



# **VOICES**Against**VIOLENCE**

Helping students, parents, and school staff speak up

## Bystander Stories

Columbia University Center for Youth Violence Prevention  
Mailman School of Public Health

Education Development Center, Inc. Health &  
Human Development Programs

EDC / Teenage Health Teaching Modules

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# **VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE**

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## **A Tool for Addressing the Role of Bystanders 1**

### **Deciding How to Use Voices Against Violence in Your School Community 3**

Identifying Appropriate Audiences and Settings 3

Advance Preparation 4

Introducing Voices Against Violence 5

Focusing the Discussion 5

Bystander Story Summaries 6

- Nikki's Story 7
- Alex's Story 8
- Anna's Story 9

### **Using Voices Against Violence with Students 10**

Introduction 10

Student Discussion Questions by Story 11

- Nikki's Story 11
- Alex's Story 12
- Anna's Story 14

### **Using Voices Against Violence with Adults 16**

Teachers and Other School Staff 16

- Audiences 16
- Note Taker 16
- Ground Rules 17
- Urgent Situations 17
- Opening the Sessions 17
- School Staff Discussion Questions by Story 18

Parents 21

- Leading Discussions with Parents 23
- Parent Discussion Questions by Story 23

Reaching Out to Other Community Member 25

Appendices 26

Appendix A: Who Is a Bystander? (Introductory Activity/Exercise) 27

Appendix B: Resources 29

## A Tool for Addressing the Role of Bystanders

**Voices Against Violence: Helping Students, Parents, and School Staff Speak Up** is a unique tool for helping school communities address the critical roles that bystanders – both youths and adults – can play in preventing school violence. Using three dramatic stories, the video explores the dilemmas faced by bystanders to school violence. It then calls on viewers to find ways their school community can encourage and support bystanders in efforts to prevent a range of violent behaviors, from bullying and physical fights to weapon carrying and other potentially serious threats to school safety.

Each story is presented through the perspective of a **youth bystander**, a boy or girl of middle-school age who confronts a violent or potentially violent situation and must decide how to respond. Viewers see the action as it unfolds, and hear from the bystander, who talks directly and honestly to the camera. This technique brings viewers inside the bystander’s decision-making process, as he or she weighs the risks and responsibilities of intervention. The choice is rarely clear-cut. The bystander struggles with such complex issues as loyalty, friendship, fear of reprisal, uncertainty about the seriousness of the situation, and lack of clarity about what is the “right” thing to do.

Most of the stories in **Voices Against Violence** include teachers, other school staff, and parents, whose presence and actions have the potential to influence the bystander’s behavior. In addition, like students, adults are often unsure whether and how to respond when they are bystanders to school violence. **Teachers and other school staff** are often unclear about what actions they should take when they witness certain behaviors or when a student shares information about a situation that could – but may not – result in violence. **Parents** may hear about potential violence but hesitate to communicate with school officials. They may also counsel their children not to get involved when they see violence occurring or hear about a potentially violent situation.

The goal of **Voices against Violence** is to help school communities create a climate that promotes positive bystander action and reduces violence. Drawn from the real-life situations that bystanders face, the stories in the video are designed to trigger discussions in classrooms, teacher and school staff meetings, in-service trainings, parent meetings, and other opportunities that bring school communities together.

Using the video with these various student and adult audiences can help school communities take the following steps:

- 1. Identify the types of situations their community faces.**
- 2. Build consensus about what bystanders are expected to do in these situations.**
- 3. Plan and take steps to make it possible for both youths and adults to do what is expected.**

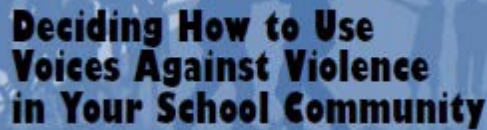
Through focused discussions, **Voices Against Violence** serves as a springboard for school communities to address questions such as these:

- How do student bystanders' behaviors encourage and discourage various types of violence in our school?
- What do administrators, teachers, and other school staff expect young people to do when they are bystanders to violent incidents involving threats, bullying, fighting, weapon carrying, or weapon use?
- What do parents think their children should do? Do parents and school staff agree on what young people can and should do?
- When and how should young people get help from school staff, parents, or other adults in the community? What barriers currently prevent them from getting such help? How can we address these barriers to promote positive bystander actions?
- What guidelines, supports, and safeguards do school staff members need to act effectively and confidentially on bystander information?
- What information, guidance, and supports do parents need to reinforce responsible behavior when their children are bystanders to violence?
- What school-wide and community-wide policies, procedures, and standards are in place – or can be put in place – to support responsible bystander behavior on the part of students, parents, and school staff?

Addressing these questions can help schools develop bystander violence prevention strategies that are right for them and which are informed by students, teachers, other school staff, parents, school safety officers, and other community members.

### **WHY FOCUS ON BYSTANDERS?**

Most attempts to prevent youth aggression and violence focus on the perpetrator or on the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. But as more is learned about the nature and scope of school violence, the role of the bystander in prevention efforts has received increased attention. Bystanders to school violence witness a range of behaviors – bullying, verbal insults, threats, and shoving – that are likely to lead to fights, or worse. A comprehensive school safety plan requires school communities to become more alert to the warning signs of violence. One way to accomplish this is to create pro-social environments that encourage bystanders to take more active roles in violence prevention. However, it is not always clear what these roles should entail: Under what circumstances should bystanders come forward with information about potential violence? When should bystanders try to defuse violent situations themselves, when should they involve others, and when should they just “mind their own business”?



## Deciding How to Use Voices Against Violence in Your School Community

This guide will help you make decisions about how to use the *Voices Against Violence* video in your school community. It also provides tips for preparing and using the stories to lead focused discussions about what bystanders should do to prevent or defuse violent or potentially violent situations.

### ■ IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE AUDIENCES AND SETTINGS

Designed to have broad audience appeal, *Voices Against Violence* can be used in the following settings with youth and adult audiences:

- Classroom discussions
- Student assemblies
- In-service sessions with teachers and other school staff
- Parent-teacher association meetings
- School district meetings
- School board presentations
- Community forums
- Meetings with school safety and resource officers and police

Because students, parents, school staff, law enforcement officials, and other community leaders all play important roles in preventing school violence, ideally *Voices Against Violence* should be shown on multiple occasions to different audiences. Using a common discussion tool with different audiences helps identify which viewpoints are shared by both students and adults and, even more important, which ones are not. Finding out where and why such discrepancies exist is an important first step in identifying and addressing barriers to positive bystander action.

For example, you can ask students to discuss what they should and can do in certain situations, what prevents them from doing what they think is right, and how others – peers and adults – can better support positive behaviors. Similarly, you can ask school staff not only what they would want students to do, but also what they think they and other adults can and should do. Parents, too, can be asked what they would want their children to do, and what they and schools can do to help students and adults make good decisions when they are bystanders to violence or potential violence.

This guide offers users suggestions for leading discussions with these different audiences. It provides critical questions that a facilitator can use to help participants accomplish key learning objectives and brainstorm practical solutions for encouraging violence prevention. This guide also provides examples of closing and follow-up activities that can improve local practices and policies.

One strategy for using the video is to start with an in-service session for teachers and other school staff that prepares them to use the video in their classrooms. Because the video addresses thought-provoking social, ethical, legal, and practical issues related to youth and adult behaviors, it is appropriate for use not only in health education or as part of a violence prevention program, but also in courses such as social studies and writing that seek to develop students' critical-thinking, discussion, and writing skills. Teachers can involve parents by assigning homework that requires students to share stories with parents and get their reactions. Parents can also participate in



discussion groups. When used with these multiple audiences, the video can be an impetus for reviewing and updating local policies and procedures related to school safety, and for ensuring that members of the community know what to do in various situations.

