What is Bystander Intervention?




Bystander

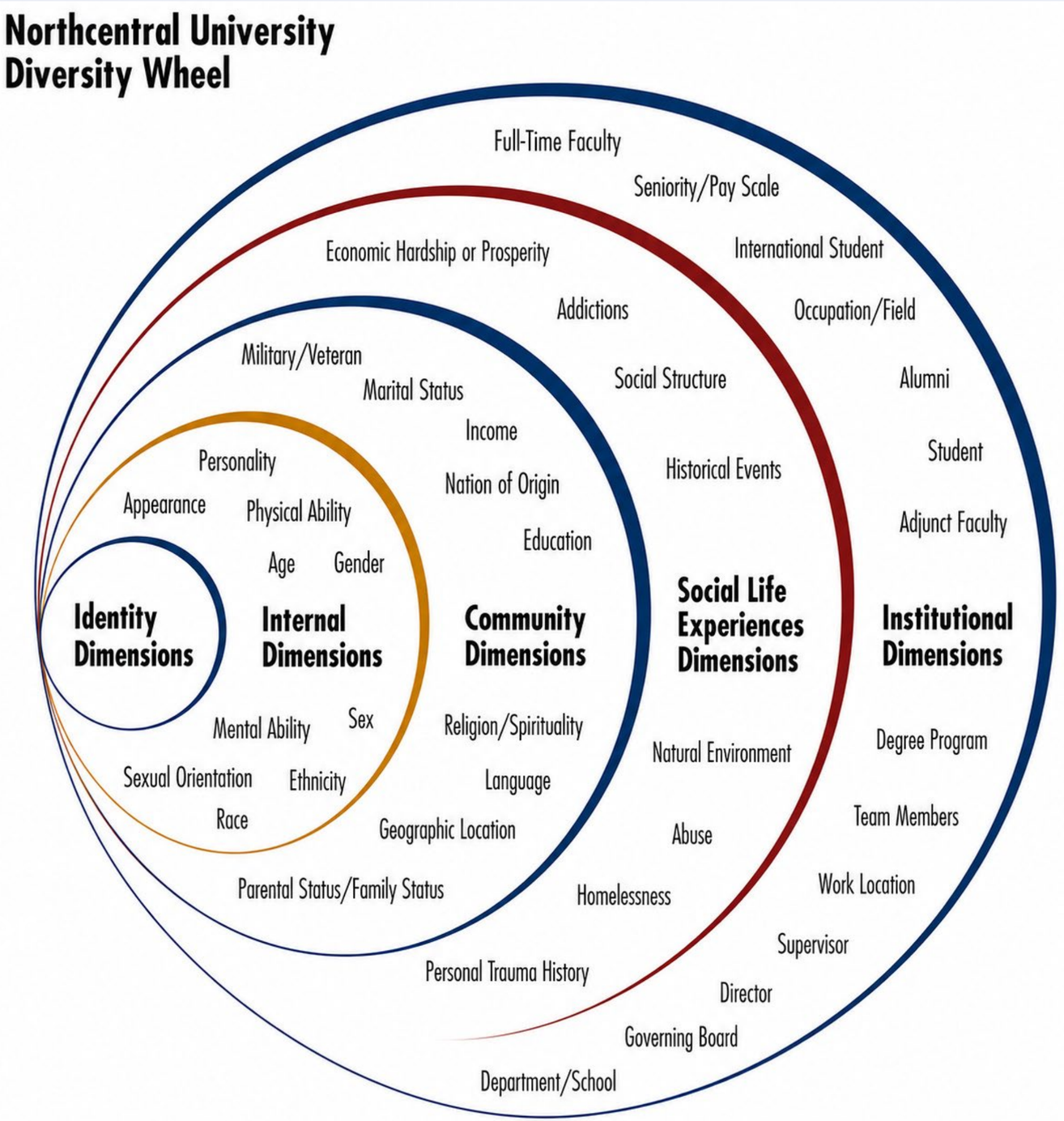
Bystander Intervention

# Understanding Identity

Which identities do you think about MOST often?

Which identities do you think about LEAST often?

Does identity matter in bystand intervention?



# Normalization of Harmful Behaviors

**Harm can be normalized through:**

- Language
- Offensive/Misogynistic "Jokes"
- Media & Pop Culture (e.g. TV, film, music, ads)

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**The most common types of harassment employees at MSU have experienced (according to the Know More Campus Climate Survey):**

- Someone making inappropriate/offensive comments about the person’s or someone else’s body, appearance or sexual activities;
- Someone making sexual remarks or telling jokes/stories that were insulting to the person

# What is the Bystander Effect?



# What is the Bystander Effect?



The more people who are involved in or witness a situation, the less likely someone is to intervene.

