

***Introduction to Performance Education Theory***

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## Beyond the “Bully”

As a performance education troupe, your goal is to prevent bullying, harassment, and related violence at your school. There are many different perspectives and philosophies about how this work should be done. Many programs attempt to prevent bullying by teaching students skills for standing up for themselves when they are confronted with “bullies”. Some programs work with teachers, staff, and administrators at schools to identify “bullies”, and then work to get “bullies” professional help for their behavior. Some programs train peer mediators to bring the “bully” and the victim together so that they can try to mediate a solution to the issue. Other programs train students to act as student hall monitors, playground monitors, or lunch monitors, to bring “bullies” to the attention of adults.

What do all of these programs have in common? They all focus on identifying and interrupting the behavior of so-called “bullies”. So what is a “bully”? The Pacific Violence Prevention Institute (PVPI) defines a bully as:

***Bully:*** An individual identified as having a pattern of using violent, aggressive, or intimidating behavior to gain control over others.

Most students can identify the handful of students at their school that fit this description. Stereotypically, this person is a large, or in some way physically or verbally intimidating student, who roams the halls terrorizing his/her victims. Research has shown that students who are identified as “bullies” are often victims of abuse themselves, do not have close connections with family, friends, or teachers, and may have a dangerously low self-esteem. In fact, the behavior of students fitting this definition is very similar



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to those who demonstrate a pattern of domestic or relational violence (Olweus, 2003). It is very difficult, and usually not very safe, for students to take effective steps to intervene in the behavior of a “bully”, because in many cases, this student’s behavior requires professional intervention. Many school districts have policies and procedures in place to identify these students, and refer them to mental health professionals, where they can be properly evaluated and treated.

While the stereotypical “bully” does exist, and does cause problems at every school, in our work with countless high school and middle school students we have learned that this is not the main problem. We have learned that most students are able to identify the “bullies” and avoid them, thereby avoiding victimization. Only a small percentage of students are actually victimized by the defined “bully” on a regular basis, and while it is highly important that adults at school are able to recognize and intervene in this type of violence, there is another type of violence that is far more prevalent, that the vast majority of students that we work with report experiencing as a victim and as a perpetrator, practically on a daily basis. The PVPI has defined this type of violence as **Bullying and Harassment Behavior**:

***Bullying and Harassment Behavior:*** Any type of violent behavior (emotional, physical, sexual) that is used to gain approval from one’s peers, gain control over one’s peers, or that creates and unsafe or unwelcome environment.

While this definition may seem very similar to the definition of a “bully”, there are some important differences. One of the most important differences is that most people engage in bullying and harassment behavior, while very few are identified to have a pattern of violent behavior. The goal of bullying and harassment behavior is often to gain approval from peers. Bullying and harassment behavior may occur without provocation, however, in some cases the perpetrator may feel that they are justified in their behavior, based on some sort of interaction that the perpetrator has had with the victim in the past. Those who engage in bullying and harassment behavior are usually more popular with their peers than students who are simply mean or aggressive.

There are many behaviors that constitute bullying and harassment behavior. Some of the most common forms are not physically violent. To name a few, these behaviors include spreading rumors, putting people down, shunning, telling inappropriate or offensive jokes, or using words that may be offensive to individuals or groups of people. Bullying and harassment behavior can be committed whether the victim or target is present or not. These behaviors are so prevalent that they create an atmosphere that makes it easier for acts of violence to escalate. In

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many cases fighting or other forms of physical violence can be traced back to acts of violence that may seem much less severe.

By focusing this prevention program on bullying and harassment behavior, rather than focusing on the “bully”, your troupe will be able to address a problem that affects everyone. At one time or another everyone has experienced bullying and harassment behavior, as victims, perpetrators, or as bystanders, so your troupe will be able to approach this topic with its audience in a guilt-free manner, and rather than lecturing its audience about how they shouldn’t be bullies, it will be able to work with its audience to develop solutions to a problem that everyone experiences.

The following chapters will explore the theory, philosophy, and methods used by the PVPI, whenever it develops violence prevention programs. This information will help you and your troupe develop a violence prevention program that will meet all of these goals.

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## **Creating Appropriate Programs for Your Audience**

**A**s a performance education troupe you will be exploring some very sensitive issues with your audience—issues such as bullying and harassment, relational violence, and school violence. If your program is to be successful it will be necessary to take into account the maturity of your audience, and the exposure that your audience has to the subject.

When developing a program it is important to always keep in mind the following theory:

# Stages of Change Theory

**T**he Stages of Change Theory is a model of behavior change. Since our ultimate goal is to change the behavior of our audience, it is important to be familiar with this model. The model describes the process that we all go through when making important changes in behavior. All of the stages are important and we learn from each stage. Repeating stages is normal (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984).

## **Stages of Change:**

### **1) Pre-contemplation**

- Subject is unaware or under-aware that a problem exists
- May deny that a problem exists
- **Goal is to build awareness of the problem**

### **2) Contemplation**

- Subject acknowledges that there is a problem
- May struggle to understand the problem
- **Goal is to provide support for change and to make change seem possible and attractive**

### **3) Preparation**

- Subject is determined to take some deliberate action to correct the problem
- May have taken some action but with no intentional plan
- **Goal is to assist them in finding change strategies that are appropriate and effective**
- **Goal is to focus on positive expectations**

### **4) Action**

- Person begins to modify his/her behavior or environment to overcome the problem
- **Goal is to assist in appraisal of different strategies for change**
- **Goal is to recognize the action taken**

### **5) Maintenance**

- Subject consolidates their gains and commits to maintaining new behavior
- **Goal is to support behavioral gains**
- **Goal is to prevent relapse**

### **6) Relapse**

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- Temporarily returning to previous behavior
- Relapse is a NORMAL and a TEMPORARY part of change

Most of the people that you will be working with will be in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stages, so it is important that you design programs with messages that audience members are ready to hear. Too often programs over-estimate their audience's developmental readiness for change.

Two examples of developmentally over-estimating the target audience are "Just Say No" type campaigns, and fear-based campaigns. Telling an audience to "Just Say No" is a flawed method of prevention that doesn't take into account change theory. Telling people to "Just Say No" is telling them to take an action (the action being "saying no"). If the population that the campaign is directed toward is in the pre-contemplative, contemplative, or preparation stage, they are not developmentally ready to take an action, and the campaign will be lost on the target audience.

The goal of fear-based campaigns is to scare the target audience into taking an action by making them afraid of the consequences of *not* taking an action. One example of this flawed approach is traditional Sexual Assault Prevention education for men. For many years the message geared towards men about sexual assault was "Don't rape women because you will end up in jail". This seems like it would be an effective approach because most people would not **knowingly** commit an act that would result in imprisonment.

However, in our experience with working with men to prevent sexual assault, most men **don't** know what actions qualify as sexual assault. Many of the men that we've worked with don't know that the legal definition of rape includes coercion, or that legal consent for sex cannot be given if either party is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or is otherwise incapacitated. Usually their perception of rape is that of a stranger attacking a woman at night in a poorly lit area. Most men would never commit an act such as this.

The fact is that the vast majority of rapes are committed by an acquaintance—a friend or partner of the victim. Often times the perpetrator does not even know that he has committed rape because their idea of rape is the stranger-rape myth. These men are in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stages of change and are not even aware of what constitutes sexual assault.

The efficacy of any campaign that tries to scare men into *not* committing rape will be limited because the success of the campaign relies on the

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audience already having some degree of awareness of the issue, which in most cases they will not have. Rather than stressing the consequences associated with rape, a program should attempt to build awareness of what constitutes rape. Only when an appropriate level of awareness is reached can the use of consequences any real benefit.

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### ***Reflection Questions***

- 1) *How do the Stages of Change apply to educating students about bullying, harassment, and related violence?*
- 2) *Why should we keep the Stages of Change in mind when we develop programs?*

# The Ally Process

**W**hen developing programs surrounding violence prevention, diversity building, prejudice reduction, and community building, our main goal has to be changing **bystander behavior** into **ally behavior**.

**Bystander:** *A person who witnesses an event but is not actively involved in the event.*

Bystanders are present in 85% of bullying/school violence episodes (Craig & Pepler, 1997).

**Ally:** *A person who acts against an act of violence, oppression or mistreatment that is not directed at them.*

Research has shown that when a bystander intervenes in an act of bullying or harassment 57% of the time the bullying or harassment will stop within 10 seconds (Craig & Pepler, 1997). In other words, the majority of the time an ally can quickly stop an act of bullying or harassment. We must give people the skills to move from bystanders to **ALLIES**. Based on the stages of change the **Ally Process** has been developed. The Ally Process is a developmental approach to promoting ally behavior that allows nearly everyone to be an ally:

## **The Ally Process**

Be Aware

Get Educated

Gain Skills

Take Action

Develop Support

It is important to note that the Ally Process is not a step-by-step guide to becoming an ally. It is a process that allows people in any of the Stages of Change to practice ally behavior. It also promotes a developmental increase in ally behavior, allowing someone who is in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stages to practice ally behavior, without being pressured to take action that they are not developmentally ready to take.

One commonly held belief is that if someone witnesses an act of violence or prejudice and does not take any action, then that person is also at fault for violence or prejudice. This is the “If you aren’t part of the solution, you are part of the problem” attitude. If we are to be effective health educators we have to move away from this attitude. The groups that our programs target are not developmentally ready to be told that if

they don't take action they are part of the problem. This will only serve to make them feel guilty about not taking action. Guilt is not an effective tool for prevention. People do not like to feel guilty and this guilt may actually prevent some people from practicing ally behavior in the future.