## ■ ADVANCE PREPARATION

Following the guidelines below will help you facilitate discussion.

### Preview the Video

Become familiar with the ***Voices Against Violence*** video, perhaps viewing it with one or more of your colleagues. Viewing the video will help you make decisions about where and how you can best use it to foster discussions about the role of bystanders in violence prevention. It will also provide an opportunity to think about your own experiences and opinions, and the types of responses and reactions you might get from the groups you lead. In previewing the video, follow these steps:

1. As you watch the video, be aware of the feelings and questions that arise for you and those that might surface for others.
2. Think about how viewers may respond to the questions posed by the narrator.
3. Consider what stories might be most relevant to your audience and community.
4. Plan how you can use viewer responses to facilitate a meaningful discussion.
5. Review school policies and procedures regarding violence prevention so that you can respond to questions and provide accurate information regarding what is in place.

Also read through the rest of this guide. It includes a description of each of the stories. Familiarity with the situations and characters will help you become comfortable dealing with viewers' comments and responses. The guide also provides follow-up questions and tips for leading discussions that stay on track and address issues that are important in your school setting.

### Obtain and Test Your Equipment

To use ***Voices Against Violence*** you must have a computer monitor or screen large enough to share with others. If you expect a large group (e.g., more than 25 people), consider setting up more than one TV set or monitor, if possible, or using a large screen that everyone can see. Based on group size and your viewing facility, you may want to hook up a microphone in front of the room so that everyone can hear you as you introduce the video and lead the discussion.

### Plan the Session

Decide how much of the video to show your audience and how to allocate time between watching the video and group discussion. As you plan, consider the following points:

**Sessions with students:** One or more stories can be shown during a class period, with a brief discussion and follow-up activity. If time is available, there is enough going on in each of the stories to build several class sessions, especially if students are asked to share a story with parents as part of a homework assignment and report on their input as well. You may also choose to show the whole video during one class period, to introduce the topic of bystanders. Then in subsequent periods, you can choose one or more stories to be the focus of group discussion.

**Sessions with adults:** Begin by determining the time that is available and the stories you would like to use. Then set a reasonable goal for the discussion. You might choose to hold an informational session for parents or school staff, showing the whole video and describing how it will be used in the classroom and in the school to promote positive bystander behaviors. However, if you want to leave time for meaningful discussion and working on next steps, it might be better to show selected stories and leave more time for group interaction. Again, make sure to view the video in advance and determine which story or stories are most appropriate for your school and your audience.

## ■ INTRODUCING VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE

The introduction you provide before showing some or all of **Voices Against Violence** depends on how and with whom you will use the video. With every audience, we suggest you begin by providing an introduction to the topic of bystanders and stating the program’s goal: To help school communities create a climate that promotes positive bystander action and reduces violence.

The introduction may be as formal as the activity, “Who Is a Bystander?” in Appendix A, or as brief as the following statement:

*Often, when violence takes place at school, bystanders are present. For most people, the term “bystander” means a someone who sees a situation or event occur. However, we’re going to use a broader definition that not only means a person who is present when violence occurs, but also someone who has information about a problem that may lead to violence. Both types of bystanders have an important role to play in preventing school violence.*

*Anyone can be a bystander to school violence – students, teachers, other school staff, and parents. When bystanders have information about violence that may occur or when they see things happening that may lead to violence, they need to know what to do to protect themselves as well as others. Figuring out what to do and when, where, and whether to get help can be difficult, but it is possible to do. We just have to talk about it, work out realistic plans, and then follow through. The video you’re about to see will help us talk about what youth and adult bystanders can do to prevent school violence and make our school a safer and better place for everyone.*

### **Focusing the Discussion**

Although each story is different, the discussion that follows should focus on having viewers consider:

- 1. How bystanders encourage or discourage conflict**
- 2. When, where, and how students should get help for dealing with a violent or potentially violent situation**
- 3. What adults – parents, school staff, law enforcement officials, and community members – can do to support students and help prevent violence**

## TIPS FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSION

Following these steps can help you lead your sessions effectively:

1. Introduce the topic using the introductory statement above or the activity in Appendix A.
2. Show the entire video or a selected story.
3. Establish audience-appropriate ground rules for a constructive discussion.
4. Begin the discussion by using the questions posed by the narrator, Erika Harold, Miss America 2003.
5. Build on participant responses to these questions in order to enrich the discussion.
6. Time permitting, ask some of the other questions provided in this guide, or use your own. As viewers respond to these questions, it may be helpful to have them watch portions of a story again, stopping the action at appropriate points to talk about ways the bystander and others could have responded differently, and what the outcome might have been.
7. Provide accurate information on your school's violence prevention policies and procedures, including reporting, ensuring confidentiality, and addressing harassment and bullying.
8. Summarize key points from the discussion.
9. Brainstorm next steps and/or introduce follow-up activities.

### ■ BYSTANDER STORY SUMMARIES

The following pages contain summaries of the bystander stories presented in the video. Each story is on a separate page. You may want to make copies of a story for distribution when it is being discussed.

# Nikki's Story



## Main Characters

Nikki: The bystander, 11-year-old girl

Kelly: Nikki's sister, 15 years old

Deshawn: Boy in Kelly's grade at school

Trina: Girl in Kelly's grade at school

## Story Summary

Nikki and her older sister, Kelly, are walking to school together. As they reach the entrance of the school, Deshawn, a boy who seems to be interested in Kelly, asks her about math homework. Kelly and Deshawn exchange a few words, then Deshawn watches Kelly as she and her sister enter the school. Trina, another girl who is Kelly's age, is in front of the school with some of her friends. She watches the interaction between Deshawn and Kelly. Trina considers Deshawn to be her boyfriend and doesn't like what she sees.

In the next scene, Nikki and Kelly are in the school library, studying together. Trina and her friends approach. Trina sits across the table from the two girls while her friends stand around in support. Trina tells Kelly that she knows what Kelly is up to with Deshawn, and that she should stay away from him because Deshawn is her boyfriend. Kelly looks at Trina, but says nothing. The librarian notices the girls, and asks, "What's going on over there?" No one responds to the librarian's question. Trina and her friends leave, but not before Trina leans across the table and tells Kelly that she'll be watching her. Nikki looks frightened.

That night at home, Nikki comes into Kelly's bedroom to talk to her about the incident. Nikki suggests telling their mother or someone at school about what happened, but Kelly disagrees. She tells Nikki that she doesn't even like Deshawn, that there's nothing to be concerned about, and that she doesn't think it would be a good idea to tell anyone because there isn't anything to tell. She says to her little sister, "Nik, I have to take care of myself."

Kelly continues to talk to Deshawn at school and Nikki's level of concern increases, but she doesn't talk to anyone about it. In the final scene, Trina is in the cafeteria with her friends; one of them points out Kelly to her. As Kelly is leaving the food line with her lunch tray, Trina approaches, blocks her way, and tells her that she has warned her about talking to Deshawn. Nikki is still in the food line, watching what's taking place. She looks around and sees several school staff. Kelly looks around as well. None of the adults seems to notice what's happening. The scene ends when Trina knocks Kelly's tray out of her hands, and the food falls to the floor.

