Now what?

A group you are part of wants to meet in a small room.

“I don’t need a mask—I feel fine.”

You arrive at an event and notice no one is socially distancing.

Now what?

BeVocal is a university-wide bystander intervention initiative. Bystander intervention is recognizing a potentially harmful situation or interaction and choosing to respond in a way that could positively influence the outcome.
1: Recognize Harm

- COVID-19 can be spread by people without symptoms who feel completely fine. We have a responsibility to make a positive impact on community safety by taking steps to wear masks, socially distance and wash hands. Choosing to disregard guidance puts us all at risk.
- Harm around COVID-19 can look like:
  - **Culture:** Perpetuating misconceptions about mask-wearing. Focusing on your personal rights without recognizing your responsibility to keep our community safe.
  - **Imminent Harm:** Bunching up in a checkout line instead of staying six feet apart or having people over for a dinner party instead of a picnic outside.
  - **Post-incident:** Sharing other’s test results, shaming or over-exposing individuals on social media for their actions.

2: Choose to Respond

Longhorns take care of each other and you can encourage others, to do their part by intervening. Ask yourself:

- How can I be helpful in this situation?
  - Make the decision to say or do something to highlight recommended practices and point out unsafe ones.
- Am I the right person to intervene?
  - Sometimes you may feel too vulnerable or upset in the moment to deescalate the situation.

3: Take Action

**Direct Action**

- Be respectful.
- Tell the person directly you think what they said or did is inappropriate and why.
- Proactively negotiate boundaries with people you interact with regularly before any events or issues arise.
- Educate the person by dispelling myths and normalized attitudes about the coronavirus.
- Using “I feel” statements, tell them how the comment or behavior affected you. E.g., “I feel unsafe when you get too close to me.”

**Indirect Action**

- Follow up with the person later via chat, text, or email.
- Get support:
  - Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line 512-232-5050
  - besafe.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line
  - Talk with your friends and colleagues about how you want to hold people accountable in your circles.
  - University Ombuds: ombuds.utexas.edu/student

If everyone works together, we can Protect Texas Together. Remember to consider your physical and emotional safety before intervening.