



In an emergency  
call 999.

# The 5 D's of Bystander Intervention



**Distract** – Interrupt the situation (e.g. ask the victim a question - ‘what’s the time?’).

**Delegate** – Get help from a person of authority, such as security/ bus driver, if you don’t feel safe stepping in yourself.

**Delay** – Check in afterwards and offer support if intervening in the moment feels unsafe.

**Direct (only if safe)** – Calmly ask the harasser to stop, if you’re confident it won’t escalate the situation.

**Document** – If safe, record what’s happening and offer it to the person affected. Delete the video immediately if asked and do not post online.



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
**HARROW**

The goal of distraction is to interrupt the harassment without confrontation. By shifting attention, you can help defuse the situation and support the person being targeted.

Focus on the person being harassed – **Ignore** the harasser and engage directly with the individual who needs support.

Avoid mentioning the harassment – Instead, start a conversation about something **completely unrelated**.

**Create a physical barrier**  
Continue what you were doing, but position yourself between the harasser and the person being harassed.

**Cause a harmless commotion**  
“Accidentally” drop your phone (in a sturdy case!), spill your coffee, or scatter the change in your wallet—anything that distracts and breaks the tension.

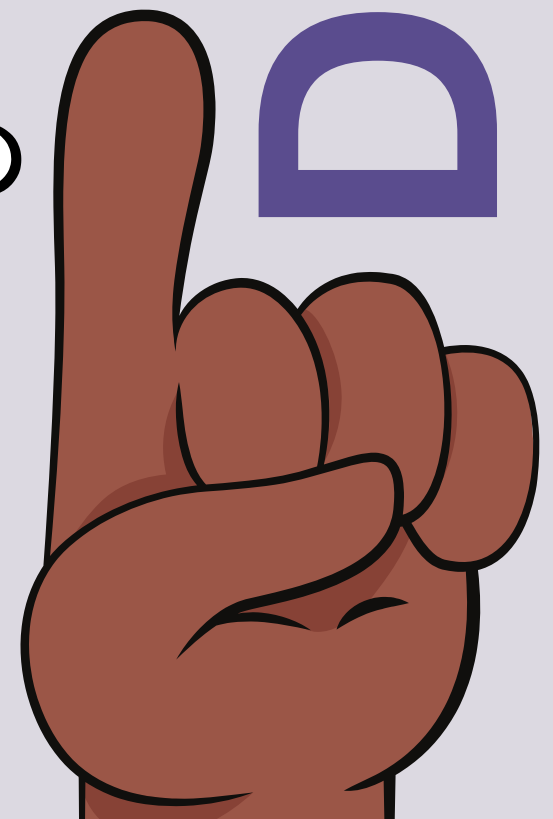
**Act like you know the victim** and are excited to ‘run into’ them. Talk about something that shifts attention away from the harasser.

**Pretend to be lost** and ask the person being harassed for directions, or ask them for the time.

The beauty of distraction is that no one needs to know you’re intervening!

**STEP IN  
NOT ASIDE**

**DISTRACT**



Delegation is asking a third party for help with intervening in harassment.

Look for a Delegate who is **ready and willing to help**. Often, a great choice is the person right next to you or a person of authority in whichever environment you are in (bus driver, security guard, cashier etc).

When you Delegate someone to help you, try to tell them as **clearly as possible** what **you're witnessing and how you'd like them to help**.

**Be specific** when asking for help  
"I think the person in the red hat is making the one in the blue jacket uncomfortable. Can you help me get them out of the situation? Maybe you could distract by standing between them while I check if 'Blue Jacket' is okay?"

**Identify someone with authority**  
In public spaces, your Delegate could be a store supervisor or a bus driver. Near a school campus, it might be a teacher or administrator.

**Work together with another bystander**  
Speak to someone nearby who also notices what's happening and collaborate on a plan to intervene safely.

**STEP IN  
NOT ASIDE**

**WE  
TAKE  
YOUR  
DELEGATION**



Even if you can't intervene in the moment, you can still make a meaningful difference by checking in with the person who was harassed afterward.

Many incidents happen quickly or in passing, and **it's not always possible to act immediately**. But ignoring what happened isn't the only option - offering **support** can help reduce trauma and show that they're not alone.