# Alex's Story



## Main Characters

Alex: The bystander, 13-year-old boy

Samantha: Alex's friend at school

Jake: A boy in Alex's grade, a loner

Monty: A popular student at school

## Story Summary

Alex and Samantha are good friends and frequently hang out together. Jake, a loner, is another student at the school; Alex has known him since grade school. As they are leaving school, Alex and Samantha run into Jake, who is playing with his remote-controlled race car. Monty is a popular student who is hanging out on the school bleachers with a group of his friends. He jumps down, picks up Jake's car, takes his remote control, and starts playing with the car. One of Monty's friends asks Jake whether he will be going to the school dance, and Monty responds that Jake will be at home playing with his "remote-controlled girlfriend." Everyone laughs, except Samantha and Alex. Then Monty crashes Jake's car, hands the remote control back to him, and calls him a loser.

The next day, Alex and Samantha are eating lunch together in the school cafeteria. Jake approaches and says he didn't know that Alex and Monty were friends. Alex explains that he and Monty are not friends; they just have a class together. Jake doesn't seem to be listening. He says that Monty is "a pain," adding that if he were Alex, he wouldn't hang out with him. He walks away.

At the end of the day, Alex is sitting on the steps in front of the school. Samantha approaches and tells him that there's a rumor going around school that Jake has a plan to "get" Monty and his friends, and that "someday soon, they'll be sorry." Alex tells Samantha not to worry, adding that Jake is odd but wouldn't hurt anyone. But Samantha says that Jake was "freaking her out" in the cafeteria earlier. Alex isn't really convinced that Jake is only talking, but he doesn't share his concern with Samantha.

As Alex and Samantha begin to walk home together, Jake approaches, and asks Alex to send a message to Monty for him. Alex restates that he doesn't hang out with Monty but, once again, Jake seems to ignore his response. Instead, Jake pulls up the front of his shirt, revealing a gun. He says, "Well if you see him, that's my message." Both Alex and Samantha are clearly shocked, and Alex asks, "Is that thing real?" Jake says, "Maybe," and begins to walk away, but turns back slightly and says, "See you at the dance." Samantha turns to Alex, looking distressed.

# Anna's Story



## Main Characters

Anna: The bystander, 14-year-old girl

Lindsey: Anna's friend at school

Maya: A new girl at school

Sonia: A bully at school

## Story Summary

A group of girls is getting dressed for gym class, stashing backpacks in lockers and lacing up sneakers. Among them is Anna, the bystander, and her friend Lindsey. Also getting ready is Maya, a new girl. Sonia, another student, is making negative comments about Maya in a loud voice, saying that she "walks around like she owns the school." Initially, Maya doesn't realize that Sonia's comments are directed at her. When she does realize it, she seems puzzled by the remarks, and doesn't respond. Instead, she leaves the locker room, with Sonia calling after her, stating that Maya has no friends. As Sonia turns back to the girls standing around her, she notices that Anna and Lindsey are watching. She says "What? You got something to say?" Both girls look at her but do not respond.

Looking directly into the camera, Anna addresses viewers, stating that Maya is new at school and rather quiet. She adds that Maya has her own style, and that may be why Sonia is picking on her.

During gym class, as students run around the outdoor track, Maya tries to talk to Anna about Sonia and her friends. Anna suggests that Maya ignore Sonia, adding "I wouldn't mess with someone like Sonia if I were you." Lindsey is running a lap, and Anna joins her, leaving Maya alone. Lindsey asks Anna, "Who's your new friend?" Anna explains that Maya was talking to her about Sonia, and says that Sonia is Maya's problem.

The girls are back in the locker room and Maya is looking for her clothes, which are missing from her locker. Sonia says that she doesn't know who took them, but adds that she did see some "trashy-looking stuff" over in a corner. Maya retrieves her belongings and runs out of the locker room. Lindsey asks Anna, "Well? Aren't you going to stick up for your new friend?" Anna reminds Lindsey that she has stood up for Lindsey in the past. Lindsey tells Anna not to come looking for her when Sonia starts bullying Anna.

Anna addresses the camera again. She says that she feels bad for Maya but is afraid that if she stands up for Maya, she'll be harassed as well. Anna also fears that her friends will give her a hard time for befriending Maya, and says that it's a lot easier not to take sides.

In the final scene, Maya is at her school locker when Sonia approaches, accompanied by several other girls. Sonia takes Maya's lip gloss, tries it on, then throws it on the floor. Next, she takes her journal, flips through it, and throws it in the air. As papers scatter across the floor, the group departs. Anna and Lindsey are watching and a teacher is seen in the distance. Lindsey looks at Anna then walks away. Anna stands alone for a moment then walks over to Maya and leans down next to Maya to help pick up her papers.

## Using Voices Against Violence with Students

### ■ INTRODUCTION

Because the *Voices Against Violence* stories are dramatic and engaging, it is likely that students will be ready to talk, so you must be prepared to facilitate the process effectively, stimulate critical thinking, and support students in hearing one another's points of view. You will notice that the narrator often asks "why" or "why not" questions. This is because such open questions often produce the most stimulating discussions. Asking students to voice the reasoning behind an answer forces them to reflect on and analyze their own views. Assumptions and beliefs are revealed, which may result in a student modifying his or her initial position. This broadening of understanding and acceptance of others' points of view are important for identifying common barriers to bystander action and ways to overcome them. Students can also reinforce norms and behaviors that encourage positive bystander action.

#### WHAT IS BULLYING?

- *Repeated negative behavior, over an extended period of time, directed at a target who has less power than the bully.*
- *Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, or insulting behavior that makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable; undermines the victim's self-confidence, and possibly causes the victim to suffer stress*
- *Longstanding violence – physical or psychological – conducted by an individual or group against an individual*

Most studies indicate that 15-20 percent of students will experience bullying at some point between kindergarten and high school graduation. Typically, bullying prevention programs help participants understand the power inherent in bullying and the ways bystanders support the behavior of bullies when they do nothing, directly or indirectly, to intervene. In addition, such programs train teachers to intervene effectively and provide guidelines for developing and implementing school policies and procedures that prevent bullying.

*Voices Against Violence* is part of Teenage Health Teaching Modules (THTM), a comprehensive health curriculum. THTM has a 12-lesson, middle-grades bullying prevention module titled Taking Action to Stop Bullying.

For additional information on bullying prevention, see the website Take a Stand, Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now! At [t www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov).

Remember that students must be taught not only how to organize their thoughts and present them coherently, but also to be respectful listeners when different opinions are voiced. Encourage them to hold other students' ideas up to critical analysis and be prepared to have their own opinions and experiences discussed. By engaging students in stimulating discussions that foster their critical-thinking skills, you will help them come to realize that there are often alternative ways of looking at the same situation.

## TIPS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS

- Establish ground rules for a “safe” discussion; these include not making fun of others’ opinions or experiences, and not putting down others’ points of view.
- Encourage students to express concerns about being bystanders to violence or impending violence, and to describe actions they take to keep themselves safe.
- Give students “equal time”; make sure to hear from all students – both boys and girls. Remember that girls’ and boys’ experiences with violence and as bystanders might be different.
- Emphasize that any student may be a bystander to violence.
- Hold students’ opinions up to respectful but critical analysis by the class.
- Leave time to summarize key points and talk about next steps.
- If the discussion uncovers a situation that needs immediate attention, be sure to follow up after class with the student(s) involved.