It is more effective to take a developmental approach by promoting awareness, educating the audience about the problem, and teaching them some skills to deal with the problems (see ally process). Once people start to become aware, and then are given the skills to take action, they will take action when they are ready to.

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**Reflection Questions**

- 1) *"The Ally Process is a developmental approach to promoting ally behavior." Discuss this statement.*
- 2) *How can changing bystander behavior into ally behavior help to prevent **future** incidents of violence?*

## Standpoint

**W**henever you are working to change behavior, it is important to be aware of the factors that influence and encourage behavior, and factors that can become barriers to behavior change. It is always important to keep in mind the **standpoint** of each individual audience member. Put simply, standpoint is the place from which we view the world. Our standpoint influences our attitudes and beliefs about the world, and the way that we interact with it. We are all born innocent, without negative attitudes and beliefs about groups of people that are different. Based on where we were born, what part of the world we live in, our generation, our economic class, our faith, our ethnicity, or the attitudes and beliefs of our family and friends, we all see the world from a unique perspective (Fabiano, 2001).



**Image 1:** We are all born innocent. By no fault of our own we absorb the negative and positive attitudes and beliefs of those around us, and learn to view the world through those lenses.

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For example, a child who grew up in the Deep South of the U.S. in the 1950's would be likely to have very different attitudes and beliefs about people of color than a child who grew up in the Northwest in the 1990's. The child who grew up in the South in the 50's didn't have the opportunity to choose the environment where he/she grew up, but all the same would have absorbed the attitudes and beliefs that permeated the society at the time. Conversely, the child that grew up in the Northwest in the 90's didn't choose to be born in a society seemingly more open to diversity.

Another way to look at this idea is to imagine someone who is very conscious of protecting the environment. This person always recycles, and only buys biodegradable products. His home is heated by solar power and he grows all of his vegetables in his garden, where he only uses organic gardening methods. Even though this person does everything in his power to live in a clean, healthy environment, while riding his bike to work everyday his lungs are damaged by breathing in the smog from all of the drivers on the road.

Just like the environmentally conscious man described above believed that the world would be a better off without pollution, most people believe that the world would be better off without bullying, harassment, school violence, and prejudice. Many people work to be sensitive and accepting of diversity, and work to make the world a safer place for everyone. However, there are attitudes and beliefs that permeate our society, and no matter how hard you work, some of those attitudes and beliefs are absorbed.

Everyone that you will be working with will come from a unique background, and will have a different standpoint. It is important to keep in mind that people who have negative attitudes and beliefs about certain groups of people are usually not bad people. Without any choice, they have a background where they absorbed these attitudes and beliefs from those around them, creating a standpoint that supports these attitudes and beliefs. If you are going to change the attitudes and beliefs of each individual, it is important to recognize each individual's standpoint, and work to change their attitudes and beliefs, without attacking the individual.

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### ***Reflection Questions***

- 1) Why is it important to consider the standpoints of our audience members when we develop programs?*
- 2) How can someone's standpoint influence their behavior?*

## **P.I.E.**

The last guideline for creating appropriate programs is described by the acronym PIE. PIE stands for Positive, Inclusive, and Empowering. It is important that we always gauge the appropriateness of our programming by asking ourselves if the program is PIE.

### **Positive**

All programs should be positive. This is often difficult because the issues that we are addressing are usually not positive. As previously discussed it is important to stay away from fear-based programs and “Just say no” programs. It is also important to leave your audience feeling hopeful that there is a solution to these issues, and that the problems presented are not so daunting as to make them feel that they should not even try to take action.

### **Inclusive**

Programs should be inclusive. It is important to design your programs so that they don't alienate any groups, and to try to develop characters that most audience members can relate to. Although not always realistic, it is good practice to try to develop your characters so that every member of the audience can relate to **at least** one character's attitudes, beliefs, or experiences. This will not always be possible, so it is important in facilitation to point out places where scenes are not inclusive, and discuss reasons for the lack of inclusivity. For example, if a troupe does not have any members who are people of color, and the troupe is doing a program about racism, it may be important to point out to the audience some of the difficulties of discussing racism without having voices of those who are most affected by racism.

### **Empowering**

Some of these issues are very overwhelming. It is easy for audience members to feel overwhelmed, and to feel that they can't make a difference because the problems are so big. Programs should always try to show some positive outcomes, even very small ones. It should be a goal for audience members to leave performances feeling as though they can make a difference.

The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI, 2003), an international organization promoting community building and prejudice reduction, teaches an idea called “Small Wins”. The idea of “small wins” acknowledges that alone one person is probably not going to be able to end world-wide racism, stop all acts of violence, or fix all of the world's many problems. Sometimes when your work doesn't seem to be making a large-scale difference, it can get frustrating. It is at these frustrating

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moments that it is important to remember that everyone has the power to prevent acts of bullying, harassment, violence, and reduce prejudice in his or her own small community. It is important to acknowledge and celebrate every time you make a small difference in your community. These small differences that you can make are called “small wins”. While a “small win” may seem insignificant, it can have a real impact on a single person. If everyone focuses on “small wins” a larger scale difference can be made. If you can pass this idea on to your audience, hopefully you will empower some of them to work for “small wins” of their own (2003).

It will not always be possible to develop scenes or performances that completely meet the PIE criteria. In the rare cases where this is not possible, it is important that the group discusses the reasons why the scene or performance is not PIE, and try to make it so in the future.

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### ***Reflection Questions***

- 1) How will our programs be more effective if they are PIE?*
- 2) Will it be possible for our programs to always be PIE? What are some examples of times that our programs may not be PIE?*
- 3) Why is it important to celebrate small wins?*

## Introduction to Violence Prevention Strategies

**D**eveloping an effective violence prevention program requires you to have a basic understanding of the violence prevention strategies used by the Pacific Violence Prevention Institute. It is important to be familiar with the ideas presented in this section so that you will be able to address different forms of violence that your audience members will encounter.

Before we begin to discuss how to develop an effective violence prevention program, let's explore what violence really is. Usually when people think of violence they think of physical acts (punching, hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, shooting, etc.). However, to effectively prevent violence it must be addressed in all of its forms. **All** acts of bullying and harassment behavior are forms of violence. **All** racist, sexist, homophobic, age-ist, size-ist, or any other kind of oppressive joke, comment, or attitude is a form of violence. Acts of violence include physical, emotional, sexual violence. Any time that someone does something that hurts someone else, emotionally, physically, or sexually, it is a form of violence.

The PVPI operationally defines violence as:

**Violence:** *Any act, physical, emotional, or sexual, that causes physical, emotional, or sexual pain.*

### Violence Levels

For the purposes of this manual and for ease of discussion, we will classify acts of violence into three different categories, Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3:

#### Level 1

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Level 1 includes all violent acts that occur when the target is not present. Level 1 acts of violence include, but are not limited to, spreading rumors, talking negatively about someone behind their back, or making prejudiced jokes or comments. Level 1 can also include destruction of property if the target is not present.

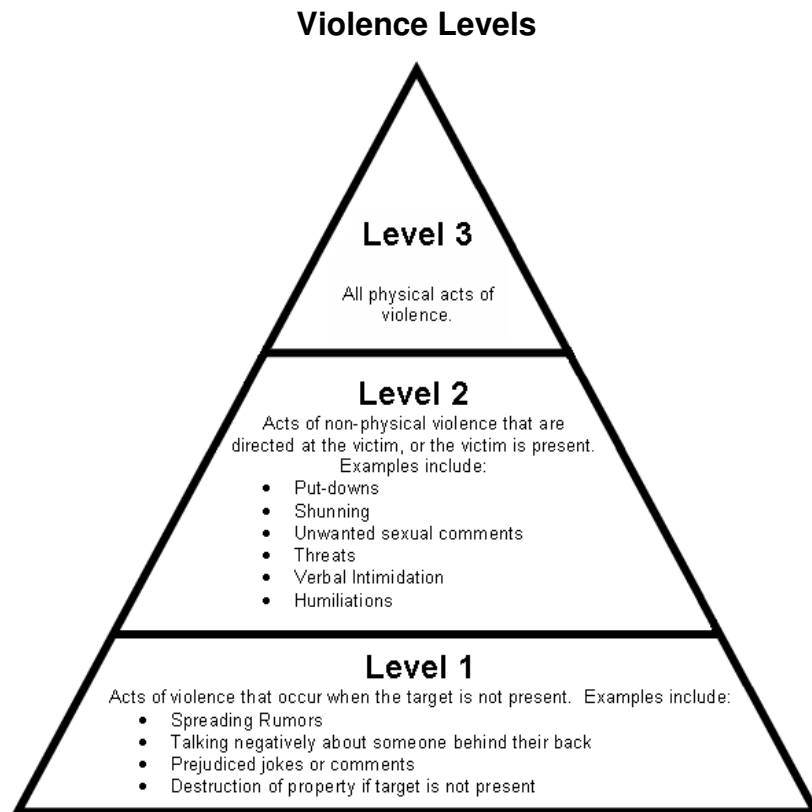
### **Level 2**

Level 2 includes acts of *non-physical violence that are directed at the victim*. This level includes, but is not limited to, put-downs, unwanted sexual comments, shunning, humiliating comments, threats, verbal intimidation, or coercion.

### **Level 3**

Level 3 includes all acts of physical violence.

