

Slide 1 Introduction**Slide 2 How to use this tool****Slide 2 Purpose of this PowerPoint**

The Everyone's Included lessons have been tried and tested for several years in Scottish Schools through the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme (MVP). These lessons have been removed from the MVP programme to allow it to focus solely on gender-based violence and have been repurposed as part of a series of lessons called 'Everyone's Included'.

The aims of these lessons are to support social inclusion and encourage children and young people to be active bystanders in a safe way when they witness harmful behaviours. There is evidence that bystander approaches in schools to reduce bullying have a positive impact. Supporting safety and inclusion resonates with the national discussion report which has proposed a renewed vision of Scottish education where 'All learners are supported in inclusive learning environments which are safe, welcoming, caring, and proactively address any barriers to learning and inequities that exist or arise'.

It also recognises children's rights to an education and protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse.

This short PowerPoint for staff has been developed to aid in your delivery of the Everyone's Included lessons by giving an overview of bystander theory and an insight into why the lessons have been designed with a particular structure.

Everyone's Included is potentially suitable for delivery in 2nd/3rd level. Individual lessons are linked to Experiences and Outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence and to the UNCRC Children's Rights that these lessons uphold.

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We will now explore bystander theory and related ideas.

Slide 5 What is a Bystander?

So, what is a bystander? In these lessons a bystander is 'anyone who sees, hears or has knowledge of an incident, but is not directly involved.'

We will now refer to the harrowing death of a young woman in New York in the 1960's which sparked global interest in this topic.

Slide 6 Bystander theory

In March 1964, 28 year old bar manager Kitty Genovese was brutally attacked and murdered outside her home in Queens, New York. This was supposedly witnessed by thirty eight people, whom it was claimed at the time did nothing to help. Decades on we know this is not the full story; witnesses were smaller in number, they only witnessed parts of the incident and some did in fact take action. However, what is clear is that the murder of Kitty Genovese prompted questions as to why individuals might do nothing to help those clearly in need.

Psychologists followed up these questions over the next few years, investigating what came to be known as 'the bystander effect' .

Slide 7 Psychologists investigate

Following the murder of Kitty Genovese, two social psychologists by the name of Darley and Latané undertook a series of experiments exploring the conditions under which individuals act when faced with seemingly emergency situations.

One experiment involved placing college student subjects in a room where they were aware of others but could not see them. One of the individuals had what sounded like a seizure and the response of the subject was monitored. They found that the

length of time it took the students to seek help was strongly influenced by the number of others present in the room at the time.

Slide 8 Diffusion of Responsibility

The researchers termed this the '*diffusion of responsibility*' that is the greater the number of people present in an emergency situation, the less likely any one individual is to take action. Darley and Latané found that it was not that the subjects were unsympathetic to the plight of others or weren't attuned to their distress, but rather were more heavily influenced by the behaviour of those around them. It is thought that individuals don't take action as they think that someone else will provide the help or will know better how to help. Additionally, people tend to be afraid of being judged as acting inappropriately during situations of uncertainty, and as a result, avoid taking action.

Slide 9 Pluralistic Ignorance

Subsequent studies have indicated that there are a range of factors that may inhibit bystanders from intervening and may act as barriers. These include the nature of the situation, the ambiguity of the situation, the perceived similarities with the person being harmed and even the mood of the bystander at the time.

A powerful factor seems to be the influence of '**pluralistic ignorance**'. This is the idea that the actions of individuals are influenced by the incorrect notion that other peoples' beliefs, values or attitudes differ from your own. So, if we witness harmful behaviours and are surrounded by others doing nothing we assume others are okay with the behaviour and that we are in the minority. We are then more likely to do nothing despite our discomfort or rejection of the behaviour. Instead the other bystanders might also be monitoring those around them and come to the false conclusion that others are okay with what has happened.

Anyone who has read the Hans Christian Anderson tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, will be familiar with the concept, written about well ahead of its time! In this story every onlooker privately knew that the emperor was naked, but could not be positive that everyone else noticed it until the little boy called out making the fact common knowledge.

During *Everyone's Included* class lessons, learners are asked to shut their eyes and put up their hand if they think there is something wrong with the scenario that has been read out. They are then asked to open their eyes and look around. Here the purpose is to highlight the actual norm, where the majority believe that something is wrong, rather than a perceived and often false belief that the majority believe the behaviour is okay (note, however, that if only a few learners see a problem, the learners are not asked to look around, they are just asked to put their hands down and the exercise is revisited later in the lesson).

