

Be the Sixth Player

THE FUNDAMENTALS

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An Introduction to Bystander Interventions

WHAT IS A BYSTANDER INTERVENTION?

Violence, harassment, and related harms can be prevented by creating a healthier community. When bystanders intervene when they see something wrong, it can make hate and harassment less acceptable before it escalates to physical violence. This guide is for fans, families, and community members; it is not a substitute for arena staff, security, emergency response, or 911 in case of emergency. But when we see a small harm that, if unchecked, could escalate into a greater harm or make our community feel like a harmful one – we each have the power to point our communities in a safer direction.

Sometimes, teammates off the court need help to get back on the right path. Other times, others are trying to knock you and your teammates down with hate and harassment. Bystander intervention is the ultimate play for keeping you and your team on the path to sportsmanship and success. The goal is not to be a hero or win an argument; it is to make respect the norm and choose a safe action that helps the person impacted.

Bystanders first need to take care of themselves. When encountering harassment, always assess the situation. Ask yourself: what are you noticing? How will you protect your own safety and the safety of others? Evaluate if intervening in the moment will just escalate, putting the bystander in harm's way.

Bystanders recognize potentially harmful situations and take action to make a positive difference. While those committing the personal fouls are responsible for the harm they cause, bystanders can intervene to protect others, themselves, and their community, making sure that those hurt by hate and harassment are seen and protected.

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THE FUNDAMENTALS · THE 5 D'S

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The 5 D's of Bystander Intervention

Just as basketball players know how to play defense on the court, the best teammates know the 5 Ds of Bystander Intervention:

D

Distract: Derail hate and harassment by distracting from it, either by engaging directly with the person being harassed (not the person causing harm) or talking about something completely unrelated. Force a turnover!

D

Delegate: Asking for a third party to jump in and mediate a bad situation. Look for a delegate who is ready to jump in and tell them clearly as possible the harassment you are experiencing. A parent, a friend, a coach can all act as a referee.

D

Document: For particularly harmful harassment or hate you may need to “review the play.” Take notes or record the harassment. Make sure the person being harassed is receiving help. Always ask the target of the harassment what they want to do with the documentation, and about available resources: then give them the agency to determine next steps.

D

Delay: Even if you can't get into the situation in the moment, check in on someone after harassment or hate—it can make a difference. Some harassment can happen very quickly. Checking in after the fact can help your teammates feel seen and safe. If you weren't sure how to respond in the moment, you can always follow up and make sure that the person who experienced harm knows you support them and that what happened to them wasn't okay.

D

Direct: Sometimes, the best approach is to respond directly to hate or harassment by calling the foul and confronting the person doing the harm. This can be risky, so use it with caution. Be careful not to escalate the situation. At a public event, indirect options like Distract, Delegate, and Delay are usually safest. Direct should be brief, calm, and used only when it will not put you, the targeted person, or others at risk.