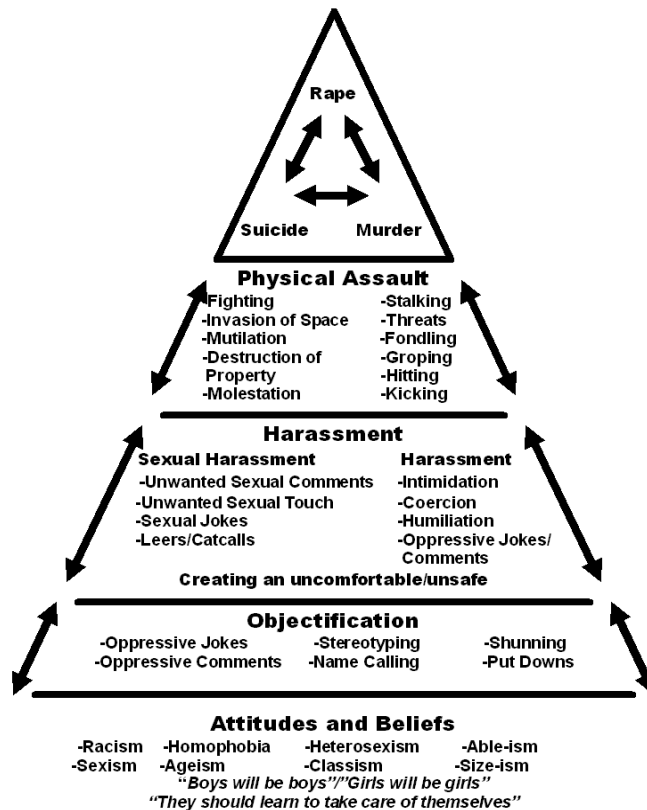
It's important to note that these levels do not refer to the *severity* of act of violence, or the effect of each act on the target. They more accurately reflect the frequency that these events occur, and the ease of intervention. For example, it is always easier to intervene in a situation when the target is not present, because you don't have to worry about embarrassing the target and making the situation worse.



# The Violence Continuum

**B**efore your troupe begins to develop programs that will successfully prevent violence it is important to discuss the nature of violence. **All acts of violence occur in a continuum, meaning that acts of violence that may not seem very severe (i.e. objectification, stereotyping, offensive jokes or comments), are connected to acts of violence that may seem more severe (i.e. unwanted sexual touch, intimidation, physical violence), which are connected to acts of violence that seem to be the most severe (sexual assault, murder, suicide).** These ideas hold true for all types of violence. A bullying violence continuum pyramid is shown on the following page (Image 2).

## Bullying Violence Continuum Pyramid



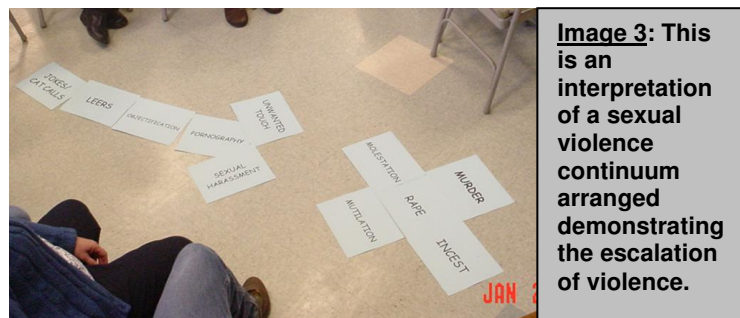
**Image 2:** Acts of violence exist in a continuum. This continuum can be expressed as a pyramid. Image 2 is a description of Bullying Violence. Notice how “Attitudes and Beliefs” are the foundation for this pyramid. Only by working to decrease these attitudes and beliefs can we prevent acts of Bullying Violence. A pyramid can be constructed for any type of violence. Try to make your own for another type of violence (i.e. sexual violence...)

Think about violence as if it were a physical pyramid. A pyramid, like any other building, has to have a solid foundation. In the case of violence, the foundation is our attitudes and beliefs. Everyone carries attitudes and beliefs about groups and people that are not like them. Usually these attitudes about groups of people are unfounded, or are

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founded on a limited interaction with a small representation of the group. These attitudes provide a foundation for all forms of violence. If a program is to effectively prevent violence, it must to work to change the attitudes and beliefs of its audience members.

As Image 2 illustrates, after the foundation of attitudes and beliefs, we can move up the pyramid and the acts of violence increase in intensity. The arrows point in both directions for two reasons. First, because this is a continuum, it is fluid. Different acts of violence affect different people in different ways. For example, one person may be more affected if they were called a racial slur than if that person were physically assaulted, while another person may be more affected by being physically assaulted than by being called a racial slur. The victim



of the violence always defines the severity of the violent act. Second, the arrows illustrate how all of the acts of violence on the pyramid are connected, and

relate to each other. Acts on the lower end of pyramid can lead to more severe acts of violence. This is not to say that if someone tells a sexist joke that they are likely to commit rape. What this does mean is that **if an act of violence at the lower end of the pyramid become socially acceptable, an atmosphere is created that makes it easier for violence to escalate.** For example, if someone is objectified, that is, turned into an object instead of a person, it is easier to commit more acts of violence against that person. It is much easier to hurt an object than it is to hurt a living person.

If your programs address the attitudes and beliefs that are the foundation of violence, an atmosphere can be created where it is clear that the acts on the lower end of the pyramid will not be tolerated, and it will make it much more difficult for more severe acts of violence to take place. It is much more realistic to teach students the skills needed to interrupt offensive comments, or address someone's attitudes than it is to intervene in a physical assault. **Physical acts of violence can be prevented by creating an atmosphere where acts of objectification are not tolerated, and where students will intervene when other students are committing acts of violence on the bottom of the pyramid.**

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### ***Reflection Questions***

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- 1) *How can we prevent violence from escalating by addressing behaviors at the lower end of the violence continuum pyramid?*

## Changing Bystander Behavior into Ally Behavior

To effectively prevent violence, programs have to address elements of diversity building, prejudice reduction, and community building. As we know, it is attitudes and beliefs that are the foundation for violence. So, in order to prevent violence your troupe will have to learn to address intolerance, objectification, stereotyping, and offensive comments and jokes, because all of these actions create an atmosphere where violence is encouraged.

How will your troupe accomplish this? Your troupe will work to turn **bystanders** into **allies**. This idea was discussed in the *Creating Programs Developmentally* section. Now this concept will be discussed in further detail.

Being an effective ally is a skill. Like any skill, developing it requires instruction and practice. Of course someone can be an ally if they have never been given any instruction or had any practice, but the only way to become skilled is to have instruction and practice. I liken this idea to an athlete. Someone can be a naturally gifted athlete and without any coaching or practice, can be pretty good at most sports. However, if the same person wishes to be an elite athlete in a particular sport, he or she will need coaching and practice to reach that goal.

The PVPI's philosophy of violence prevention revolves around a few statements:

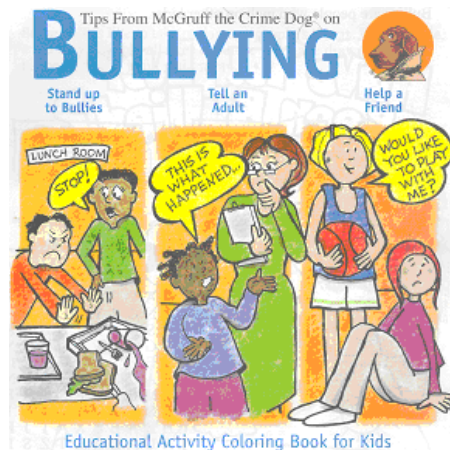
**1) It is NEVER the victim's responsibility to prevent acts of violence perpetrated against them.**

Often times in our society victims and survivors of violence and oppression are made of to feel as though the acts of violence that they experience are their fault. For example, nationwide studies of police procedure have shown that when investigating an alleged sexual assault the first questions that women are usually asked about their alleged assault are: **What were you wearing? Were you drinking or using drugs? Where were you?** All of these questions indirectly or directly imply that the woman was in some way at fault for the assault that she experienced assault. These questions are often asked by members of the public as well. Many go so far as to justify the assault by saying that if the victim hadn't been wearing that outfit, hadn't been drinking, or hadn't chosen to be where she was when she was assaulted, that the assault wouldn't have occurred. Questions such as these only serve to

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place blame on the victim, rather than where it belongs, on the perpetrator.

However, in our culture we have been indoctrinated to ask such questions. The staff of the PVPI been doing sexual assault prevention work for over a decade. Still, when we hear about an alleged sexual assault those same questions still pop into our minds—**What was the victim wearing? Was the victim drinking or using drugs? Where was the victim when she was assaulted?**—with one important addition: **Is the victim telling the truth?** Why do we still ask ourselves these questions? We know better, don't we? The answer is simple. We do know better. We know that these questions are not fair to ask of a victim, nor are they productive. We know that statistically women very rarely falsely report sexual assault (FBI Uniform Crime Report, 2003), but we have been socialized to ask these questions, in the same way that **ALL** of your audience members have been in some way socialized to ask such questions of their own. It will be your job to explore these ideas with your audience, and help them to recognize ways that they have been socialized to ask the same types of questions.



**Image 4:** Example of “traditional” bullying prevention program focusing on the victim’s responsibility. On the positive side, this program does encourage ally behavior.

Another example of the first assumption is the way that bullying and harassment in schools has historically been addressed. Some attitudes that are commonly expressed when a student is being bullied are: “Boys will be boys”, “Girls will be girls”, and “You need to learn to stand up for yourself”. These are all comments that we hear on a regular basis. All of these attitudes promote a belief that bullying and harassment is a natural part of growing up, and that it is the responsibility of the victims of violence to protect themselves.

One example of the way that bullying and harassment has been historically addressed is the *McGruff the Crime Dog* (**Image 4**) program shown here. In this program a great emphasis is placed on teaching students who are being bullied to stand up for themselves. This is probably the most common method of addressing bullying. While it is important to empower victims of violence to stand up for themselves, this type of program does not promote prevention, but intervention and self-preservation.

