Bystander Intervention

Members’ observation of a high-risk situation (i.e., a situation that may precede a negative experience), and how they would intervene to diffuse or stop the behavior or remove a potential victim from the event.

Bystander Interventions aim to reduce violence by encouraging individuals to intervene in a safe and effective manner when they hear or see circumstances that could lead to violence. The Department of Defense strives to develop individuals to safely intervene to diffuse or stop inappropriate behaviors or remove a potential victim from a potential event. Below are favorable and unfavorable indicators and outcomes that may be present within an organization. Leaders should focus on promoting those favorable behaviors that will foster a positive organizational culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members safely take action and help someone who may be a target of a sexual assault</td>
<td>Resistance or fear to address rude, inconsiderate offensive humor or unprofessional behaviors (e.g., comments and jokes)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strong group norms and a sense of belonging encouraging young members to speak up about violence and sexist language</td>
<td>Increase in peer’s alcohol consumption and risky behaviors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leaders attending and supporting training events</td>
<td>Reports of unwanted sexual behaviors (e.g., intentional touching, exposure to sexual situations)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sextist behaviors (e.g. comments, jokes) are addressed promptly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Reduction in violence and inappropriate behaviors</td>
<td>Threats of violence (e.g., sexual assault, hazing rituals, bullying, or suicide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in recognizing abusive behaviors towards men, women, and children prior to an incident</td>
<td>Low retention rate, fewer new employee hires due to work environment; increase in requests for reassignments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decreased alcohol/drug related incidents that might have resulted in a sexual assault</td>
<td>Serious short and long-term health consequences including physical injury, poor mental health and chronic physical health problems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members discuss issues and model positive behaviors by military leaders</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stronger sense of teamwork, camaraderie and community involvement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bystander Intervention Strategies

This below strategies can help to address negative behaviors.

Develop programs to prevent incidents with a focus on bystander intervention.

- Include all members in sexual assault and other prevention initiatives and training.
- Provide time lines and measures of success for programs to determine their effectiveness.
- Educate members on techniques as to how and when to intervene (before, during, or after a negative incident).
- Provide members an opportunity to express concerns for their physical safety and potential social stigmas surrounding bystander intervention, then discuss how to overcome these hurdles.
- Display posters, videos, and other forms of media to influence attitudes and beliefs about bystander intervention.

Ensure effective strategies are used to educate and influence Service Members knowledge and attitudes.

- Train members to identify high risk situations to recognize when a sexual assault is likely to occur.
- Discuss the pros and cons of intervention in different scenarios.
- Provide training techniques on how and when to intervene (before, during, or after a sexual assault).
- Provide realistic scenarios; have members determine a plan of action and discuss options.
- Create a commitment agreement for members to read and sign as part of their allegiance.
- Dispel sexual assault myths and stereotyping by educating service members on the facts.
- Hold multi-session programs to improve bystander attitudes and increase helping behaviors.
- Provide time lines and measures of success for programs to determine their effectiveness.
- Create realistic training scenarios members find relatable and may encounter.
Resources


Additional Resources

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program
  Department of Defense DIRECTIVE NUMBER 6495.01 January 23, 2012
  Incorporating Change 3, Effective April 11, 2017

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program Procedures
  Department of Defense DIRECTIVE NUMBER 6495.02 March 28, 2013
  Incorporating Change 3, Effective May 24, 2017

Military OneSource http://www.militaryonesource.mil/
http://www.sapr.mil/
https://www.safehelpline.org/
www.defenseculture.mil
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/index.html

USCG
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program
  COMDTINST M1754.10E

USMC
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program
  MARINE CORPS ORDER 1752-5B

USN
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program
  OPNAVINST 1752.1C

USAF
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program
  AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 90-6001 Incorporating Change 1,

USA
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program
  Army Regulation 600-20, July 24, 2020

Additional Reading

Army SHARP Guidebook: http://www.preventsexualassault.army.mil/

Information and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the U.S. military services, or the Department of Defense.