Slide 10 Stages necessary for Bystander Intervention

Further study of bystander behaviour has identified 4 stages that must be present before bystanders decide to act. The '*Everyone's Included*' lessons are designed to engage learners in these 4 stages.

Bystanders need to

1. Notice the behaviour and
2. see it as a problem.

Sometimes actions are so commonplace that learners stop taking notice of them.

They may not regard the action as harmful because it happens so often without being challenged (for example talking about someone behind their back).

While 1 and 2 are necessary conditions for bystander intervention they are not enough to ensure a bystander takes action.

Stage 3 involves the bystander feeling that they have the responsibility to take action. Factors that can contribute to learners feeling the responsibility to take action include feeling empathy for the person being harmed.

Stage 4 is that the person has the skills and confidence to act, that is they know what to do and feel able to do it.

Slide 11 Moral disengagement

Normally our own ethical and moral standards result in us making judgements about behaviours and encourage us to act accordingly. This is called moral agency. Our moral standards guide our behaviour, encouraging good and deterring bad. We gain self-satisfaction and self-worth from acting according to our moral standards.

However there are processes that can prevent this while still allowing us to maintain our internal moral standards. This is known as *moral disengagement*.

An obvious example of this would be Nazi Germany where many ordinary people engaged abhorrent behaviours, behaviours they would most likely have found morally unacceptable before the rise of the Nazis.

There are a number of cognitive processes that may allow individuals to 'morally disengage' one of which we have already discussed, the diffusion of responsibility.

Another is '*Euphemistic labelling*' which is when unacceptable behaviours are described in a way that allows individuals to feel like what is happening is not as serious as it is. For example, during war, civilian deaths are described as 'collateral damage' and missile attacks as 'surgical strikes'. In schools, bullying behaviour might be described by those participating as 'just banter' or 'play fighting'. This use of sanitising language allows individuals to morally disengage from a harmful behaviour, allowing it to continue unchallenged.

Disregarding or distorting consequences is another way to morally disengage by minimising the harm an action can have or denying that there are any consequences.

In the lessons, therefore, the harm of an action is explored so that harm is not minimised or dismissed.

Lastly '*victim blaming*' allows behaviours to become acceptable as the victim is somehow thought to have encouraged or deserved the harm.

Slide 12 Self-efficacy

Moral disengagement in itself is not enough to explain bystander behaviour.

Research suggests that self-efficacy may be particularly relevant. Self-efficacy is the belief we have about our innate ability to achieve goals. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy will approach tasks with a high belief that they can succeed and will be more likely to sustain efforts in the face of challenges. Studies into bullying behaviour and bystander interventions have shown that self-efficacy is positively associated with active bystander behaviour. Thornberg & Jungert found that amongst adolescents, high levels of self-efficacy seemed to motivate and engage bystanders while low levels inhibited them from intervening, regardless of their level of moral disengagement. So even if individuals are morally engaged, if they have low levels of self-efficacy they are less likely to be active bystanders.

This is where discussion of options for action in the lessons is really important. This discussion can help learners realise there is something tangible that they can do whilst the nature of class discussion allows a safe place to explore the pros and cons of each option.

Slide 13 Neuroimaging

Researchers looked at the regions of the brain that were active when a participant witnessed emergencies. They noticed that less activity occurred in the regions of the brain that facilitate helping. Distress was the immediate response that characterised bystanders, leading toward avoidance and 'freeze' states of inaction. The second response was sympathy that counteracted the initial response. The likelihood that helping behaviour occurred was the net result of these two responses. Levels of personal distress and sympathy vary from person to person and will influence the decision as to whether to intervene. In the presence of other bystanders, personal distress is enhanced, and fixed action patterns of avoidance and freezing dominate.

Slide 14 Role Models

These lessons focus on bystanders as peers, fellow learners and their role in challenging and influencing norms and behaviours. However the wider school community has a huge role to play, particularly the teachers and staff who interact with learners on a daily basis. Studies have shown that in schools where teachers and other staff model active bystander roles and intervene in harmful behaviours and bullying then students themselves are more likely to intervene when witnessing the same behaviours. They also found the opposite to be true.

Slide 15 Recent research

More recent research has suggested that the bystander effect isn't as common as once thought. An analysis of research in 2011 found that bystanders are more likely to react to emergencies than non-emergency situations. And, if one person is seen helping someone, other bystanders are more likely to offer their help.

