Bystanders and Bias: Intervention for an Inclusive Community

Middlesex Community College
Professional Day
April 3, 2014
Goals of Today’s Program

• For participants to gain an understanding of what bystander intervention is and the positive impact on the community.
• For participants to learn strategies and tools for intervening when they witness behavior that does not support MCC’s goals and policies.
What is Bystander Intervention?

• A bystander is someone who witnesses or is aware of behavior, language or situations that are or could be dangerous, inappropriate or harmful to the community.

• An active bystander is someone who intervenes to stop or assist with the dangerous, appropriate or harmful behavior, language or situation.
What ways are Bystander Interventions used?

• To intervene in emergency situations
• To stop or redirect language or behavior that is inappropriate, discriminatory and/or harmful to the community
• To report criminal activity
• To stop and prevent dating violence, domestic violence and sexual assault
• To affirm good behavior and language
Why do colleges & universities utilize Bystander Intervention?

• Active bystanders can affirm the norms, values and inclusive nature of the institution.
• Primary prevention efforts for alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault, dating violence and domestic violence.
• Immediate response to incidents, displays of behavior and language.
How does Bystander Intervention further MCC’s goals & mission?

• Confronts behavior that is against the Code of Conduct, the Affirmative Action Plan, and or against the value of inclusion.
• Affirms the values of an inclusive community
• Promotes community building, accountability, responsibility, intercultural conversations and engagement from students, faculty & staff.
What types of Bias exist?

- Unconscious bias
- Conscious bias
- Unintentional discrimination
- Intentional discrimination
- Bias based on role or position at the College
- Lack of knowledge about cultural norms and expectations
The College’s Policy on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity & Diversity

Protected Classifications:

- Race
- National Origin
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Color
- Gender
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Disability
- Genetic Information
- Military Service
- Retaliation
Tips for Active Bystanders

1. Assess the Safety Risk
2. Timing is Everything
3. Location, Location, Location
4. Proceed with Caution and Compassion
5. Display Respect by Listening
6. Understand your own Biases and Triggers
7. Know your Resources
Scenario 1

You are teaching your class as usual and there is a lively discussion about current issues. One of the students in the class said they would never use the same bathroom as a transgender (using a slur) because they “don’t want to catch STDs.”

What do you do?

Who other than you can be the active bystander?

A verbal argument has ensued, what is your next step?
Scenario 2

You are walking out of the building when you hear two students engaged in a conversation that sounds like it is getting “heated.”

What do you do?

Who other than you can be the active bystander?

What is your next step?
Scenario 3

You over hear two students calling each other the “N” word. The students seem to do this in a casual way. Several students around them seem uncomfortable about the word.

What do you do?

Who other than you can be the active bystander?

What is your next step?
Dealing with Sensitive Issues Reported to You

• **Sympathy & reassurance**
• **Understand** his/her safety risk
• **Provide** him/her with their options
• **Provide** assistance with a short-term plan
• **Obtain** important details about the incident
• **Report** to appropriate College officials
• **Take care of** yourself post-incident
Dealing with Sensitive Issues Reported to You

- Most faculty, staff, managers & supervisors see these types of issues only rarely and have limited experience handling them.
- If you talk to the accused person, you may trigger further abuse, harassment or retaliation.
- We are federally obligated to conduct a prompt & equitable, thorough investigation by trained staff.
- Liability issues for not reporting incidents.
Resources

• Alisa Chapman, Director of Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
  – 781-280-3620
  – chapmana@middlesex.mass.edu

• Daniel Martin, Director of Public Safety
  – 781-589-0165
  – martind@middlesex.mass.edu

• Darcy Orellana, Affirmative Action Officer
  – 781-280-3559
  – orellanad@middlesex.mass.edu
Questions?