

Be VOCAL

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

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

I don't need a mask—I feel fine.

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.

Start with a non-confrontational tone: "Is there a reason you aren't wearing a face covering?"

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."

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

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.

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

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