

Active bystander – the four D's

January 2024

As a follow up from the Social Safety training, we invite you to participate in the active bystander training. This is organized by the Radboud University. During this concise session (1.5 hours), you will gain insight into how to respond adequately when you witness undesirable behaviour. The training is offered to all employees and supervisors. You can subscribe via gROW:

<https://ru.capp12.nl/events/554>

Summary of the four D's

If you are a witness of undesirable behaviour, you can use one of the four D's to intervene:

- **Direct**
- **Delegate**
- **Distract**
- **Delay**

Direct

Using a direct approach is probably what most people think is required in order to be an active bystander. This is a useful technique where we confront the person exhibiting harmful behaviours or the person who we are concerned about. This could include telling a person to stop yelling at another person.

Delegation

Not everyone is comfortable with being direct, and it is not always safe. Therefore an active bystander can also utilize delegating. This option includes utilizing other people in the community, so you don't feel alone and can assess the situation together. The people we involve could be a peer, or someone with authority or power to intervene.

Distracting

Distracting is the third option, here we just want to stop the potential violence. So we could talk to one or both of the people involved in the tense situation, maybe about a movie we just saw, we could spill a drink, or pretend like we know one of the people and engage in a chat with them that disconnects them from the other person.

Delay

Delay is the last technique and we often do not understand how impactful this option can be. This can be used when we are not able to intervene in the moment, and are concerned about the people involved. We could text or call them and ask them if they are okay. Giving space for someone to talk about experiencing harm even after the incident still counts as intervening and allows you to check on their safety, provide them with emotional support, and possibly provide resources that could help.