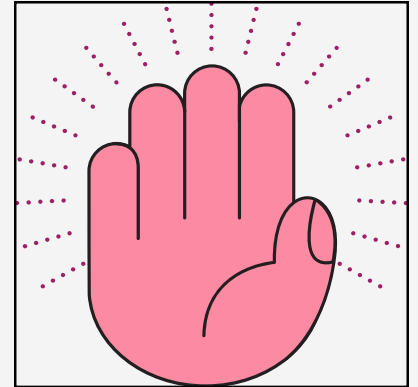


# BYSTANDERSHIP ON CAMPUS

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This month's newsletter focuses on bystandership. We look at how campus safety isn't only shaped by rules and policies, but by how students, faculty, and staff respond to situations of discomfort, harm, or distress. With a closer look at the ABCs and 4 D's of bystander intervention, we highlight how collective responsibility can help build a culture of care and accountability.



## Bystandership and Support Networks on Campus

Conversations around campus safety often focus on policies, committees, or disciplinary action. But safety isn't just about rules, it's also about culture. How do we respond when we see someone in distress? What do we do when a peer crosses a line? Together, these questions reopen public discussion around how safe Indian educational institutions truly are, and what mechanisms are in place not just to respond to complaints but also to prevent harm in the first place.

They also prompt a broader question: What is the role of those who are neither the victim nor the accused? Bystanders—whether they are peers, staff or administrators often find themselves at the edge of such events. Yet silence or inaction, even if unintentional, can contribute to an environment where misconduct goes unchecked. Accountability, then, must extend beyond formal disciplinary measures to include reflection on collective responsibility.

## What is Bystander Intervention?

Bystander intervention is a community-based prevention approach that encourages individuals to safely step in when they witness behaviour that could lead to sexual harassment, violence, or abuse. It also involves offering support to those who have experienced harm. At IIMA, creating a safe and respectful campus environment is a shared responsibility and bystanders play a crucial role in that effort.



As bystanders, we may witness moments where someone appears uncomfortable or at risk. Choosing to step in with care can interrupt potential harm and contribute to a culture where respect, consent, and accountability are actively upheld.

Importantly, intervening doesn't always mean confrontation. It can take many forms: creating a distraction, interrupting a situation, offering someone a way out, not laughing at a sexist or violent joke, or later checking in with someone who seemed uncomfortable. It might also mean having a quiet, honest conversation with a peer whose behaviour raised concern or asking for help from friends, faculty, or security.

Understanding how gender, power, and social dynamics operate in these moments can make interventions more effective and compassionate. Being an active bystander is not about "rescuing" someone in fact it's about showing care, recognising harm, and helping to build a culture where everyone feels safe and respected.

### **How to Be an Active Bystander**

Being an active bystander means noticing when something feels off whether it's a troubling comment, unwanted attention, or signs of distress and choosing to respond rather than look away. You don't always have to intervene directly. Sometimes, it means getting support from a friend, staff member, or someone in a position of authority.

Bystander intervention has been shown to reduce the likelihood of sexual harassment and assault. When individuals step in early and safely, they help disrupt patterns of harm and signal that such behaviour is not acceptable in our communities.

## THE ABC APPROACH



### Assess for safety

Before intervening, consider whether you can do so without putting yourself at risk. Your safety matters too.



### Be in a group

If possible, intervene with others or inform someone who can help. Collective action is often more effective and safer.



### Care for the person affected

Check in with them if you can. A simple “Are you okay?” can go a long way in offering support.

## THE 4 D’S OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

### 1. DIRECT

🎯 Speak up. Use clear words or actions to address the situation.

“That’s not okay—this person is too intoxicated.”

“I don’t appreciate those kinds of jokes.”

✅ Use when you feel safe and confident.

### 2. DISTRACT

🔄 Diffuse the moment. Interrupt without confrontation.

“Hey, can you help me find my phone?”

“I think someone called the police about the noise.”

⚠️ Good for tense moments where directness may escalate things.

### 3. DELEGATE

📞 Get support. Bring in someone with authority.

- Ask a friend, RA, faculty, or campus security.
- Call emergency services if someone is in danger.
- 🤝 You’re not alone. Ask for help.

### 4. DELAY

🕒 Circle back. Support someone after the fact. “Are you okay?”

“I noticed something earlier—how are you feeling?”

Suggest support services.

💬 It’s never too late to check in.

## ON-CAMPUS CARE & SUPPORT

If you have experienced sexual harassment or witnessed inappropriate behaviour, please reach out.

**Email:** [chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in](mailto:chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in)

**Phone:** 97129 15533

## MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING AT IIMA

Confidential counselling is available if you:

- Have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment
- Are feeling distressed, anxious, or overwhelmed
- Need emotional support or someone to talk to
- Are struggling with stress or mental health

**Email:** [iimaonsite@ltohelp.net](mailto:iimaonsite@ltohelp.net)

**Toll-Free:** 1800 2588 121 / 1800 2588 999

The monthly newsletter from the [Committee for Managing Gender Issues \(CMGI\)](#) is an attempt to initiate conversations on sexual harassment. We would love to have the community participate. [Please reach out to Geetika Sharma at \[geetikas@iima.ac.in\]\(mailto:geetikas@iima.ac.in\) for queries, submissions, and/or feedback.](#)

If you feel you have been subjected to sexual harassment or if you would like to make any suggestions regarding curbing sexual harassment on campus, please reach out to us at: Email: [chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in](mailto:chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in). Please note that any communication with the CMGI is strictly confidential.