## ■ STUDENT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BY STORY

### NIKKI’S STORY

Nikki, the bystander, is troubled by threats that are being made against her older sister by another girl at their school because of a boy.

You can use this story to discuss the following issues:

- The types of disputes (e.g., over boy/girl friends) that lead to threats and fighting
- What bystanders can do to intervene before things get serious
- When students should talk with parents or adults at school
- What might make the situation better (or worse)

### The Narrator’s Questions

At the end of this vignette, three questions are posed by the narrator. They provide a good way to start the discussion:

- **Is there something Nikki can do to stop a fight from happening?**
- **Is there anything the adults in the cafeteria could do?**
- **Is there anything Nikki might have done to keep this situation from happening?**



If there is time, it might be useful to show this story again and ask students to call out “Stop” at each point when they think Nikki could have made the decision to talk to an adult. This is a good time to make the point that students should seek help from an adult as early as possible when it appears that violence may take place.

### **Getting Help from Adults**

In this story, teachers and other school staff are present in several scenes. For instance, the librarian notices that something is going on. The presence of adults provides the opportunity to ask students to discuss their views about getting help:

- 1. Do you think it would have been a good idea for Nikki to talk to the librarian, since the librarian saw the group of girls surrounding Nikki and Kelly? Why or why not? What could the librarian have done to help?*
- 2. Do you think Nikki was right when she said that if Kelly and Trina were called into the office, it would have gotten worse for Kelly? If that’s true, what could someone like the principal or assistant principal have done to make it less likely that Kelly would be the victim of retaliation?*
- 3. Why do you think Nikki didn’t talk to her mother? Is there anything her mother could have done? What would you want your parent to know? What would you want him or her to do?*

The final scene takes place in the cafeteria, where many students are present, but there are also cafeteria monitors. Therefore, you should ask the class about the ways students and adults might work better together. For example:

- 4. Do you think the monitors could have helped? What should they have done in this situation?*
- 5. What about the other students in the cafeteria? What did they see and do? Could they have done something differently?*
- 6. How did Trina’s friends influence what happened? What could they have done differently?*

### **Closing and Next Steps**

There are many ways to end discussion of this story. Here are some examples:

- Encourage students to think about the school staff person or person(s) with whom they would feel comfortable sharing violence-related information.
- Conduct follow-up discussions to identify what students think each type of adult (e.g., parents, teachers, counselors, school resource officer) could do.
- Develop activities to address this topic, such as a poster contest, role plays, and brainstorming activities or homework assignments that include parents’ input about what should be done in a case like the one in Nikki’s Story.

### **ALEX’S STORY**

Alex, the bystander, becomes concerned about rumors that Jake, a loner, is planning to retaliate against Monty, a popular student, and his friends, especially when Alex learns that a gun may be involved.

This story would be a good one to use with students in order to discuss bystanders’ roles in

relation to the following:

- Bullying
- Rumor spreading
- Threats of potentially serious school violence
- Weapon carrying and firearm violence

### The Narrator's Questions

The three questions posed by the narrator provide a good place to start the discussion:

- If you were Alex, what would you do, and why?
- What should adults do if Alex confides in them?
- Do students and adults in your community know what to do if they face this kind of situation?

### Rumor Spreading

To engage students in a discussion of rumor spreading and what they should do when they hear rumors about potential violence, consider asking one or more of the following questions:

1. *Samantha told Alex that there were rumors spreading at school about Jake "getting" Monty and his friends. Why do you think Alex didn't tell an adult at school the rumors, even though Alex thought Jake might be serious?*
2. *If rumors about one student "getting" another circulated among students at your school, would school administrators hear about the rumors as well? Why or why not?*
3. *If staff at your school heard about a threat like the one in this story, what do you think they should do? Why? What do you think would happen?*

### Weapons

Weapon carrying is a serious problem that becomes even more dangerous when a firearm is involved. Consider making the points in the next paragraph and asking students some or all of the questions that follow:

*Although it wasn't clear whether or not the gun Jake had was real, it was important for Alex and Samantha to describe to an adult what happened. Even if the gun was not real, Jake could have been hurt if others thought it was real. There are many things that could have happened – none of them good. For example, what might have happened if Jake went to the dance and pulled out the gun? This is not a real story, but we know that there are times when students bring guns and other weapons to school, and the results have been deadly. Let's talk about this issue:*

4. *What do you think would happen at your school if some students knew that a student had brought a gun to school?*
5. *Why might students not report that a student had a gun at school?*
6. *Do you know what the procedure is for reporting a gun on school grounds? Do you think there are better ways to report? If so, what are they?*

It is also important to have students discuss the role that the crowd played in this story. To do so,

you might ask the following:

7. *Monty had his friends around when he was teasing Jake. Do you think they influenced Monty's behavior? If so, in what ways? Would you consider this behavior to be bullying?*
8. *Neither Alex nor Samantha laughed along with Monty's friends when he was making fun of Jake, but they also didn't do or say anything to discourage Monty. Why do you think that was the case? What are some of the things students can say or do that would make a difference when someone is being bullied?*

### **Closing and Next Steps**

Sometimes students fear reporting that another student is carrying a weapon because they think they might be identified as the informer and experience retaliation. Sometimes they don't know whether a threat is serious and don't want to get a peer in trouble needlessly. However, when it comes to guns, students may be more likely to report what they know or have heard because of the potential lethality of the violence.

Because of the deadly nature of firearms, it is essential that schools have safeguards in place so that students are less afraid to report what they know to adults. Some schools have installed a special phone number that students can use to report the presence of a gun on school grounds. The call is free, even from a pay phone. The person making the call is guaranteed anonymity. Is this a procedure that might work at your school? If so, how would you verify the accuracy of a report and distinguish a legitimate call from a prank or an attempt to get an innocent student in trouble? This and other strategies for reporting weapons could be a follow-up topic of discussion.

Because rumors and gossip often spread widely in schools, a follow-up discussion on this topic is also suggested. Find creative ways to help students understand not only how rapidly rumors spread but also why it is important to share information with a trusted adult when the rumor is about potential violence.

### **ANNA'S STORY**

Anna, the bystander, doesn't like seeing a new girl in school harassed by another girl and her friends, but is concerned about the consequences of getting involved.

You can use this story to engage students in discussions of the following issues:

- Bystanders and peer pressure
- Friendship obligations
- Barriers to intervention
- Teacher involvement

### **The Narrator's Questions**

At the end of the story, the narrator poses three questions that provide a good way to start the discussion:

- **Why did Anna decide to help Maya?**
- **What should happen next?**
- **Is it time for adults to help out?**

## **The Role of Teachers**

In the final scene, a teacher is in the background, walking down the hall. He stops briefly and seems to be looking at Sonia and her friends tossing Maya's papers in the air. However, he continues on his way. When the last question is posed by the narrator – Is it time for adults to help out? – try showing this scene again. It may be the first time that students notice the teacher. You could then follow up by asking:

- 1. Why do you think the teacher kept going? What do you think he should have done? What do you think would have happened as a result?*
- 2. How do teachers and other school staff handle similar situations at this school?*

There are many other questions that can be posed to students about this story, such as:

- 3. Do situations like this occur at this school?*
- 4. How do situations like this get resolved at this school? Do you think there are better ways to resolve them? If so, what are they?*
- 5. What would you have done if you were Anna and why?*

## **Closing and Next Steps**

In this story, there are many bystanders in addition to Anna. There is Anna's friend Lindsey as well as Sonia's friends, who participate in the bullying. Although Sonia's friends never say anything, they are a powerful presence. Sometimes, friends are drawn into bullying by pressure from their peers. Some adolescents feel guilty about their role in bullying and in order to deal with the feelings, blame the victim and decide that he or she deserves the abuse. Others feel compelled to end a friendship or avoid being seen with a bullied student to keep from losing status or being targeted themselves. All of these issues are important ones to discuss with students and school staff as part of a discussion about what youth and adult bystanders can do to prevent bullying.