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While this program does promote ally behavior to some extent, programs that promote this attitude of self-preservation can actually encourage reciprocal violence. It can be difficult for people experiencing violence to refrain from violence themselves. It is a natural response to have an urge to respond to violence with violence. Therefore it is necessary to work to create an atmosphere where violence is not acceptable. This will empower bystanders to demonstrate ally behavior. We would hope that the end result would be that victims of violence would not have to stand up for themselves because they would have allies around them.

Through our programs, we are trying to promote a new way of thinking to our audience. By deconstructing these commonly held attitudes we are able to create an atmosphere where Ally Intervention is encouraged, rather than self-preservation.

**2) In order to PREVENT bullying, harassment, related violence and prejudice, and to promote diversity and community building we must change *bystander behavior* into *ally behavior*.**

*“If people of color could end racism, racism would have ended a long time ago.”*

This is a paraphrase of a quote that we often use when we do diversity and community building work. It effectively demonstrates the role that allies play in effective violence prevention. It is safe to say that no one who is a victim of racism enjoys being a victim. If people of color were able to prevent acts of racism against them they would. In fact, for generations, people of color worked to prevent racism and made little progress. It was only when people of all races began to work together to solve some of these problems that real progress was made.

The same is true of all forms of violence. No one enjoys being a victim of violence. However, for many reasons it is very difficult for those experiencing violence to prevent it. If we are to be effective in our efforts to end violence we must give people the skill to move from bystanders to allies.

***Bystander:*** *A person who witnesses an event but is not actively involved in the event.*

As previously discussed, most of the time when acts of violence take place there are bystanders present. The bystanders often would like to do something to intervene but do not have the skills or the support to do so.

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***Ally:*** A person who acts against an act of violence, oppression or mistreatment that is not directed at them.

We know that most of the time if bystanders intervene, the act of violence will stop. We must give people the skill to become **ALLIES**. Based on the stages of change the **Ally Process** has been developed. The Ally Process is a developmental approach (see *Creating Programs Developmentally* section) to promoting ally behavior that allows nearly everyone to be an ally.

### **The Ally Process**

Be Aware  
Get Educated  
Gain Skills  
Take Action  
Develop Support

The Ally Process is not a step-by-step guide to becoming an ally. It is a process that allows people in any of the Stages of Change to practice ally behavior. It also promotes a developmental increase in ally behavior, allowing someone who is in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stages to practice ally behavior, without being pressured to take action that they are not developmentally ready to take.

Let's further explore the different stages in the Ally Process:

#### **Be Aware**

As was discussed in the *Creating Appropriate Programs for your Audience* section, many of your audience members will be in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stages of change. If your programs are going to change bystanders into allies one of the main goals needs to be building awareness. Becoming aware of all of the forms of violence that exist in a community is the first step towards preventing violence.

#### **Get Educated**

After your program increases your audience's awareness of violence, hopefully they will be empowered to learn more about the problem. Your program is the first step in educating your audience. It may be appropriate to have other resources available for audience members that will want to learn more about the problem on their own, such as brochures and bibliographies, as well as contact numbers for agencies in the area that can be contacted for more information.

#### **Gain Skills**

Gaining skills goes a step further than getting educated. The difference between the two is that getting educated focuses on learning and

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understanding more about the problem, and gaining skills is learning steps and methods to take action to prevent the problem. Most programs should explore some skills for preventing violence for those audience members who may be developmentally ready to take action but do not have the skills to do so effectively.

### **Take Action**

We hope that your audience members will eventually get to this part of the process. By increasing awareness, educating the audience, and giving the audience skills, audience members will become empowered to take action at some point.

### **Develop Support**

This is one of the most important parts of process. Violence prevention is often hard, frustrating, overwhelming work. In order to be effective and not get discouraged it is important for allies to have a support network around them. Make yourselves available to the audience to talk to if they see you on campus about what they are experiencing in their ally process. Encourage your audience members to identify teachers, administrators, staff, and other students who will support them in their attempts to end violence.

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It is important to keep in mind that being an ally is difficult work, and that no matter how educated you are, or how many skills you have learned and practiced, your attempts will not always be effective. It is important to encourage your audience members to celebrate their “Small Wins”, and to think about what attempts were effective and what attempts were not, and to try to learn from their experiences. As a performance educator you are being an ally to those who experience violence. So, it is important for you to keep in mind that your programs won’t always go as planned, and that not everyone will be receptive to your ideas. It is just as important for you to recognize your “small wins” and to acknowledge and celebrate them with your partner and other members of the project.

It is also important to stress in your programs that you are an ally if you are at **any** stage of the Ally Process. If a member of your audience is only developmentally prepared to be aware, they are just as much of an ally as an audience member who consistently takes action. It is also important to recognize that the Ally Process is fluid. For example, on Monday I may hear an offensive comment and take action to interrupt it, and then on Tuesday hear the same comment and not do anything but be aware that the comment was offensive. This is a normal part of the process that all allies go through. One very important part of being an

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ally is to make sure that you are in a safe situation before you take action.

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### ***Reflection Questions***

- 1) How can the Ally Process help us to promote ally Behavior?*
- 2) How does the Ally process related to the violence continuum?*

## Social Norms

Whenever we work to create an atmosphere where acts of violence are not acceptable we must examine the pressures that students feel to display certain behaviors and then try to diffuse some of these pressures. For example, why do students choose to tell racist jokes? Is it because they believe that the white race is superior to all other races? This is rarely the case. Usually students choose to tell offensive jokes in order to earn a **social reward**. If someone tells a funny joke, usually people laugh. The laughter is the social reward that the joke teller was seeking, which reinforces the behavior and encourages the joke to be told again in the future. Peer pressure, imagined or real, has a greater influence on one's behavior than any other influence (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986).

**Social Reward:** *Reinforcement of one's behavior by one's peers.*

But, does everyone in the room laugh when someone tells an offensive joke? The next time you find yourself in this situation, observe carefully. You will probably notice that only a few people actually laugh at the joke, and the rest of the people in the room sit quietly, feeling uncomfortable. However, those who feel uncomfortable hear the laughter, and laughter being louder than silence, notice those who are laughing and don't notice that many people aren't laughing. Therefore they remain silent, thinking that they are alone in feeling uncomfortable about the joke.

This phenomenon is described by the Social Norms Theory:

**Social Norms:** *People's beliefs about the attitudes and behaviors that are normal, acceptable, or even expected in a particular social context (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986).*

Everyone follows Social Norms to some extent. Most people know that it is not socially acceptable to answer a cell phone in a movie theater, or to belch loudly while eating at a gourmet restaurant. Social Norms are important to us because they define what behaviors are appropriate or inappropriate in any particular social setting. These guidelines for appropriate behavior are in place because most people in a social context believe that the guidelines are appropriate.

Social norms change when contexts change. For example, it is perfectly acceptable to answer your cell phone outside of the movie theater, and in some cultures in the world it is expected that you belch after eating a meal to show the cook that you enjoyed the food.

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As social creatures, most humans place a high value on fitting in and being accepted. Behavior is often modified by the need to fit in and be accepted by the group. By following social norms we are taking steps to fit in and be accepted by our peers. However, social norms are sometimes misperceived. When social norms are misperceived behaviors can be encouraged that do not accurately gauge what is appropriate in a particular social context.

The misperception of social norms is explained by a few theories:

***Peer Selection Theory:*** *People tend to associate with peers whose behavior is similar to their own (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986).*

Because people tend to gravitate towards those who have similar interests and beliefs to our own, we are often surrounded by people very much like ourselves. If our exposure is limited to those who have interests and beliefs similar to our own we may start to believe that everyone has those beliefs. For example, if you and all of your friends are heavy drinkers you may begin to think that all students drink heavily.

***Pluralistic Ignorance:*** *The inaccurate belief that an attitude or behavior is more common among one's peers than it actually is (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986).*

***Imaginary Peer:*** *The imagined or misperceived peer pressure resulting from pluralistic ignorance (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986).*

We tend to recall the most striking events from a field of the ordinary (Fabiano, 2003). For example when we've just sat for an hour in a traffic jam we don't remember the hundreds of other drivers who are waiting patiently, we remember the few who are honking their horns obnoxiously. Because of this selective memory we begin to believe that everyone on the freeway was being obnoxious.

***Memory Selection:*** *We recognize the most striking events from the field of the ordinary (Fabiano, 2003).*

Peer pressure can often be a powerful influence on behavior. When people misperceive the norms of their group, that is, they inaccurately think an attitude or behavior is more (or less) common than it actually is, they may engage in behaviors that are in sync with these false norms.

The concept of the imaginary peer is very important to address in violence prevention. We know that peer pressure can be a powerful influence in behavior choices. The imaginary peer is just as powerful. As we discussed earlier in this section, humans, as social creatures,

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want to fit in with other members of their group. So, behavior is often influenced by our *perception* of what the group expects of us. If someone tells an offensive joke, and some people laugh but most stay silent, memory selection tells us that we will remember those who laughed and forget that most stayed silent. This is when the social norm begins to be misperceived and an imaginary peer is born. **Someone who is sitting quietly may feel pressure to tell or laugh at offensive jokes in order to gain a social reward from the group, when in fact, most people in the group do not approve of this behavior.**

If programs build awareness of the Imaginary Peer and start to deconstruct the misperceived social norms surrounding violence, this can help to create an atmosphere where violence is not allowed to exist. If people don't feel pressure from the imaginary peer they may not choose to take violent action, and may feel empowered to be allies.

