

## What is an Engaged Bystander?

As members of the MTI College community, every student and employee plays a critical role in preventing crime - particularly crimes that are sexual in nature - through their words and actions. An engaged bystander is someone who intervenes when he/she observes or becomes aware of behaviors that are disrespectful, harmful, or promote sexual violence. Research has shown that engaged bystanders are crucial in preventing sexual violence, because they can minimize a situation early and stop behaviors from escalating. This being said, safety is critical when deciding how and when to respond as an engaged bystander. Further, given that every situation and every individual is different, it is a decision that each person must make for him or herself.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center ([www.nsvrc.org/](http://www.nsvrc.org/)) offers the following suggestions:

When considering how to respond, ask yourself:

1. Is there a problem?
2. Does someone need help?
3. What are my options?
4. Is it safe for me to intervene? If not, take action by getting help.

In addition, there are many ways an engaged bystander can make a difference. Some examples include the following:

- Speak up when you hear sexual innuendos or jokes about rape, because sexual violence is never funny.
- When out with friends or at a party, make sure your friends get home safely.
- Be a role model online (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and other social media) by calling out inappropriate behavior and showing support for survivors by challenging violent and abusive comments, alerting the authorities if you see potentially illegal behavior, or posting articles and information that talk about healthy relationships and healthy sexuality.
- Finally, while it is better to get involved before sexual violence actually happens, you can also be an engaged bystander by being supportive and believing victims when they disclose abuse.