# Why are we not intervening?

Social Norms & Pressure

Power & Identity

It's not my business!

I am worried about retaliation

I don't know how to

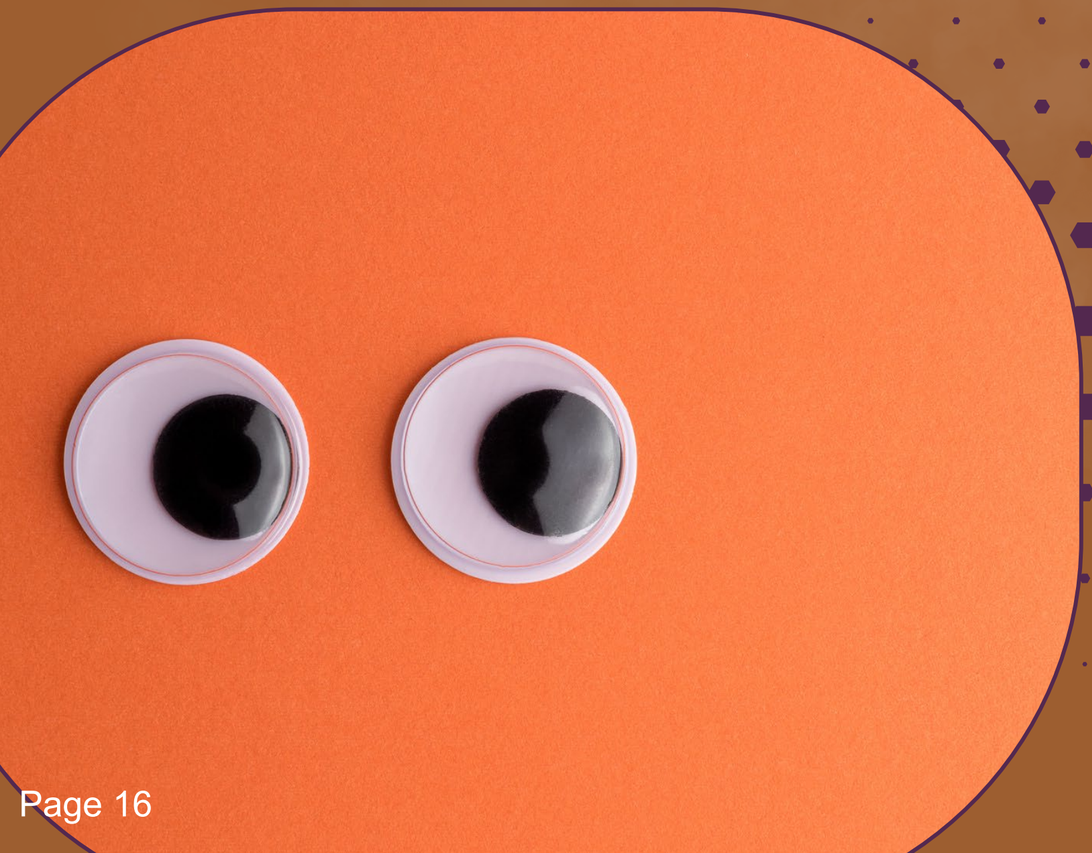
What if I am wrong?

# 5 Steps to Intervention



- Notice the Event
- Evaluate the Situation
- Take Responsibility
- Know How to Help
- Take Action!

# Notice the Event



**Questions:**

- What is happening around me?
- Does anyone look uncomfortable?

**Actions:**

- Pay attention and look around
- Be aware of potential signs of harm
- Pay attention to body language, tone of voice

# Evaluate the Situation




**Questions:**

- If a situation is unclear, what do I need to know to move forward?
- What would I want others to do if I was in that situation?

**Actions:**

- If a situation is unclear, there may still be a problem.
  - Ask others
  - Look around to see if others are concerned
- **Trust your gut**

# Take Responsibility



**Questions:**

- What is holding me back?
- Can I intervene safely?
- Is this an emergency?

**Actions:**

- Make a plan
- Consider the benefits of intervening - by being the first person to intervene, you are empowering others to as well!

**NOTE:** Fight, Flight or Freeze

# Know How to Help



**Questions:**

- Do I have the skills I need to intervene?
- What intervention can I employ for this situation?

**Actions:**

- Understand what is happening in your community
- Know your own limits and preferences
- Use Bystander Intervention styles (stay tuned!)

# Take Action!



**Questions:**

- Am I ready?
- Am I safe?

## Actions:

- Do the thing!
- Follow through!