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### ***Reflection Questions***

- 1) *How can the Imaginary Peer influence someone to engage in bullying/harassment?*
- 2) *How can Social Reward seeking influence someone's behavior?*
- 3) *How can we use the Social Norms Theory to prevent violence?*

# **The Three Motivations Model for Bullying, Harassment, and Other Forms of Violent Behavior**

When the PVPI was created we focused our attention on changing bystander behavior into ally behavior, especially in situations of bullying and harassment behavior and prejudice. We believed that acts of violence were motivated by a painful experience in the perpetrator's past and that the best way to prevent the act from happening again in the future was for the ally to figure out what that painful experience was and then work with perpetrators, sometimes over long periods of time, to convince them that their actions are not okay. We taught students to intervene in Level 1 and Level 2 acts of violence using this model, and while they reported that this was effective in some cases, our students were coming back to us and telling us that it was falling flat in others. They told us that in many cases the acts of violence that they were witnessing just didn't seem to be motivated by a painful event in the past, and they asked whether there might be other factors in play, and that if there were, perhaps we needed to be teaching other methods. We went back to the drawing board, and after interviewing students and staff we developed a new model for intervening effectively in acts of violence. The following section describes the proprietary violence prevention model developed by our team, called the *Three Motivations Model for Bullying, Harassment, Prejudice, and other forms of Violence*. This model is used exclusively by the PVPI for all of its violence prevention and prejudice reduction programs and has been successfully presented to over 10,000 participants around the United States.

## **The Three Motivations Model for Bullying, Harassment, Prejudice, and Other Forms of Violence**

Bullying and harassment behavior, prejudice, and all other types of violence are typically motivated in one of three ways: First, the instigator may be unaware of his behavior. Second, the instigator be seeking a social reward. Third, the instigator may have had a previous painful experience that is motivating his behavior. If an ally intervenes in an act of violence and hopes to stop the behavior and prevent the behavior from happening again in the future, the ally should evaluate the motivation for the behavior and intervene accordingly.

### **Unaware**

People often make comments that create an unsafe atmosphere without intending to hurt anyone. These people are unaware that their behavior has an affect on those around them. An example of this unawareness is comments like "That's so gay" or "That's retarded". While these people

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may hold deep-seated homophobic or able-ist attitudes, it is not likely that these attitudes are presenting themselves in comments such as “That’s so gay” or “That’s retarded”.

There are some underlying reasons that people may say things like this. They may have been conditioned to do so by their peers. They may be ignorant of the meanings of these words, or if they understand them they may feel that they are “just words” and don’t understand the implications of using them in a negative context. Or they may be totally aware of the meanings of the words, may have already resolved not to use them in the negative context, and may have had a slip of the tongue caused by their previous habitual use of the word.

### **Social Reward**

If a person is spreading a rumor, telling an inappropriate joke, putting someone else down, or engaging in similar behavior they are often seeking a social reward. As was discussed in the “Social Norms” section, as humans, one of our strongest needs is to fit into our social group. Therefore, if we perceive that telling an offensive joke, spreading a rumor, or putting someone down will help us fit into our social group we may be motivated to do so. We may engage in this behavior even if we do not have strong feelings about the person or group that we are talking about, or we may act in a way that even goes against our personal beliefs if we think it will reward us socially.

### **Previous Painful Experience (PPE)**

Sometimes a person exhibiting behavior such as spreading rumors, telling inappropriate jokes, putting people down, or other similar behaviors may be motivated by a Previous Painful Experience. For example, the instigator of the behavior may perceive that their target has done something to him that has caused him pain, and thus feels the need to get back at the target. It can be very difficult to tell if a behavior is motivated by seeking a social reward or by a PPE. .

### **\*Mental Illness**

Mental illness often plays a role in acts violence. For example, if someone has Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder they are likely to be very impulsive. This impulsivity may cause them to take violent action without thinking it through. Other disorders, including but not limited to Bipolar Disorder, Major Depression, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Schizophrenia, Oppositional/Defiant Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, and other personality disorders may cause an individual to be more prone to violence, and may make it difficult for ally behavior to be effective. While the Three Motivations will still play a role in motivating their violent behavior, it is possible that the suggested interventions later in this chapter will not be as effective when an

instigator has a psychiatric disorder. If a staff member suspects that a behavior may have been influenced by mental illness, it is vital to the safety of the community and the student that an appropriate referral is made to a school psychologist or other mental health professional so that the behavior can be evaluated and treated if necessary.

### **Description of the Behavior of the Instigator, the Bystander, and the Sway**

In most situations motivated by Seeking a Social Reward or a Previous Painful Experience you will notice three different roles being played: The instigator, the bystander, and a character that we will call the sway person. Let's examine the characteristics of each role. The instigator is the person who commits the initial bullying and harassment behavior. At the time that the first behavior occurs, the instigator is the leader of the group and controls the conversation.

The second role being played in most of these situations is that of the bystander, who is the potential ally. As we know, in most situations like this there are bystanders present. *We define a bystander as someone who witnesses an event but is not directly involved in the event.* In many cases the bystander is aware of the behavior, does not feel good about it, but doesn't really know how to intervene, or if he should. Research has shown that if a bystander intervenes in a situation of bullying and harassment behavior situation, that 55% of the time the act of violence will stop within 10 seconds. Our goal is to change bystander behavior into ally behavior.

The last role is that of the sway person. The Sway person is someone who wants to belong to the group so badly that they will usually go along with whatever seems to be the consensus of the group. They identify the consensus by going along with whoever is controlling the conversation at any given time. In this manner the sway person is *not a bystander because the sway person will actively engage in whatever behavior he perceives will allow him to fit into the group.* Especially in the case of behavior motivated by Seeking a Social Reward, the efficacy of the intervention is likely to hinge on the sway person. If the bystander can influence the sway person's behavior then the instigator will be alone in their behavior, and will not receive the social reward that he is seeking. If the bystander does not influence the sway person's behavior, and the sway person joins in with the instigator, it will be very difficult for the bystander/ potential ally to change or remove the social reward.

### **The Ally Inside You: Using the Three Motivations Model to Respond Effectively to Acts of Violence**

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The following concepts may be more difficult to grasp in written form, and is intended to be used in conjunction with *The Ally Inside You* video. This video is available for viewing on the PVPI website in the staff *Improvising Change* section.

Whenever an ally takes action to intervene in an act of violence that he witnesses, he should have two goals. The first goal is to stop the behavior that he witnesses. This is an immediate goal. The second goal should be to try to prevent the behavior in the future. This is a secondary goal. The ally may not be very successful in meeting both goals at first. In fact, he may need to attempt action multiple times, and in multiple different ways to meet both goals. The following techniques will help the ally to evaluate the motivation for the behavior and intervene in a way that is likely to meet both goals.

### **Unaware**

If being unaware is the motivation the ally's goal in taking action should be bring the instigator to awareness. Let's look at a scenario where an act of bullying and harassment behavior takes place that is motivated by being Unaware. In this situation the Bystander, Rhiannon, is having coffee with her friend Markus, who is the instigator, when he commits the act of bullying and harassment behavior:

*(Rhiannon waits for Markus at a coffee shop. Markus arrives and sits down)*

**Markus:** *Hi Rhiannon*

**Rhiannon:** *Hi Markus*

**Markus:** *Sorry I'm late, there was horrible traffic.*

**Rhiannon:** *That's okay.*

**Markus:** *You know how sometimes you're driving on the freeway and there's a car crash in the other lane and your lane goes slower?*

**Rhiannon:** *Oh yeah, cuz everyone wants to see what happens?*

**Markus:** *Yeah! I was waiting in traffic for thirty minutes. It was so gay!*

**Rhiannon:** *(Looking Uncomfortable) Well, I'm glad you're here now. I haven't seen you in a while, how have you been?*

In this situation, Markus has committed an act of bullying and harassment behavior. By using a phrase like, "that's so gay" to describe something negative, Markus is helping to create an uncomfortable or

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unsafe environment. Assume that Rhiannon is uncomfortable with Markus saying “that’s so gay”, and that she is ready to take action. Her next step is to decide what type of action to take. Let’s look at two ways that Rhiannon could respond to Markus, that are common ways of handling a situation like this, but may not be the most positive or effective courses of action.

### **Flight**

*(Rhiannon waits for Markus at a coffee shop. Markus arrives and sits down)*

**Markus:** *Hi Rhiannon*

**Rhiannon:** *Hi Markus*

**Markus:** *Sorry I’m late, there was horrible traffic.*

**Rhiannon:** *That’s okay.*

**Markus:** *You know how sometimes you’re driving on the freeway and there’s a car crash in the other lane, and your lane goes slower?*

**Rhiannon:** *Oh yeah, cuz everyone wants to see what happens?*

**Markus:** *Yeah! I was waiting in traffic for thirty minutes. It was so gay!*

**Rhiannon:** *(Looking uncomfortable and interrupting) Um, well I think if we leave now we can still make it to the concert.*

**Markus:** *We can? Great, let’s go?*

In this situation Rhiannon chosen the flight option, and changed the subject away from the negative behavior. By changing the subject was Rhiannon being an ally? Remember that we have defined an ally as someone who acts against violence or oppression that is not directed at them. So in this situation Rhiannon was being an ally because she was aware of the comment, knew that it made her feel uncomfortable, and even took the action of changing the subject to stop the behavior. But, was Rhiannon successful in meeting her goals of stopping the behavior and preventing the behavior in the future? She did stop the behavior, because she changed the topic of conversation. However, she probably didn’t stop the behavior in the future because she didn’t do anything to communicate to Markus that she was uncomfortable with the behavior so Markus didn’t know that he’d done anything wrong. So, while

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Rhiannon was being an ally in this situation, she wasn't very effective in meeting her goals.