**Offer support.** Ask if there's anything you can do to help.

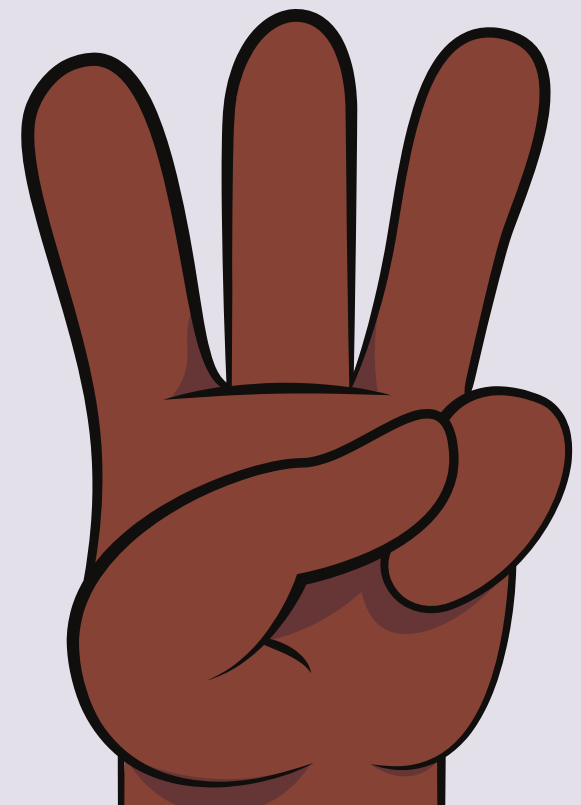
**Check in with them.** Ask if they're okay and let them know you saw what happened and that it wasn't okay.



**Share resources.** Provide information on support services and offer to help them make a report if they want to.

**Share documentation**

**Stay with them.** Offer to accompany them to their destination or sit with them for a while.



STAY  
SAFE

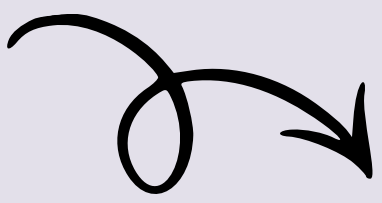
**STEP IN  
NOT ASIDE**





Direct intervention means addressing the harassment head-on by naming the inappropriate behaviour or telling the person to stop. This approach can be effective, but consider the below before utilising.

Before you act, ask yourself:

- 
- Are you physically safe?
  - Is the person being harassed physically safe?
  - Does it seem unlikely the situation will escalate?
  - Does the person being harassed want someone to speak up?



If you can answer yes to all of these, you **might** choose a direct response.

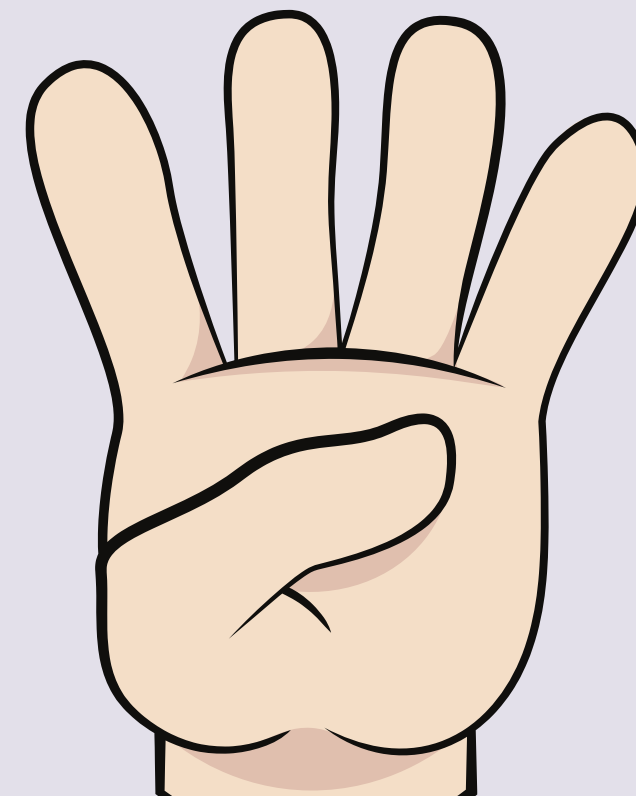
Keep it short and clear. For example: 'That's not okay - please stop.' **Set a clear boundary.**

Avoid arguments or debates. Engaging can escalate the situation.  
If the harasser responds, focus on supporting the person harmed, not on continuing the confrontation.

**Show support for the person being harassed.**

'They've asked you to leave them alone, and I'm here to support them.'

**Call out the behaviour.** 'That's inappropriate.' 'That's homophobic.' 'That's disrespectful.' 'That's racist.' 'That's not okay.' 'That's harassment.'



**TO  
E  
R  
D**



Documenting harassment can be helpful, but it must be done safely and respectfully.

### 1. Assess the situation first

Is anyone helping the person being harassed? If not, use another of the 5Ds before recording. **Documenting without support can add to their trauma.** If someone else is assisting and you feel **safe**, you can begin documenting.

### 2. Respect consent and privacy

Always ask the person who was harassed what they want to do with your recording or notes. **Never** post it online or share it without their explicit permission. **Delete immediately if asked.**



Check out this video  
from 'WITNESS' on  
how to Document  
effectively.

Being harassed is already  
**disempowering**. Sharing images or  
footage without consent can make the  
person feel even more powerless,  
especially if the content goes viral and  
exposes them in ways they do not  
want.

Harassment can be  
deeply traumatic.  
Posting someone's  
experience without  
consent is not helpful,  
it can cause further  
harm.

**STEP IN  
NOT ASIDE**

**DOCUMENT**