It may also be useful to explore the issue of girl bullies. In explaining this behavior, some researchers have contended that at an early age, girls are subjected to strong messages from the media and society in general that they must conform to certain ideals of femininity, beauty, and romance to be popular and successful, and they shouldn't trust other girls, with whom they are in competition. The result of this competition can be aggressive behavior. Does this seem like a possible explanation for bullying among girls in your school? Among the suggestions made for addressing bullying are finding ways to help girls feel more confident and powerful on their own, so they are less inclined to pick on other girls. Appendix B contains information about programs that have been developed especially for girls.

## Using Voices Against Violence with Adults

### ■ TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

*Voices Against Violence* aims to help teachers and other school staff better understand student bystanders' points of view. This understanding is critical for developing effective ways to reward positive bystander actions and for addressing barriers to such actions. You can use the questions for students at the end of each story to elicit the perspectives of adults as well. Their views are important, because adults are often bystanders themselves, as well as people that youth turn to for support. Thus, you can use the stories to trigger discussions about what school staff think youth can and should do in various bystander situations **and** what they themselves can and should do.

### AUDIENCES

If possible, *Voices Against Violence* should be viewed and discussed not only by teachers who might use the video in their classrooms, but also by other school staff: administrators, safety officers, classroom aides, cafeteria and recess monitors, clerical staff, bus drivers, librarians, nurses, school board members, and many others. Their diverse experiences as bystanders, student confidants, and security advisors can provide valuable input for developing locally informed policies and procedures.

#### VENUES FOR USING VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE WITH SCHOOL STAFF

- Screen the video at a teachers' meeting to encourage its use with students.
- Use the stories as part of a formal in-service training on bullying prevention, discussing the issues raised and ways to address them.
- Show the video at a staff meeting to begin a discussion of the bystander's role in violence prevention and the need to develop and enforce school policies and procedures.
- After using the video with students, show it to school staff, describing students' responses and suggestions.

Administrative involvement is key to ensuring that follow-up activities – including development of policies and procedures – have the backing and resources needed for implementation. Input from staff whose positions put them on the front line of student violence – witnessing fights or hearing about what might happen – is necessary to ensure buy-in from those who are charged with carrying out policies and procedures day to day. School-safety and legal personnel, including police assigned to schools, bring juvenile justice and law enforcement perspectives that also need to be taken into account.

### NOTE TAKER

Whether you hold meetings with staff who have similar positions (e.g., all teachers) or different positions (e.g., administrators, teachers, and clerical staff) will depend on the size of your school and

opportunities for bringing people together. Regardless of the group composition, the sharing of information is critical for moving from discussion to action. To facilitate this sharing, consider appointing a note taker or recorder who prepares summaries of what was discussed, highlighting similarities and differences of opinion, situations and barriers identified, and suggestions for promoting and rewarding positive bystander actions.

### **GROUND RULES**

It is important to establish ground rules for these discussions so that staff can be candid without worrying about repercussions. For example, you should encourage staff to discuss times when they did not act as they feel they should have. This is not the time for reprimanding them for past behavior, but for looking to the future. Confidentiality is important for those participating in such meetings, as well for any staff, students, or families who might have been involved in the situations that are discussed. You can ensure confidentiality by asking participants not to use names and instructing the note taker not to use names or other identifying information. Of course, if a major incident is being discussed, the names of those who took part may be widely known. However, it is still important to focus on identifying the issues that the incident raised and how people responded so that the school can use these facts to inform future action.

### **URGENT SITUATIONS**

The discussion might reveal an ongoing or potential problem that requires immediate attention. In this case, as the group leader, you are responsible for sharing the information with the appropriate administrator and other staff so action can be taken.

### **TIPS FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH SCHOOL STAFF**

- Choose the school staff who will be involved and prepare ground rules for the discussion. Ground rules are especially important if the group is a heterogeneous one that includes administrators, teachers, support staff, and safety and security officers.
- Decide how much time is available: Do you have time for only one session, or can you hold multiple sessions?
- Adjust the learning objectives to the available time and the audience.
- Decide whether you will show the whole video or only selected stories.
- Review the questions you will ask to lead a focused discussion.
- Be sure to leave time for summarizing key points and next steps

### **OPENING THE SESSIONS**

No matter how you decide to use the video, you should provide your audience with a brief introduction to the topic of bystanders and the goal(s) of the discussion. Although it is important to tailor your comments to fit the audience and setting, information provided in the *Introducing Voices Against Violence* (page 5) can be adapted for school staff. You may also use the introductory exercise in Appendix A.

## BYSTANDER FACTS

- In a nationwide survey, two-thirds of youths said groups of students at their school intimidate others. However, only 16 percent said other students intercede when intimidation takes place.<sup>1</sup>
- Twenty percent of students report that they have heard a student talk about shooting someone at school, and 19 percent had second-hand knowledge about a potential school shooting. Only 54 percent said that they would tell an adult.<sup>2</sup>
- In three-quarters of fatal school shootings, shooters told others of their plans or engaged in behavior indicative of potential violence.<sup>3</sup>
- Middle school principals are more likely than elementary and high school principals to cite physical conflicts as one of their most serious discipline problems.<sup>4</sup>
- Younger students (i.e., 12- to 15-year-olds) were more likely than older students to experience violent victimization – primarily simple assault – in the presence of a third party. Third-party presence during victimization was most likely to occur at school.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Knowledge Networks. (2002). *Social Control, Verbal Abuse, and Violence among Teenagers*. Washington, D.C.: The Empower Program.

<sup>2</sup>Gaughan, E, Cerio, JD, and Myers, RA. (2001). *Lethal Violence in Schools: A National Study*. Final Report. Alfred, NY: Alfred University.

<sup>3</sup>Vossekuil, B, Fein, R, Reddy, M, Borum, R, and Modeleski, W. (2002). *Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States*. U. S. Department of Education.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). *Violence and Discipline Problems in Public Schools: 1996-97*. Washington, DC: DOE.

<sup>5</sup>Planty, M. (2002). *Third-party involvement in violent crime, 1993-1999*. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. NCJ 189100.

## SCHOOL STAFF DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BY STORY

Many of the questions suggested for use with students (see pages 10-15) can be used or easily adapted for school staff. You can also begin discussions by asking the questions that the narrator poses at the end of each story. Most of them focus on what students should do, what they currently do, why they may not be acting in pro-social ways, and what adults might do to support student bystanders. This section provides additional questions that are especially relevant for school staff. They focus on what adult bystanders should do, what adults currently do, and what policies, procedures, and supports are needed to help school staff be more proactive bystanders. You can also find suggestions here for next steps school staff can take to help bystanders “do the right thing.”

