Bystander Training

To begin our discussion of (responsible) bystander behavior, might you please write some short answers on the green pages? (The white copies are for you.) If you are willing for us to collect the green pages at the end, please do not write your name on them and please do not use names. (If people decide to turn in their pages, we will return aggregated and non-identifiable results to all members of the group, and shred the originals.)

A “Bystander” is: A person who observes or learns about good—or bad—behavior by “Others,” and who is not knowingly engaged in planning or executing that behavior. The Bystander typically has no formal role in the situation. And may be a peer. And may or may not take action.

Today you are the judge of whether the behavior of the “Others” was “good” or “bad.”

1. **A bystander behaves in an affirming and helpful way**: Can you think of times when a peer or bystander helped you, or someone else that you care about, in a significant way? What happened? (Examples: a bystander thought well of you and unexpectedly introduced you to a person who could help you. A bystander unexpectedly spoke in public about good work you had done. Or helped you with a problem.)

2. **A bystander comes to know of unacceptable behavior and takes no action**: Can you think of times when something unacceptable happened at MIT and it seems that no one took action? In brief, what happened—that is, what were the issues?

3. **A bystander comes to know of unacceptable behavior and takes action**: In brief, what happened and what was done?
Peer and Bystander affirmations and “mentoring”

- Affirming your efforts and your achievements, in expected and unexpected discussions with you, with specifics about what you did well
- Cheerleading for your work, in discussions with other people
- Coaching, with specifics, to help you when you need to do better, and, with specifics, helping you to avoid mistakes
- Confidant—listening for anything you need to talk about
- Counseling for dealing with dilemmas
- Developing various different talents you might have or could develop
- Griot (teaching about the organization) so you learn “how things work”
- Guarding your interests when you or your team (or your reputation) need some protection from irresponsible people
- Inspiring, to help you define what is excellent, and develop new goals
- Integrity role model—illuminating the way to deal with ethical dilemmas
- Master of the subject matter—helping when you get stuck
- Opening doors and building bridges, helping you build a network
- Patron—speaking for you and your team or office, and providing resources
- Personal and professional role model—providing an “existence theorem” for you on your chosen path
- Pioneer—showing the way, where there are no road maps
- Seminal source—providing you with ideas
- Teacher—helping you organize how to learn what you need to learn

Q. Which kinds of affirmations and mentoring have you known from peers and bystanders at MIT? Please check off those that you have experienced.

Q. Which of these have you done for other people? Which are the easiest? Is there any way MIT could help us all to affirm the work of those around us?
Bystander Interventions with respect to “unacceptable behavior:”

- Act in such a way that the behavior will come to the attention of managers, or of routine monitors (like safety or audit or fiscal officers)
- Ask questions, in an direct or indirect fashion
- Consult hypothetically with campus resources, in a direct or anonymous fashion (“What would happen if something like this came to light?”)
- Discourage and disparage behavior that is unacceptable
- Deflect or derail the behavior (unobtrusively as with humor, or overtly)
- Engage others to help you deal with the behavior
- Interrupt the behavior
- Instigate or trigger a “generic approach” such as asking for relevant training on the subject, or posters, without (yet) identifying any individual
- Mitigate the behavior
- “Name” the behavior, so it does not happen un-noticed
- Observe the behavior, gathering more information before choosing an option, perhaps collecting evidence
- Punish the behavior (at the time or later) or act to see it punished
- Prevent the behavior from recurring (e.g. by making the behavior punishable or by encouraging positive alternatives)
- Re-channel plans or persons or resources engaged in unacceptable behavior, for example engaging the relevant person elsewhere, removing their access
- Report the behavior, (alone or with others; once or repeatedly; in writing or orally; identifiably or anonymously; formally or informally; immediately or later; with a few details or with exhaustive information. Please check all that you have tried)
- Remediate the behavior, (noticeably or behind the scenes, in an overt way or “routinely”)
- Stop the behavior
- Stop the behavior and follow up, directly or indirectly, to see that it stays stopped
- Teach others how to identify unacceptable behavior and to think “Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, and with Whom?” for reporting serious concerns
- Teach others how to lead and exemplify positive alternatives, (in groups, as relevant, or individually: “Each one, teach one; each one, reach one”)
- Try more than one of these interventions as needed
Q. Please make a checkmark for actions that you have undertaken. Are there actions you probably would not try? If so, write N.