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ACTIVE BYSTANDER PACKAGE

Young Peoples' Consultation 2024



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About

This research was carried out in response to feedback from young people that the term active bystander was not easily understood. Some young people believed it meant engaging in risky behaviour or not helping at all. When speaking about the 5Ds of bystander intervention (Distract, Document, Delay, Delegate, Direct) some young people had highlighted confusion around their meaning and what it would look like in real-life scenarios.

Focus groups were conducted to explore whether these views were shared by other young people and to find ways to make our active bystander resources clearer and more relatable.

Thank you to the young people who generously shared their experiences and perspectives with us, and to the practitioners who supported the facilitation of the sessions.

Methodology

We conducted a series of focus groups to gather qualitative data on young people's understanding of the term active bystander and the 5Ds of bystander intervention. Four focus groups were held: one in a school setting and three in youth work settings, with a total of 27 young people.

Findings

UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM ACTIVE BYSTANDER

Awareness of the term varied, with some young people familiar with it from workshops or online content, while others had never heard it before.

Initial confusion included misconceptions that an active bystander was someone engaging in risk-taking behaviour rather than preventing harm.

After explanation and discussion, most young people understood and could use the term confidently. However, some noted that practitioners referring to "bystander" without also using the term "active" added to their confusion.

The top voted positive alternative phrases suggested by the young people were "Good Friend", "Action Taker", and "Influencer".

One group raised concerns about the perception of "grassing" and being "dafties".

FEEDBACK ON THE 5Ds

The young people liked the structure and alliteration the 5Ds provided.

Delegate and document were highlighted as being confusing and overly formal. As a result of this they thought they would be difficult to apply in real-life scenarios.

Confidence in applying the 5Ds varied. While some felt capable, others found it too complicated to recall under pressure.

The young people suggested the use of simpler, informal language with relatable examples and easier terminology to make the steps more young person friendly.

Outcome

USE OF THE TERM ACTIVE BYSTANDER

As the young people demonstrated the ability to understand and use the term active bystander after a brief explanation, we will continue to use it within our resources, keeping it consistent with other prevention frameworks. We will address the misuse of the term "bystander" in practitioner training and our resources, while also making it more relatable to young people by connecting it to the idea of being a "good friend". Additionally, our activities will include sessions to explore the perceived blurred line between being a bystander and being an active bystander.

THE 5Ds OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

Feedback revealed that while the 5Ds provided a helpful structure, some young people found the terms confusing and not youth-friendly. To improve accessibility, we have adapted the framework to produce the **STEPS** to being an active bystander approach:

Step Up – Recognise the problem and intervene directly.

Tell An Adult – Get help from a trusted adult such as a youth worker or teacher.

Evidence – Take notes of what has happened, including what you saw, heard, or know about the situation.

Pull Attention Away – Take the focus off the problem and shift their attention to something safer.

Support Later – Follow up and check in with the person after the situation.

By implementing the STEPS approach, we aim to create resources that are relatable and effective for young people, empowering them to act as active bystanders. We will continue to engage with young people to refine our tools and ensure they meet their needs.



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