### Nikki’s Story

This story raises a number of issues that are important to discuss, such as the actions of teachers and other school staff, as well as the school policies and procedures that could be effective in dealing with situations such as this one. You might ask the following questions:

- 1. What are staff in this school, like the librarian and the cafeteria worker, expected to do when they are bystanders in a similar situations? What are they not supposed to do?*
- 2. What kinds of situations do we want students to tell us about? What should they handle on their own? When should staff get involved? When and what kinds of adult involvement might help? What kinds of actions might exacerbate the situation?*
- 3. Do students know when they should come to us, or what will happen if they do? What are their concerns about getting help? How can we address those concerns?*

### **Closing and Next Steps**

There are many ways to end discussion of this story, and much depends on the issues raised by your group. For instance, if your school does not have a formal system for reporting potential violence – one that school staff understand and can describe and follow and which students feel confident employing – a useful next step might be to have the group talk about how to develop such a reporting system. Whether or not a formal reporting system is in place, you should ask the group to talk about ways school staff can encourage students to come to them with information about violent or potentially violent situations. Confidentiality is of prime concern to students. It is very important to acknowledge and address the belief held by many students – that they cannot be assured of confidentiality when sharing information with school staff.

### **Alex's Story**

Given the potential seriousness of the threatened gun violence in this story, critical questions to ask include the following:

- 1. If Alex were a student at this school, what do you think he would do after Jake showed him the gun? Why?*
- 2. How would staff at this school want Alex to act? What would keep him from acting this way? What can we do to help students in similar situations act responsibly?*
- 3. If Alex came to one of us, how should that person respond?*
- 4. What could have been done earlier to prevent this type of situation from developing?*

### **Closing and Next Steps**

This story raises two important matters that may lead school staff to consider strengthening or changing school policies and procedures for dealing with violence. The first issue is potentially lethal violence. You might want to ask your group the following questions:

- 1. Does this school currently have policies and procedures for how staff should handle such situations?*
- 2. If so, are most staff familiar with what they should – and should not – do?*

If staff do not agree about how they should respond, these questions are important ones to ask:

- 3. Do policies and procedures address how staff should deal with rumors or things they hear or see?*
- 4. Do the policies and procedures address the confidentiality and safety of students or staff who report a threat or weapon carrying?*



*5. Do staff in various positions know how to identify the warning signs of potential violence and when, where, and how they should report such signs?*

If the answer to any of these questions is no, there is likely a need for staff education and perhaps the refinement of the school's policies and procedures.

This story raises another question: What can be done to help students like Jake before they engage in violence? In every school, there are students who are teased, bullied, or feel alienated from the school community. In most cases, such students do not pose any threat to school safety. However, teasing and bullying negatively affect school climate, whether or not weapon-related violence results. Consider posing these questions:

*6. What steps do staff currently take to prevent bullying and other negative student interactions?*

*7. Should more be done? If so, what?*

See Appendix B for a range of resources for addressing school bullying and other forms of violence.

### **Anna's Story**

Some of the other stories depict physical aggression. The conflict in this story revolves around girls being mean to a new student. This behavior has been termed *relational aggression*. Boys are three to four times more likely than girls to use physical aggression; girls tend to practice more subtle and covert forms of bullying. Though girls' bullying can be harder to detect, it is still harmful for all involved – bullies, victims, and bystanders.

Sonia's efforts to isolate Maya socially required the support of her clique. A clique of girls – who are sometimes active and sometimes passive bystanders – can greatly influence such bullying behavior. To discourage relational aggression by cliques, find ways to foster a social environment in which girls feel empowered to take positive steps to reduce bullying and other forms of victimization. Create safe places for girls to voice their own experiences with and concerns about being ostracized or bullied. Promote activities in which girls identify and counter negative stereotypes and media portrayals of how they are supposed to act; such experiences may help girls build more supportive relationships with one another. Viewers might not think of the behaviors shown in this story as violence, and may disagree about whether and when adult intervention would be helpful. Questions for staff to address should include the following:

*1. How common are such behaviors in this school? What kinds of relational aggression do you see and hear about?*

*2. Should adults get involved? What should they do? Will they help or hurt the situation?*

*3. Would you want a student in Anna's predicament to confide in you? What would you do if she did so?*

### **Closing and Next Steps**

If school staff report that such situations are common, they may need to learn more about ways to address harassment, bullying, and other forms of relational aggression. Aggression and violence among girls have received increased attention from researchers and there are a number of gender-specific programs available to address this concern. See Appendix B for resources.

## CREATING AND SUSTAINING CHANGES IN SCHOOL CLIMATE

To promote changes in school policy and climate that support positive bystander actions to prevent violence, it is important to enlist the involvement of school leaders as well staff at all levels. Obtain the support of the school principal and other leaders whose engagement is critical for promoting change and committing time and resources. To build and sustain change, the delicate balance between top-down and bottom-up involvement must be handled carefully. Top-down action is necessary to set general directions for the school and communicate expectations. Bottom-up efforts are essential to fully engage teachers and other school staff in planning for change. In addition, you should bring parents into the process, as well as other key members of the school community, including the police.

### ■ PARENTS

Much of the research on family involvement in schools advocates providing parents with information in multiple ways. You can use a range of channels to reach as many parents as possible, informing them of your school's efforts to address the role of bystanders in school violence prevention and inviting parents' involvement. You can share this information at parent-teacher conferences, through a parent newsletter, at PTA meetings, via a letter from the principal, and as part of a bystander violence prevention kick-off event to which parents are invited. The goal of these strategies is to increase parental awareness of bullying and/ or violence problems at both the national and local levels, the importance of bystander involvement, and the need for parental involvement in the school's efforts. You should show some or all of ***Voices Against Violence*** to introduce and discuss the role of bystanders in violence prevention and the contributions parents can make to supporting students.

To encourage children to respond pro-socially when they are bystanders to violence, parents must talk with their children about what is going on in school. It is important for parents to validate their children's feelings – whether fear, anger, sadness, or any other emotion – and to explain that their children have made the right choice by talking with their parents about an incident or impending incident. Parents can perform the following important roles:

- Help their child be specific about what he or she knows (e.g., who, what, when, where).
- Find out what actions their child has taken and what happened.
- Coach their child in possible ways to respond when they are bystanders.

Parents can also encourage their children to seek help from others, including school staff. However, this is unlikely to happen unless parents see the school as their ally. Parents must feel comfortable not only encouraging their children to come forward with information, but also doing the following things:

- Sharing their children's concerns and specific information about bullying and other violent or potentially violent incidents with appropriate school personnel
- Working with school staff to ensure that their children are protected from possible retaliation and that appropriate action will be taken if retaliation occurs

- Reaching agreement with school staff on how parents will work with the school and their children to deal with future bullying/violent incidents

Students usually have at least one adult at their school whom they trust and can go to with problems. It is important for parents to know who that adult is for their children and to make contact with him or her as well. However, many incidents occur at times and in places (e.g., playground, lunchroom, field trips, bus lines, gym) when it is not possible for a student to talk to a specific teacher or other school staff.

Parents themselves need to know about school policies and procedures that are in place to support student bystanders. For parents to feel this level of comfort with their children's school, the school must promote true parental involvement, make sure that parents have input into and knowledge about policies and procedures, and ensure that parents know what schools expect of students and their families.

There are many ways to use ***Voices Against Violence*** with parents. These include showing the video at a meeting of the parent-teacher association, parent advisory committee, or school board, or arranging a special event. Although valuable input can be obtained this way, such meetings often draw relatively small numbers of parents. Therefore, you might also consider engaging parents through a student homework assignment, as described on page 4. This method has the advantage of promoting parent-child discussions about expectations around and ways to deal with being a bystander.