Let's look at the next possibility:

### **Fight**

*(Rhiannon waits for Markus at a coffee shop. Markus arrives and sits down)*

**Markus:** *Hi Rhiannon*

**Rhiannon:** *Hi Markus*

**Markus:** *Sorry I'm late, there was horrible traffic.*

**Rhiannon:** *That's okay.*

**Markus:** *You know how sometimes you're driving on the freeway and there's a car crash in the other lane, and your lane goes slower?*

**Rhiannon:** *Oh yeah, cuz everyone wants to see what happens?*

**Markus:** *Yeah! I was waiting in traffic for thirty minutes. It was so gay!*

**Rhiannon:** *(Said angrily) It was gay?*

**Markus:** *It was dumb.*

**Rhiannon:** *(Said Angrily) How can you use that word like that Markus?*

**Markus:** *It's just a word.*

**Rhiannon:** *No, it's not just a word, that's so inconsiderate, we have friends that are gay, and do you know what that actually means?*

**Markus:** *(Interrupting) Rhiannon, that's not what I meant! I was just saying that it was dumb!*

**Rhiannon:** *(Loudly and angrily) Yeah, but you still used it and...*

**Markus:** *(Angrily) Okay, stop attacking me!*

**Rhiannon:** *(Standing up and shouting) You know what Markus, you're ridiculous, and I don't even know if we can be friends anymore so I'm leaving!*

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At one time or another you have probably responded this way when someone has said something that upset you—or at least you probably wished that you would have. Unfortunately this kind of response is not very helpful in a situation like this. Instead of stopping and preventing violence, Rhiannon's reaction has actually escalated the violence situation. While Markus may not be saying "that's so gay" anymore, the conflict has escalated to the point where the situation has become very unsafe for all.

So, while this might not be a very good option, was Rhiannon still being an ally? According to our definition she was an ally because she was aware of the violence behavior, and took action to intervene. However, her response was not very effective because she didn't meet both goals.

While the flight and fight options weren't very effective, it's not always going to be possible for an ally to respond in a positive manner. Taking some action, even action that's not going to totally effective, is better than taking no action at all. However, if an ally needs to use one of these less-effective actions, if possible they should always choose the flight option, as this option avoids direct conflict, while the fight escalates violence.

Now that we've looked at two ways that Rhiannon could take action that probably aren't going to change Markus' behavior, let's look at a more positive and hopefully more effective option. Keep in mind that Markus' behavior is motivated by being unaware, and if Rhiannon is if is going to change Markus' future behavior she will have to increase his awareness.

### **Positive Action**

*(Rhiannon waits for Markus at a coffee shop. Markus arrives and sits down)*

**Markus:** *Hi Rhiannon*

**Rhiannon:** *Hi Markus*

**Markus:** *Sorry I'm late, there was horrible traffic.*

**Rhiannon:** *That's okay.*

**Markus:** *You know how sometimes you're driving on the freeway and there's a car crash in the other lane, and your lane goes slower?*

**Rhiannon:** *Oh yeah, cuz everyone wants to see what happens?*

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**Markus:** *Yeah! I was waiting in traffic for thirty minutes. It was so gay!*

**Rhiannon:** *(Said calmly and conversationally) That's too bad. I'm sorry you had to sit there for so long. But what did you mean by gay (said curiously)?*

**Markus:** *I don't know, I guess I just mean that it was stupid.*

**Rhiannon:** *(Still calmly, not preaching) Okay, it's just that it kind of makes me feel uncomfortable when you use that word that way because we have a lot of friend who are gay and I don't like associating the word gay with a negative connotation. You know?*

**Markus:** *Yeah, it's just something that people say.*

**Rhiannon:** *Yeah, I know a lot of people use that word, and I used to say it too until I realized what I was saying and what it meant...*

**Markus:** *Yeah, I never thought of it like that.*

**Rhiannon:** *It's pretty offensive, so...*

**Markus:** *Yeah, I'm sorry I said it.*

**Rhiannon:** *It's okay, you didn't mean anything by it, as long as you think about it...so, do you want to order some coffee?*

**Markus:** *Yeah, I'm thirsty.*

In this situation, Rhiannon reacted much differently than she did during the previous two options, and there were a number of positive aspects to her response. First, she worked hard to make sure that Markus didn't get defensive. Once someone is defensive it's very difficult to have a conversation that does not result in a conflict. Rhiannon remained calm and never raised her voice. The first thing that Rhiannon did after Markus made the comment, was to validate Markus' feelings about being stuck in traffic. Then to start the conversation about Markus' behavior in a non-threatening way, she asked him a simple question—what did you mean by gay? She obviously knew what Markus meant, but sometimes playing dumb can be very disarming. By asking this question she was able to start an open and honest conversation.

After Rhiannon gave Markus the chance to answer and listened to his response, she went on to say that when Markus used that word it made *her* feel uncomfortable. This made her objection personal. Sometimes

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it's tempting to say something like, "it makes some people feel uncomfortable when you use words like that," but this approach is usually not very effective because it's unlikely that someone who is unaware like Markus is going to care if a person who is not there, who he doesn't know might feel uncomfortable about his comments. Since Rhiannon is his friend it's more likely that he will care enough about her feelings to want to change his behavior, than the feelings of other people who he doesn't know.

She also did a good job of not making Markus feeling guilty. People don't like feeling guilty, and if Rhiannon makes Markus feel guilty it will probably mean that Markus will not be receptive to anything else that she has to say. When Rhiannon says that she used to make the same comment before she realized what it meant, it put them on equal footing, and made it less likely that Markus was interpret what Rhiannon was saying as "I'm good, you're bad."

Finally, one of the most effective aspects of Rhiannon's intervention was that after she had made her point, and Markus had acknowledged what she was saying, she changed the subject. By moving on, Rhiannon avoids angering Markus by lecturing him after he has already acknowledged her point of view. If Rhiannon does not move on, it's possible that Markus will become angry and defensive, and she will lose all of the gains that she had made.

So the question is, did Rhiannon's ally behavior meet both goals? We don't know for sure because we can't see into the future. We do know that Markus didn't make the comment again while they were talking, so she did meet the goal of stopping the behavior. She also make Markus think about what he had said and what it meant, so it's likely that even if he says it again in future he will realize what he says, and he may even correct himself. Behavior change doesn't happen overnight, so Rhiannon may have to continue to address this same issue with Markus over and over, but it's likely that if she proceeds in this fashion she will eventually change Markus' behavior.

### **Seeking a Social Reward**

When people engage in common bullying and harassment, or prejudiced behaviors, such as spreading rumors, telling inappropriate or offensive jokes, making negative comments, or putting people down, they are usually either seeking a social reward for their behavior, or they have had a previous painful experience that is motivating their behavior. Let's look at an example of a behavior that is motivated by seeking a social reward.

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In this situation Ian, Markus, and Rhiannon are playing video games, when Ian makes a negative comment:

***Ian:*** *(Pausing from playing the game) Do you guys know Jeff, that kid in geometry class?*

***Rhiannon:*** *Oh yeah.*

***Ian:*** *All he does is talk about playing this game. I swear that's all he does. He's such a fag!*

*(Markus looks uncomfortable but stays quiet)*

***Rhiannon:*** *Did you know that he asked me to homecoming last year?*

***Ian:*** *Are you serious?*

***Rhiannon:*** *Yeah, and I was like, um, I don't think so!*

***Ian:*** *Really? I expected him to ask Markus (nudging Markus with his elbow)! That's all he does man, stare at you.*

*(Ian and Rhiannon laugh, Markus stays quiet, still looking uncomfortable)*

Let's assume that in this situation, Ian's behavior is motivated by seeking a social reward. A social reward is defined as any act used to gain approval or acceptance from one's peers. Ian has committed an act of bullying and harassment behavior, and Rhiannon joins in, which is probably what Ian was hoping for. By Rhiannon joining in, she is giving Ian the social reward that he was seeking, making him feel like he belongs to the group. Notice the three different roles being played in this scenario, the instigator, the bystander, and the sway person. These roles are illustrated by the three characters in our previous scene. Let's re-examine the characteristics of each role. In this scene Ian plays the role of the Instigator, and at the time that he makes the negative comment, he is the leader of the group and controls the conversation. Markus is playing the role of the bystander, and he is our potential ally. Remember, in most situations like this there are bystanders present. Rhiannon plays our sway person, and she is a very important character in this situation. The Sway person wants to belong to the group so badly that they will usually go along with whatever seems to be the consensus of the group. They identify the consensus by going along with whoever is controlling the conversation at any given time.

If Markus wants to successfully intervene in Ian's behavior, there are a few options that he can try. First, let's look at a technique called *Changing the Social Reward* to try to stop Ian's behavior and prevent it from happening again in the future. In order for Markus to change the

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social reward he will need to recognize that Ian is going to say something negative about someone, and then enthusiastically saying something positive about that person. He will try to become the focus of the conversation and persuade Rhiannon to go along with him instead of Ian. When Ian finds himself not fitting in with the group, he should change his behavior.

Let's see what this conversation looks like:

### **Changing the Social Reward**

***Ian:*** (Pausing from playing the game) *Do you guys know Jeff, that kid in geometry class?*

***Markus:*** (Recognizing that Ian is about to say something negative) *Yeah dude, I love that guy! We're in a Halo tournament next week and that guy can play Halo (said enthusiastically)!*

***Ian:*** (Looking confused) *Seriously?*

***Markus:*** *Yeah, I love that guy! (Nudging Rhiannon) Don't you like him, Rhiannon?*

***Rhiannon:*** *Yeah, totally, he asked me to homecoming last year and I really wanted to go with him but I already had a date.*

***Ian:*** (Still looking confused) *Wow, I guess if he's really good at this game I should get some advice from him.*

If an act of Level 1 violence is motivated by Seeking a Social Reward, Changing the Social Reward can be a very effective tool--if it's done right. First, it should probably only be used for Level 1 bullying and harassment behavior, when the target is an individual. It will not be very effective to use this technique to intervene in a prejudiced comment targeting a whole group of people.

