

Solidarity Syllabus for *Bystander, Upstander*
The Solidarity Is This Podcast

Q: Why is bystander intervention an important act of solidarity?

A: Violence against people of color, LGBTQ communities, immigrants, Muslims, and women is on the rise and occurs around us - on buses and in the subway, at workplaces and in classrooms, and in our own neighborhoods. Bystanders who witness acts of harassment, bullying, and threats of or actual violence can intervene in such situations by focusing on the needs of the person(s) targeted and practicing de-escalation strategies.

Q: What are some contexts in which bystander interventions have been practiced?

A: Bystander intervention has been promoted as an effective strategy in interrupting and de-escalating potentially threatening and violent acts. For example, bystander interventions are often practiced to intervene in situations of sexual assault on college campuses, street harassment, and domestic violence. Increasingly, bystander interventions are being practiced to de-escalate potential acts of hate towards communities of color, Muslims, and LGBTQ individuals.

Q. Have bystander interventions increased since the election?

We know that hate incidents [have been on the rise](#) since the election, thanks to documentation from groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center, Pro Publica and others. Bystander intervention trainings have also been more popular since the election. As the *Bystander, Upstander* episode of Solidarity Is This relates, bystander interventions occurred on a Portland train during Memorial Day weekend. Ricky John Best, Taliesen Myrdden Namkai Meche and Micah David-Cole intervened as a man approached a Muslim woman and her friend and hurled racial slurs at them on a train in [Portland, Oregon](#). Another example occurred at a restaurant in [Olathe, Kansas](#) when Ian Grillot intervened during a shooting rampage that resulted in the murder of Indian American engineer, Srinivas Kuchibhotla.

Q: What are some tips that are helpful in bystander interventions?

A: Here are some tips, drawn from various organizations that have bystander intervention programs, such as [Hollaback!](#) and the [Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition](#):

1. **Talk** to the targeted person. Try to remain calm while engaging in conversation with them or use a distraction technique by asking for the time or directions.
2. **Delegate:** Delegation is when you ask for assistance, for a resource, or for help from a third party. While third parties could include authority figures such as law enforcement, make sure that you consider whether the targeted person would want to interface with law enforcement officials.
3. **Resist** the urge to engage with a dramatic situation. Keep reminding yourself you are there to de-escalate on behalf of the targeted person, not to get drawn into the attacker's scenario.
4. **Document** the incident. Check [Hollaback's](#) tips on how to do this properly make sure to ask the targeted person what they want to do with the recording.
5. Even if you can't act in the moment, you can make a difference for the person who has been harassed by checking in on them after the fact.

Q: Should I get trained on bystander interventions?

A: There are many organizations providing trainings online and in person. It is especially important to be trained in order to try and avoid personal and physical harm during a bystander intervention. We recommend these:

[Hollaback's Five D's Bystander Intervention Trainings](#): You can sign up for **FREE** digital workshops [here](#), using promo code *hollabacksummer*

[Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition's Bystander Intervention Training Script](#)

[Step UP's Bystander Intervention Training Presentations](#)

[Barnard Center for Research on Women's Bystander Intervention For Racist Attacks Video](#)

[National Sexual Violence Resource Center's Bystander Intervention Training Resources](#)

Q. What are three must-read articles on bystander interventions?

A: We recommend:

[After the Portland Tragedy, Bystander Intervention Training is More Important Than Ever Stepping Up to Stop Sexual Assault](#)

[In New York, Activists Train Bystanders to Take Action Against Harassment](#)

[This Is Why Every College Is Talking About Bystander Intervention](#)

Q: *Bystander, Upstander* also discusses the dangerous rise in white nationalism, including in Oregon, which was a backdrop to the tragedy on the Portland train. What are some helpful resources to understand the racial dynamics there?

A: We recommend reading [this interview](#) of Scot Nakagawa by APANO's Joseph-Santos Lyons and [this article](#) in the *Washington Post* by DeNeen L. Brown that identify the complex racial and economic phenomena that shaped the state of Oregon. Scot tells us: "When Oregon was settled in 1844, settlers' fear of Native people and distaste for slavery combined, causing whites to fear that Blacks and Native people would ban together against them." In the decades that followed, Oregon passed racial exclusion laws that prevented people of color from living and working there. Today, with a 76 percent white population, Portland is the [whitest big city](#) in the country.

Oregon's racial history and demographics have also fostered a [climate](#) for white nationalist groups to thrive. [This article](#) on the white terror crisis in *The Huffington Post* recounts the anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant and anti-Black sentiments expressed by many white nationalist groups that are based in Oregon. The article quotes Randy Blazak, a professor and head of the Oregon Coalition Against Hate Crime, who notes that the revitalization of white nationalist groups "...is undoubtedly linked to the political climate."

Check out and support the many groups in Oregon that are organizing communities against white nationalism, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, and xenophobia, including [Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon](#), [Rural Organizing Project](#), [Unite Oregon](#), [Western States Center](#), [Basic Rights Oregon](#), [Causa Oregon](#), and [Momentum Alliance](#).

Solidarity Is This is grateful to Amara Majeed for her assistance with the Solidarity Syllabus.