#### **TIPS FOR USING VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE WITH PARENTS**

- Identify the best times and places the video can be shown to groups of parents.
- Publicize the event and send invitations, as appropriate.
- Fit the learning objectives to the time, setting, and audience.
- Decide whether you will show the whole video or selected stories.
- Review the questions you will ask to lead a focused discussion.
- Be prepared to answer questions parents might have about school violence prevention policies and procedures regarding reporting, confidentiality, harassment/ bullying, codes of conduct, etc.
- Plan introductory comments, highlighting why parent involvement is important, using the points made above and in the introductory script or the activity in Appendix A.
- Establish ground rules, reminding participants not to identify or focus on specific individuals or confidential situations.

## LEADING DISCUSSIONS WITH PARENTS

The stories provide numerous examples of how parents can – or might not – become involved, both as bystanders to potential violence and as supports for their children. Involving parents can clarify expectations about how students, parents, and school staff should respond to various situations and, equally important, can help identify and address gaps in existing procedures and channels of communication.

Whether you decide to show the whole video or only selected stories, you can ask the following questions:

- 1. How would you want your son or daughter to act in a similar situation, that is, if he or she were a bystander like Nikki, Alex, or Anna?*
- 2. If your son or daughter asked for your help, what would you say or do? What advice would you give? What would you be concerned about? Would you want to talk with anyone at school about it? If so, would you know with whom to talk? Are there reasons you wouldn't want to talk with someone at school? Would you talk with other parents?*
- 3. In which situations do you think the school staff should get involved? What do you expect teachers and other staff to do in such situations?*
- 4. Are there other kinds of violent or potentially violent situations we as a school community should be addressing?*

Even within families, mothers and fathers may not agree about the best ways to address different types of violence and potential violence. Parental concerns about having their children get involved, and possibly experience retribution, might be paramount, especially when there is a threat of serious violence. Also, parents disagree with each other – or do not agree with school staff – about whether adult intervention is called for and, if so, what kind is best. This may be particularly true with regard to more common forms of violence. For example, if parents assume that “boys just fight” or “girls are just mean to one another,” they may not think it appropriate for adults to get involved. Indeed, they may want their son or daughter to handle the situations themselves. The **Voices Against Violence** stories provide a safe way to begin talking about these differences. Obtaining this input from parents is an essential step in formulating policies and procedures that will work when difficult situations arise.

## PARENT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BY STORY

In addition to these general questions, you may want to ask additional ones related to some of the specifics of each story. If there is time, consider asking the questions in the next sections.

### **Nikki's Story**

Nikki's sister is concerned that getting her mother involved may only worry her mother, complicate the situation, or make it worse. Ask:

- 1. How would you address Kelly's concern?*
- 2. Do you think that parents would want to be involved in this type of situation? How could they be helpful? How could the school be helpful?*

### **Alex's Story**

Because of the potential lethality of the threatened violence, advance planning is appropriate. Students, parents, and school staff should know what they are expected to do in this type of situation. Ask:

- 1. Have you talked with your son or daughter about what they should do if they hear rumors or get information about a potentially serious threat? Do they know what type of threat is serious? Is it clear what you and they should do?*
- 2. Have you seen or heard about students being bullied, teased, or excluded? Is there a point at which parents or schools should be involved?*

### **Anna's Story**

Almost everyone can relate to being the new kid in school or being singled out and teased for another reason. Ask:

- 1. Has your son or daughter been a bystander in a situation like this? Has he or she expressed concern to you? Have you given your child advice regarding how to act or what to do when a student is being bullied?*
- 2. What else do you think teachers and other school staff can do to prevent or reduce this type of bullying behavior among female students?*

### **Closing and Next Steps**

It is important to tell parents how the information they provide will be used to inform what happens next. A summary of key points made in your session(s) should be sent home, perhaps in a parent newsletter. You can also encourage parents to get involved in the following ways:

- Parent volunteers can develop and/or review school policies and procedures, or address gaps that have been identified.
- Using the resource information provided in Appendix B, parents and staff can work together to identify relevant programs. These may include more comprehensive approaches to violence prevention, as well as bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and peer mediation programs.
- A committee of students, parents, and staff may be formed to address issues of school climate that contribute to violence. The committee might also reach out to other community members who are bystanders to violence, or who can help students make responsible decisions about whether, when, and how to take action.

## Reaching Out to Other Community Members

School violence is not a problem that confronts only schools; it affects the quality of life in the neighborhoods that are part of the school community – its residents, businesses, and local organizations. A community forum is a powerful mechanism for educating the public about the problem, facilitating public discussion and debate, building consensus about actions to be taken, and influencing policy. Such forums ensure that the community’s voice is heard and can help schools learn about key issues facing the world beyond school walls.

When schools actively seek the input of all members of the community – not just parents whose students attend their school – they can engender hope and help build social capital. Briefly stated, social capital is the level of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind together the members of communities and make cooperative action possible. The basic premise of this concept is that interaction enables people to build communities and to commit themselves to one another for the good of the whole.

Although community forums tend to be more difficult to moderate than other types of discussions, they are truly an excellent venue for enabling community members to raise concerns and become involved in developing strategies to address them. Attendance at such forums is better when they are planned at times that are convenient for many segments of the community, are held in locations accessible via public transportation, and, as with parent discussion groups, provide child care.

An excellent publication about conducting community forums is *The Wilder Nonprofit Field Guide to Conducting Community Forums: Engaging Citizens, Mobilizing Communities* by Carol A. Lukas and Linda Hoskins. Published in 2003 by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in St. Paul, Minnesota, the book is a step-by-step guide to planning and holding a community forum, and conducting follow-up activities.

As with a parent event, during a community forum, you can introduce participants to the topic of bystanders and their roles in violence prevention, show all or some of *Voices Against Violence*, and engage participants in a discussion of school violence and the roles the community can play in preventing it. Once the forum has taken place, information can be shared to promote collective action. If a planning process is happening, you can encourage community members to be involved.





## Appendix A

### ■ WHO IS A BYSTANDER?\*

#### INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Before showing the video to students or adults, it is important to be clear about just who bystanders are. The word *innocent* has become so connected to *bystander* that even when the two words are not spoken together, they are frequently thought of as interrelated. In addition, the term *bystander* has been used almost exclusively to describe a person who is present but does not take part in a situation or event. Therefore, as an introduction to the video, the following activity is suggested.

#### Objective

Participants will define and discuss the term bystander in order to gain a better understanding of who bystanders are and how they can affect potentially violent situations.

#### Materials

- Flipchart, chart paper, and marker; chalkboard and chalk; or whiteboard and marker
- A sheet of paper for each participant

#### Procedures

1. Ask: *Who are bystanders? Can someone give me a definition of the word bystander?*
2. Repeat each definition offered.
3. Encourage participants to think of examples or anecdotes to support their definitions.
4. Ask: *How about someone else?*
5. When it is clear that no more definitions will be offered, make a statement such as: *Everyone did a great job of coming up with standard definitions of the term.* Then uncover the dictionary definitions you have written on the flipchart or board and mention any definitions that weren't offered by participants:

#### *by-stan-der*

- someone who observes an activity but is not involved in it
- a person standing near but taking no part in what is happening
- a non-participant spectator
- one who has no concern with the business being conducted

6. Next, tell participants you will give them a few minutes to write down as many synonyms for the word bystander as they can. Explain that synonyms are words with similar or identical meanings and offer an example (e.g., synonyms for *hurry* are *rush*, *dash*, and *run*).
7. After a few minutes, ask: *How many of you came up with ten synonyms? Nine? Eight? etc.*
8. Ask the person who came up with the most synonyms to read them aloud.