Second, timing is everything! For this type of intervention to work, the ally has to recognize that the instigator is about to talk negatively about someone else. Since this type of intervention works best with your friends, you will probably know when your friend is about to say something negative. Usually when someone says something like, "Oh my gosh, do you know Jeff...", or "Oh my gosh, did you hear about Kelly...", it's a good bet that the instigator is about to say something negative. Once the ally hears one of these cues, they will want to interrupt and loudly and enthusiastically talk positively about the person named by the instigator, *with the goal of influencing the SWAY person.*

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Once the sway person has sided with the ally, it's unlikely that the instigator will go against the group and continue talking negatively.

Changing the Social Reward is very effective in meeting both goals. There are many reasons why this technique works. First, because it's preemptive, it's very realistic for students to use this tool because it's fairly low risk for the ally. After-all, the only thing the ally is doing here is saying something positive about someone as soon as their name is brought up—the instigator hasn't even said anything negative yet, so the ally doesn't have to actively disagree with the instigator and cause conflict. So, rather than having to stop the behavior, the action actually prevents the behavior. It will also work to prevent the behavior in the future because humans are so good at figuring out what they need to do to fit into their group. If an instigator tries to gain a social reward by talking negatively and the social reward is changed, they will learn very quickly that they can't get a social reward in this manner. They should quickly change their behavior. The PVPI has presented this model to approximately 10,000 participants, and this technique has been the most popular, and participants have reported overwhelmingly that it is an effective tool.

### **Removing the Social Reward**

Let's look at the same situation, only this time Markus is going to try to stop Ian's behavior by using a technique called removing the social reward. To remove the social reward, Markus will simply recognize that a violence act has taken place, and then calmly tell the instigator that the act was not okay. This technique can be used effectively for all levels of violence, however, it should be encouraged for use on Level 1 and Level 2, as it's not very safe for students to intervene in physical acts of violence. Just like Changing the Social Reward, if Markus is going to successfully remove the social reward he will try to become the focus of the conversation, and persuade Rhiannon to go along with him instead of Ian.

Let's look at this situation again, and this time Markus will Remove the Social Reward:

***Ian:*** *(Pausing from playing the game)* Do you guys know Jeff, that kid in geometry class?

***Rhiannon:*** *Oh yeah.*

***Ian:*** *All he does is talk about playing this game. I swear that's all he does. He's such a fag!*

***Markus:*** *Dude, let's just drop that, it's not cool to say stuff like that.*

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**Rhiannon:** *Yeah, concentrate on the video game.*

**Markus:** *Yeah, you need it (Said kindly and jokingly).*

**Ian:** *Yeah, I need to pay attention.*

If Ian's behavior is motivated by Seeking a Social Reward, Removing the Social Reward should stop his behavior, as it does in the previous scenario. However, we don't know if Markus met the goal of preventing the behavior in the future. If Markus wants to meet both goals he will need to follow up with Ian later. The best way to do this is for Markus to wait for a time when he and Ian are alone and then talk to him about it.

Let's take a look at Markus' follow-up conversation with Ian. This conversation will take place a few minutes after the initial comment. Rhiannon is going to leave, and then Markus will talk to Ian:

**Rhiannon:** *Okay guys, I can't watch you guys play video games all day. I'm leaving. See you later.*

**Ian:** *See you later, Rhiannon!*

**Markus:** *See you Monday!*

*(Markus and Ian continue playing video games for a few minutes)*

**Markus:** *Hey, now that we're alone, let's pause the game for a second.*

**Ian:** *Okay, what's going on?*

**Markus:** *Well, what were you talking about earlier with Jeff?*

**Ian:** *I don't know, dude. He's just been really annoying lately, talking to me all of the time in class.*

**Markus:** *I can understand that, but you called him a fag, and that made me feel pretty uncomfortable, you know?*

**Ian:** *Sorry about that. I totally didn't mean it to come across like that.*

**Markus:** *It's just that I know some gay people, and so do you, and they're really cool. I just don't like it when people talk that way.*

**Ian:** *Yeah, I guess I just didn't think at all before I talked. I'm sorry. Jeff isn't even that bad of a guy. I guess I just talked before I thought about it.*

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**Markus:** *Okay, well just think about it before you say things like that again, okay? But no worries. Do you want to play a different game?*

**Ian:** *Yeah, let's play something else.*

By having a follow-up conversation with Ian, Markus went a long way towards preventing Ian's behavior in the future. However, we don't know if this one conversation will prevent Ian from ever making a conversation like this again. Markus may need to be patient and continue to have conversations like this Ian, if he wants to change his behavior.

### **Previous Painful Experience**

Now that we have looked at incidents motivated by being Unaware and Seeking a Social Reward, let's examine an incident motivated by a Previous Painful Experience or PPE. In some cases it will be very obvious that a behavior is motivated by a PPE. However, in many cases a PPE will look almost identical to a behavior that is motivated by seeking a social reward.

Let's look at a different situation, motivated by a Previous Painful Experience. In this situation, Ian, Alethia, and Daria are watching a basketball game on TV and commenting on it to each other. Alethia is the instigator, Daria is the Bystander, and Ian is the Sway:

**Ian:** *(Speaking to the TV) Okay, Allen, you got this...oh no, how could you miss that?*

**Alethia:** *What was that? He never misses that shot! I can't believe this!*

**Daria:** *It's okay. We still have chance.*

**Ian:** *Okay, we've got the ball again. Yes, yes, it's a breakaway! He shoots...how could he miss that, he never misses shots like that!*

**Alethia:** *Yeah, I can't believe this game. I mean, you'd think with all of the black people on our team we'd totally be winning, but no.*  
*(Daria looks shocked but says nothing)*

**Ian:** *Yeah, I thought it was white men that couldn't jump!*  
*(Alethia and Ian laugh, but Daria just looks uncomfortable)*

It's really difficult to tell if this situation was motivated by Seeking a Social Reward or by a Previous Painful Experience. In cases like these the only way to determine the motivation is to assume that the behavior is motivated by seeking a social reward, try to change or remove the social reward, and watch the instigator's response. Remember, if the

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instigator is only motivated by seeking a social reward, eventually they should go along with the ally and the rest of the group. However, if the instigator has a Previous Painful Experience they are likely to respond in a different way.

Let's look at the same situation again, only this time Daria will try to Remove the Social Reward. When she tries to remove the social reward, Alethia is going to become angry, argue with her, and leave. This kind of reaction will tell the ally that the instigator has a PPE:

**Ian:** *(Speaking to the TV) Okay, Allen, you got this...oh no, how could you miss that?*

**Alethia:** *What was that? He never misses that shot! I can't believe this!*

**Daria:** *It's okay. We still have chance.*

**Ian:** *Okay, we've got the ball again. Yes, yes, it's a breakaway! He shoots...how could he miss that, he never misses shots like that!*

**Alethia:** *Yeah, I can't believe this game. I mean, you'd think with all of the black people on our team we'd totally be winning, but no.*

**Daria:** *Whoa...wait, that's not okay.*

**Alethia:** *(Raising her voice) What do mean that's not okay, there's so many prejudices for black people in sports, it's just ridiculous!*

**Daria:** *Racial comments are just not...*

**Alethia:** *(Now yelling and standing up) Why are you attacking me? This whole thing sucks, this game sucks, I'm leaving!*

*(Alethia storms out and Daria and Ian look at each other, stunned)*

In this situation we could tell that Alethia had a PPE because she got angry and left. If an ally tries to change or remove the social reward and the instigator responds by arguing, looking uncomfortable, becoming angry, becoming withdrawn, or leaving, it's likely that the instigator has a PPE.

When an ally discovers that an instigator has a PPE, it's very important for them to handle the situation carefully. The first thing the ally should do is to take a deep breath and evaluate the situation. Taking a deep breath is both literal and figurative. Literally, when a person finds themselves in a stressful situation it's common for them to hold their breath. When a person holds their breath it causes their heart rate to

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increase, along with their stress level. Taking a deep breath will slow the heart rate make it easier for the ally to take positive action. Figuratively, in a situation like this it's important for an ally to take the time that she needs to decide on the best course of action. The ally has just discovered that her friend is hurting, and may need her help. The ally's goals in this situation are try to identify the PPE, as her friend may not even be aware that it exists, take care of her friend's needs, and try to communicate to her friend in a caring and non-confrontational way that she were not comfortable with the behavior. The following steps will help allies to work with their friends in a positive way to help you meet those goals:

### **TAKE A DEEP BREATH!**

1. Ask a caring, non-judgmental question: "You seemed really upset earlier. Is everything okay?"
2. Keep a relaxed, friendly tone of voice. If you are still too angry to do that, then end the conversation and try again later when you have calmed down.
3. Listen to their story. Listening is not the same as agreeing.
4. Reach for the higher ground. Try to avoid arguing!
5. Be aware of your own PPE's. If you have too much pain or anger surrounding the issue to respond positively, it might be a better idea to walk away, or address it later.
6. Focus on taking care of your friend and your friend's needs rather than the behavior of the person/persons/groups that are the focus of the PPE.
7. *Celebrate "small wins".*

In this situation, since Alethia got angry and left, Daria has plenty of time to take decide what type of action to take. She chooses to wait a few hours and then goes to talk to Alethia. In the next situation, Daria will try to follow the steps and have a positive conversation with Alethia. In this scenario, Alethia is in her room playing the guitar when Daria knock on the door. Alethia lets her in, Daria sits down, and starts the conversation:

***Daria:*** Hey Alethia.

***Alethia:*** Hi (*Alethia still appears to be upset and not wanting to talk*).

***Daria:*** How's it going?

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**Alethia:** Fine.