A 2020 study from the University of Copenhagen has shown that in public conflicts, bystanders will act more often than not. Researchers analysed hundreds of CCTV clips from the Netherlands, South Africa, and the U.K. From

low-scale conflicts to severe violence, they found that **intervention is the norm**. In fact, 90 percent of the time, three-to-four people stepped in to help if they saw incidents such as someone falling onto train tracks or being assaulted in public.

This suggests that active bystanders are more common than we have been led to believe.

In schools learners are not normally witnessing emergency situations but they will encounter situations where another young person is being excluded from a group, talked about or treated unkindly.

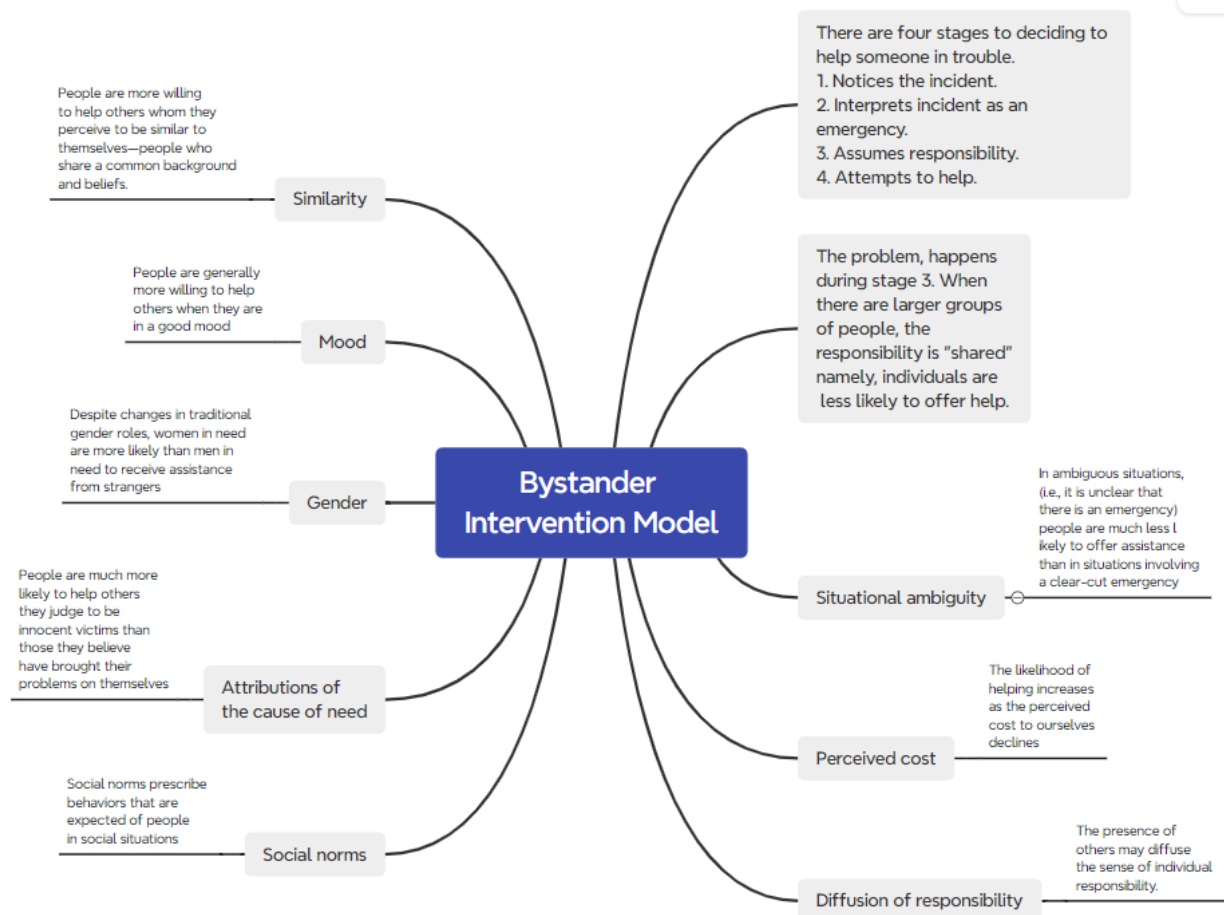
Bystander research suggests that if we support our learners to see the problem when others commit harmful behaviours, and if we build their self-efficacy to intervene in a safe way, we are likely to help them to intervene to prevent or stop harm in our school settings.

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