9. Write the synonyms on the flip chart or board.

10. Ask participants for additional synonyms that were not mentioned.

11. If the group did not come up with many synonyms, you may want to add some of the following to the list:

spectator	onlooker
observer	passer-by
fence-sitter	viewer
witness/eyewitness	beholder

12. Make some or all of the following points, based on whether or not participants have acknowledged a narrow or broad definition of bystander:

*Taken together, the definitions of bystander and synonyms for the word create an interesting picture of a bystander. It's the image of the bystander as spectator, someone who has little or nothing to do with what's going on – in this case, school violence.*

*However, that's a narrow definition that isn't accurate when we're talking about school violence, which almost always involves several bystanders, most often students, who influence what happens in many different ways.*

*And so, although it's true that bystanders are people who are present when an event – in this case, violence– takes place, they may do or say things that influence what happens. In addition, bystanders are people who possess knowledge about violence that may occur. And bystanders are both students and adults – parents, teachers, librarians, cafeteria workers, administrators, other school staff, and community residents.*

*But because students are most likely to have information about violence that may occur, to get that information earlier than most adults, and to be present when school violence occurs, it's important to figure out how we can support student bystanders in preventing violence.*

*For example, only half of all students who responded to a national survey said they would tell an adult if they overheard a student talking about shooting someone. In another survey, the majority of youths said that groups of students at their school intimidate others. However, only about 15 percent said other students intercede when intimidation takes place. And we know that there were warning signs before most fatal school shootings. Shooters told others about their plans or were acting in ways that suggested that violence might occur.*

13. Close by making a statement such as the following:

*It's important that we work together to make our school a safer and better place for all of us. That's why each of us has to be an alert bystander. But when we have information about something that may happen or when we see things that are happening or about to happen, we need to know what to do to protect others as well as ourselves. Figuring out what to do – whom to turn to and what they should do – isn't always easy. In fact, it's often difficult. But it's possible to do. We just have to talk about it, work out realistic plans, and then follow through.*



## Appendix B

### ■ RESOURCES

Below are just some of the bullying and violence prevention resources that can be accessed via the Internet.

#### **Bullying & Violence Prevention Websites**

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

National Education Association's National Bullying Awareness Campaign [www.nea.org/schoolsafety/bullying.html](http://www.nea.org/schoolsafety/bullying.html)

National Resource Center for Safe Schools  
[www.safetyzone.org](http://www.safetyzone.org)

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center  
[www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)

Safeguarding Your Children at School, National PTA  
[www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/healthsafety/crisis/sgyc/index.asp](http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/healthsafety/crisis/sgyc/index.asp)[www.pta.org/programs/syccsch.htm](http://www.pta.org/programs/syccsch.htm)

The ABC's of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression  
On-line course for school professionals  
[http://pathwaycourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully\\_intro\\_pgl.htm](http://pathwaycourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_intro_pgl.htm)

Take A Stand. Lend A Hand. Stop Bullying Now  
[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)

#### **Fact Sheets, Guides, & Reports**

Bomb Threat Response: A Free Interactive Planning Tool  
A CD-ROM Training Program to Help Schools Deal with Bomb Threats  
<http://www.threatplan.org/>

Bullying at School: Indicators of School Crime and Safety,  
2003 [nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/crime03/6.asp?nav=1](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/crime03/6.asp?nav=1)

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/gtss.html>

The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States  
[www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_final_report.pdf)

National Criminal Justice Reference Service: School Safety Resources  
[http://www.ncjrs.org/school\\_safety/publications.html](http://www.ncjrs.org/school_safety/publications.html)

Peacing It Together: A Framework for Preventing Youth Violence and Curriculum Review Guide  
Book and CD-ROM formats  
<http://www.icvp.org/peace.asp>

Preventing Bullying: A Manual for Schools and Communities  
[www.edpubs.org/webstore/Content/search.asp](http://www.edpubs.org/webstore/Content/search.asp)

Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide  
<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/actguide/index.html>

School Safety and Security Toolkit: A Guide for Parents, Schools, and Communities  
[http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/healthsafety/BSSToolkit\\_Complete\\_PTA.pdf](http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/healthsafety/BSSToolkit_Complete_PTA.pdf)

Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General  
[www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/)

### Female-Specific Resources

#### Gender-Specific Resource Manual

<http://www.nccdjjdp.org/gsm/>

#### Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming

<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/principles/content.html>

#### Pace Center for Girls

<http://www.pacecenter.org/index.htm>

#### Girls Inc.

<http://www.girlsinc.org/>

#### Promoting Resiliency in Adolescent Girls

<http://www.girlscircle.com>

### Award-Winning Violence Prevention Videos

**Bang Bang You're Dead** (93 mins.): EPPSilon Award for Outstanding Cause-Oriented Entertainment

Public Relations Campaign

Ribbon of Promise, 1410 Orchard Street Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 726-0512

**Break the Code of Silence: Save a Life** (18 mins.): International Association of Audio Visual Communicators

blue ribbon, Columbus International Festival bronze plaque

Alfred Higgins Productions, 15500 Hamner Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90077, (800) 766-5353, Fax (310) 472-3232

**Kids Killing Kids/Kids, Saving Kids** (58 mins.): National Education Association Award, CINE Golden Eagle Award

AIMS Multimedia, 9710 DeSoto Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311

[www.aims-multimedia.com](http://www.aims-multimedia.com)

**PeaceTalks** (10 videos, 25-30 mins. each): U.S. International Film & Video Festival Gold Camera Award, Learning

Magazine Teacher's Choice Award, Chicago International Film Festival silver plaque

Live Wire Media, 273 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (800) 359-5437, (415) 564-9500, Fax (415) 552-4087

[www.livewiremedia.com](http://www.livewiremedia.com)

**Violence: It's About Us, Too** (13 mins.): Classic Telly Gold Award

United Learning, 1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 100, Evanston, IL 60201, (800) 323-9084, Fax: (847) 328-

6706 [www.unitedlearning.com](http://www.unitedlearning.com)

### Bystander-Related Books

Coloroso, B. (2003). *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School, How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*. New York: HarperResource.

Giannetti, C.C., & Sagarese, M. (2001). *Cliques: Eight Steps to Help Your Child Survive the Social Jungle*. New York: Broadway.

Newman, D.A., Horne, A.M., & Bartolomucci, C.L. (2000). *Bully Busters: A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders*. Grades 6-8. Champaign, Illinois: Research Press.

Ross, D.M. (2003). *Childhood Bullying and Teasing: What School Personnel, Other Professionals, and Parents Can Do*, 2nd ed. Alexandria, Virginia: American Counseling Association.

Smith, P.K., Pepler, D., & Rigby, K., eds. (2004). *Bullying in Schools: How Successful Can Interventions Be?* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Suckling, A., & Temple, C. (2002). *Bullying: A Whole-School Approach*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

*VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE* is distributed as part of the  
Teenage Health Teaching Modules (THTM). Related  
Teenage Health Teaching Modules:

Education Development Center. (2004). Taking Action to Stop Bullying:  
A Literacy-Based Curriculum Module.  
Newton, Massachusetts: Education Development Center.

Slaby, R., Wilson-Brewer, R., & Dash, K. (1994). Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders:  
Thinking and Acting to Prevent Violence.  
Newton, Massachusetts: Education Development Center.

Contact information: [www.thtm.org](http://www.thtm.org)