# A Review: 5 Steps to Intervention



- Notice the Event
- Evaluate the Situation
- Take Responsibility
- Know How to Help
- Take Action!

# Bystander Intervention Styles



# Intervention Styles



## Delegate

Asking another person to intervene or help you intervene



## Distract

De-escalating the situation by drawing attention away from the problem



## Direct

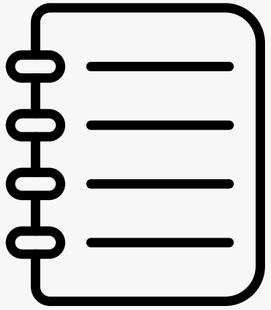
Putting yourself into the situation and addressing the problem

# Intervention Styles



## Delay

Follow up with the person who was harmed and ask how they are doing



## Document

Document the situation/incident

# Additional Tips...

- Try to stay calm
- Do not raise your voice and escalate the situation

- Don't be accusatory
- Respond to what you are seeing
- Use "I" statement

- Take care of yourself; know your limits
- Intervene safely

# Costs & Benefits

**What are the benefits of intervening?**

- Break social norms
- Help someone in need
- Prevent the situation from escalating

# Costs & Benefits

**What can happen if you don't intervene?**

- Allow this behavior to continue
- Someone might get hurt

# Costs & Benefits

**What if I'm wrong and it's not a problem?**

- Nobody is hurt
- You had good intentions
- Everybody moves on with their day

# Scenario 1

At a monthly district meeting you see Toni (a new employee) and Logan (who has been with Extension for quite some time) having a conversation prior to the start of the meeting outside in the hall. Since Toni and Logan do not work within your institute you are unfamiliar with the situation they are talking about, but you can tell the conversation is taking a turn as Logan raises their voice at Toni and says, "Ugh. It's always so hard to work with people like you." Toni's face becomes flustered and they begin to apologize and remind Logan they are still learning.

- **What would you do? What bystander style(s) would you use, if any?**
- **What factor(s) does identity play in this scenario? (The people in the scenario and your own)**

# Scenario 2

At one of your monthly workshops, when introducing the guest speaker, a community partner makes an inappropriate joke about the guest speaker's gender. You can tell that the guest speaker and the attendees were uncomfortable.

- **What would you do? What bystander style(s) would you use, if any?**
- **What factor(s) does identity play in this scenario? (The people in the scenario and you own)**

# Scenario 3

Shaun just joined as a new Extension specialist. On their first day, Shaun explained to their colleagues that they use “they, them” pronouns. During a meeting, another extension specialist keeps using “she and her” pronouns when referring to Shaun.

- **What would you do? What bystander style(s) would you use, if any?**
- **What factor(s) does identity play in this scenario? (The people in the scenario and your own)**

# Free & Exempt Resources

## Impacted Individual(s)

### *Center for Survivors*

Sexual misconduct services:
therapy, advocacy, crisis line & crisis chat

(517) 372-6666
general@msu.edu

### *MSU Safe Place*

Relationship violence and stalking services:
counseling, shelter, advocacy, safety planning

(517) 355-3551
general@msu.edu

### Sexual Assault Healthcare Program

Sexual assault medical examinations:
including medical treatment and evidence collection.

(517) 353-2700
Student Services Building Suite 237

### MI Statewide Sexual Assault Hotline

Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence;

1-855-VOICES4
mcedsv.org

# Free & Exempt Resources

## General Student

### Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)

Individual, Relationship and Group Counseling

(517) 372-8270 (24/7)
caps.msu.edu

### Gender and Sexuality Campus Center

Educational, Social and Support Programming for LBGTQ+ MSU Community Members

(517) 353-9520
gscc.msu.edu

### University Ombudsperson

Assistance to any student or employee in resolving conflicts and disputes within the University

(517) 353-8830
ombud.msu.edu
ombud@msu.edu

# Office for Student Support and Accountability (OSSA)

## Report Potential Misconduct

Students, faculty, staff and members of the general public may report alleged student misconduct (**other than RVSM**) by students via OSSA's public reporting tool.

(517) 884-0789

conduct@msu.edu

## Care and Intervention Team

If you or someone you know needs support, is distressed, or exhibits concerning behavior, help by making a referral to CAIT

Emergencies: 911

Referral: ossa.msu.edu/report

Resources available at poe.msu.edu/resources

# Resources
# Faculty & Staff

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Counseling, emotional wellness and family services for faculty, staff, retirees and graduate student employees

(517) 355-4506
eap.msu.edu

## Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence is dedicated to the empowerment of all the state's survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

(517) 347-7000
mcedsv.org

tinyurl.com/MSUBystander

# Contact Us

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empower@msu.edu

@MSUPOE

@MSUPOE