**Daria:** Um, about earlier...I don't know, are you okay? You stormed out of there really fast and I just wanted to make sure everything was alright.

**Alethia:** I'm fine.

**Daria:** You seemed pretty upset. What's wrong?

**Alethia:** Nothing. Don't worry about it. I just wanted to come back here and work on this song.

**Daria:** I don't know, it seemed like it was kind of a big deal. I mean, you can talk to me, we're friends right? You can tell me if something's going on.

**Alethia:** Yeah, thanks...It's stupid really. You know I used to play basketball, right?

**Daria:** Yeah, you were awesome at it.

**Alethia:** Apparently I just wasn't good enough.

**Daria:** What do you mean?

**Alethia:** Well, see, I went to high school with this girl, and she played basketball with me. I'm not going to lie, she was great, but I felt like when we played we were pretty much even. We had the same number of points...I mean she was a good player but she wasn't any better than me. You know her she goes here, so you know she's black. Well, we played on the same team in high school and I was really hoping for this big basketball scholarship, and she got it instead of me, and I just know it's because she's black. Maybe they wanted another black person on their team. It just sucks because I worked really hard for that.

**Daria:** Yeah, I mean it sucks that you didn't get the scholarship, but those comments you made just really made me feel uncomfortable.

**Alethia:** Okay, well, you know that I don't mean to make you feel uncomfortable.

**Daria:** Yeah, and I know that, it's just that those kind of things are really not okay with me.

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**Alethia:** *Okay...I'm sorry.*

**Daria:** *Yeah...well, do you want to go get some food? I'm completely starving.*

**Alethia:** *Chinese?*

**Daria:** *Definitely.*

In this scene Daria accomplished her goal of bringing the PPE to light, taking care of her friend, and communicating to her friend that she was uncomfortable with the behavior. In this case Daria was able to meet all of those goals in one conversation. Daria was able to meet her goals because she was friendly, caring, a little bit pushy, but not so pushy that she offended Alethia. In this conversation, Alethia didn't just volunteer information—Daria had to push a little bit. Since Daria and Alethia are close friends, Daria knew how far she could push Alethia before the conversation turned into a conflict.

Daria also listened effectively. She asked questions and when Alethia answered, she listened to the answer even if she didn't agree. When Alethia finally disclosed her PPE, Alethia validated that it felt bad when she didn't get the scholarship, but made it clear that it wasn't okay with her to make prejudiced comments. Because Daria stayed calm Alethia heard her and apologized for using that language.

We don't know if Daria effectively prevented Alethia from using prejudiced language again in the future. However, it's likely that Alethia had never connected her behavior to her PPE. Hopefully, now that Alethia has made that connection she will think about it further and make a decision to change her behavior in the future. While Daria was able to achieve this in one conversation, in many cases it won't be this simple and may require multiple conversations over a long period of time to meet those goals.

\* \* \* \*

The methods presented in this section are meant for allies to use with their family or friends—people that they care enough about to try to change their behavior, and that they know well enough to have an influence on their behavior. If an ally tries to use these methods with people that they don't know, they are much less likely to be successful for a few reasons. First, it's much easier for the ally to evaluate the motivation if they know the instigator well, and they are familiar with their behavior. Second, if an ally tries to use these techniques with people that they don't know its possible that those people will become agitated. For example, I had a friend who didn't understand this point, and

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decided to try some of these techniques. If she heard someone say something offensive, whether she knew them or not, she would try to intervene. Usually, those people just looked like she was crazy and would walk away or tell her mind her own business. Finally, she decided to try it with a man that was riding her bus. The man became very belligerent, started yelling at her, and grabbed her by the shirt before the bus driver stopped the bus and kicked the man off. While my friend had the best of intentions, she was not effective because those strangers didn't care what she thought, and she ended up in a physically dangerous situation. This encounter discouraged her from taking further action.

It is also important to remember that these steps are meant to be used when the target isn't there, or, if the target is there, when the behavior is not directed at the target (i.e. two friends talking negatively to each other about a person that is in hearing distance, rather than those friends putting down the target to her face). If the target is present, the situation may have already escalated to the point where if the ally takes action, it will be difficult to do so positively. In situations like these, it may be safer for they ally to enlist the help of an adult.

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### ***Reflection Questions***

- 1) *How can evaluating the motivation for behavior help us to become more effective allies?*

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## Impacting Your Audience

**A**s was discussed in *Creating Appropriate Programs for your Audience* it is important to develop your programs in a way that meets the majority of your audience members where they are developmentally. It is also important to make sure that your programs are engaging and that you have a positive impact on your audience. Here are some guidelines that should help make your audience's experience a positive one, while helping you to get the most out of your experience as a performance educator.

### **Get the audience involved early!**

The earlier you can involve the audience in your program the better. Performance Education is new to most people. Most people have never been to a performance by a "Theater Troupe" where they have been encouraged to be a part of the show. This can be overwhelming for some people. All performances should have some sort of introduction where audience members are told what they should expect throughout the performance. This is usually a good time to do some sort of small activity to get everyone involved.



**Image 5:** The adults in this group were very reluctant to be actively involved in the program. We decided to break the ice with "Baby Sharks".

Image 5 is a picture taken at a Bullying and Harassment prevention workshop that was required for every paid employee of a school district. As is often the

case for required workshops, most of the participants were not very excited about being there, and were not being cooperative or interactive.

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We decided to play a game called “Baby Sharks” in which everyone has to stand up and sing a song, while doing hand motions that go with the song. This is a very silly game, and most of the adults were very reluctant to play. But with a little bit of encouragement we got everyone in the room to do “Baby Sharks”. By the end of the game, everyone was laughing and smiling about the silly game that they had just played. After playing “Baby Sharks” the attitude of the group changed dramatically, and participation increased.

### **Keep it light!**

Violence prevention can be a heavy topic. Try to lighten up the mood. You can seriously and effectively address these topics without making your performance overly depressing or painful to your audience members. This is not to say that your scenes shouldn't be serious, but try to mix serious scenes with lighter scenes. Sometimes humor can be used effectively to address some of these issues. However, it is important that your humor is appropriate and will not be hurtful to anyone in your audience. Using humor is not appropriate if it minimizes the effects of violence on victims, or does anything else to undermine the work that you are trying to do. Follow the PIE guidelines when deciding if humor is appropriate.

### **Keep it real!**

Make sure that your performances are realistic, and that the situations that you portray could actually happen. Use your own experiences to gauge the reality of your scenes. If your scenes are not realistic your audience will not take them seriously.

It is important to find a balance between keeping it real and keeping it light. Remember to keep in mind the guidelines in the *Developing Programs Developmentally* section, so that you don't overwhelm your audience.

### **Have fun!**

If you are not having fun it will be obvious to your audience and they will probably not have fun. Make sure that you are only taking on roles that you are comfortable with. You **ALWAYS** have the option to opt out of a scene if you are not comfortable with your role or the content of the scene.

Don't get so bogged down in the work that you have to do that you forget to do things that are fun. Throughout the year continue to play the improv games that you will learn in training. They are a lot of fun, and they will help you continue to develop into a better improv actor. Work to get to know the other members of your troupe. If you don't know each other it will be hard to have fun together. Also developing relationships

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with your group members will make this a much richer and rewarding experience.

When you are working to develop scenes, try most of the ideas. If someone has an idea, try it. Don't just sit around talking about it. It is more fun and more effective for creating programs to try out different ideas than to sit around talking about ideas. Often ideas that sound great don't work out in scene, or ideas that sound terrible can become the most effective scenes. You'll never know unless you try it.

### **Keep learning!**

Keep learning about the topic. Search out other resources such as books and workshops, and find out about other organizations in the community that are doing the same type of work. The community is full of resources, and the more knowledge you gain, and the more connections you can make, the more effective you will be. Remember, that the second and the third parts of the Ally Process are Gain Skill, and Get Educated. This is an ongoing process. The field of violence prevention is constantly evolving, so make sure that you keep up as best as you can!

# Glossary of Important Terms and Concepts

**Ally:** A person who acts against an act of violence, oppression or mistreatment that is not directed at them.

**Ally Process:** A process that allows people in any of the Stages of Change to practice ally behavior. The Process promotes a developmental increase in ally behavior, allowing someone who is in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stages to practice ally behavior, without being pressured to take action that they are not developmentally ready to take.

**Bystander:** A person who witnesses an event but is not actively involved in the event.

**Imaginary Peer:** The imagined or misperceived peer pressure resulting from pluralistic ignorance.

**Previous Painful Experience (PPE):** An experience in one's past with a person or group, that motivates negative behavior towards that person or group.

**Peer Selection Theory:** People tend to associate with peers whose behavior is similar to their own.

**Pluralistic Ignorance:** The inaccurate belief that an attitude or behavior is more common among one's peers than it actually is.

**Social Norms:** People's beliefs about the attitudes and behaviors that are normal, acceptable, or even expected in a particular social context.

**Social Reward:** Reinforcement for one's behavior from one's peers.

**Stages of Change:** The model of behavior change used to describe the process that we all go through when making important changes in behavior. All of the stages are important and we learn from each stage. Repeating stages is normal.

**Standpoint:** The place from which we view the world. Our standpoint influences our attitudes and beliefs about the world, and the way that we interact with it.

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