MOVING FROM Bystander to Upstander

Take action to combat harassment and aggression
Living in the time of COVID-19

- Trauma
- Grief
- Loss
- Fear
- Uncertainty
- Isolation
Overview

• Introduction from Dr. Milgram
• Prologue: Presentation Goals
• Part 1: Context
• Part 2: When Harm Occurs: Role clarity
• Part 3: Cultural Paradigm – “Where Shift Happens!”
• Part 4: Tools and Strategies: What you can do
• Epilogue: Short Video
• Q&A
Presentation Goals: Do’s & Don’ts

**Do’s**
- Engage
- Inform
- Develop
- Stimulate
- Support
- Build

**Don’ts**
- Shame
- Guilt
- Invalidate/Validate
- Placate
- Diminish
- Harm
- Reinforce negative internalized feelings
Examples of harmful statements

“Slave driver” → “Crack the whip” → “Little lady” → “You need to get on the reservation and follow our plan.” → “You are really energetic for a heavy person.”

“Asians are supposed to work hard and be quiet.” → “Hey autism boy...” → “Are you a Chinese spy here to steal my best ideas?” → “You must get stopped by the TSA all the time wearing that Hijab.” → “Congratulations on your gay marriage. Which one of you is the wife and which is the husband?”

“Where are you really from?” → “You’re too pretty to be hidden in a lab all day.” → “Women should think carefully before getting an MD/PhD; your kids will really suffer.” → “You are so articulate.”
Accountability & Perception

Does everyone at NIH see the situation as a problem requiring attention, engagement, support and \textit{resolution}? 

Should bystanders be \textit{responsible} for holding fellow community members \textit{accountable} for their actions?

What role should NIH \textit{leadership} play in this process?
Accountability

- Definition from Miriam-Webster: 
  an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions

- Is it valued in your workplace?
- Is it a standard?
- Is it clearly defined?
- Is it exhibited at all levels within the community?
- Is it inclusive?
- How is it measured?

- “Accountability is a crucial element of every high-functioning workplace [and] has a clear correlation with higher performance. Research by the US Office of Personnel Management has also indicated that it leads to heightened capability, increased dedication to job roles, boosted morale, and higher levels of workplace satisfaction. Accountability also fosters innovation as staff members become more invested in the company going forward.” *Roubler.com*
Part I: Context
**Elements**

**Challenges:** Microaggressions, bullying, discrimination, hate speech and other forms of hostility are being perpetrated (consciously and unconsciously) against specific demographics within the NIH community. What can bystanders do differently to effectively engage?

**Ongoing support:** Members of the NIH community are invested. Additional resources have been prioritized to help mitigate and resolve these challenges in substantive ways (trainings, presentations and workshops).

**Proposed solution:** Tools and strategies will be offered to NIH community members who have witnessed acts of harm and have felt powerless and ill-equipped to do anything in the moment.

**Patience:** This work will take time and effort. Expect discomfort, do your best, avoid seeking perfection and ask for help.
On March 13, 1964 in Kew Gardens, Queens, New York – 28 yr. old Catherine Genovese was stabbed to death in front of her apartment building.

According to the New York Times, 38 witnesses saw Ms. Genovese in distress and failed to come to her aid or called for help.

The report from the NYT turned out to be wrong. Of the 49 actual witnesses, several did rush to her aid, but only after she had been mortally wounded.

The NYT did write a retraction. However, this became the seminal case in establishing research into what is now known as the bystander phenomenon.

The main question this research sets out to answer is: Why don’t witnesses do something?
Trauma & Resiliency

• “Hurt people, hurt people.”

• Since most of us don’t work or live in isolation, when someone is harmed, an entire community suffers. Trauma is never only about one person; it’s about the collective.

• **Victims & perpetrators** are linked by the “trauma informed relationship.” One cannot exist without the other. Their interaction negatively impacts both themselves as well as any witnesses. Harm doesn’t discriminate – in pervades!

• Be willing to ask for **help and guidance** – it’s okay not to know how best to handle a situation
Part II:

Role clarity - When Harm Occurs
The Players

• The “Victim” – the target of the harmful action(s)
• The “Perpetrator” – the aggressor
• The “Bystander” – the witness to the harm
• The “Upstander” – the goal
# Intent (Aim) vs. Impact (Target)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator - <strong>Intent</strong></th>
<th>Victim &amp; Bystander - <strong>Impact</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I thought</em> that was okay</td>
<td>That was hurtful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a compliment</td>
<td>That was cruel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was expressing my appreciation</td>
<td>I’m weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was looking to find some common ground</td>
<td>I feel disrespected and belittled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a joke!</td>
<td>I feel shamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was trying to make you(me) more comfortable</td>
<td>I’m not welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I don’t see color...</em></td>
<td>It’s not safe here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t trust this place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From now on I’m keeping to myself</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### The “Victim”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerless</td>
<td>There is nothing I can do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>When will this be over?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposed</td>
<td>I feel vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>I hope no one noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self blame</td>
<td>This is my fault for being a...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprised</td>
<td>Is this really happening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>I feel so alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>I need help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Why did this happen to me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamed</td>
<td>I feel like a bad person.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# The Perpetrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malignant behavior</th>
<th>Benign Intent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Dominant</td>
<td>• Attentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Justified</td>
<td>• Generous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free</td>
<td>• Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Immune</td>
<td>• Making a connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exempt</td>
<td>• Pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presumptive</td>
<td>• Respectful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Bystander

• Powerless – There is nothing I can do.
• Anxious – When will this end?
• Embarrassed – Why is my friend/boss doing this?
• Responsible – Why am I allowing this to happen?
• Surprised – I can’t believe this is happening.
• Sad – I feel bad
• Scared – How will this affect me?
• Angry – I hate seeing this

• Shame
• Failure
• Guilt
• Remorse
• Denial
The Bystander

**Passive** observer who doesn’t get involved

**Fearful** of what might happen (personal safety or consequences)?

**Follower** Conditioned not to do anything unless someone else acts first

**Cynic:** “What can one person do in this situation?”
Reason #1: Cynic

Root cause analysis: *Lack of safety and support*

• It’s none of my business
• What can I - one person - do in this situation?
• If I say or do something, who’ll have my back?
• It wasn’t really a big deal – they’ll get over it.
• Maybe it didn’t happen the way I remember.
• Denial – it was just a...
Reason #2: Follower

Root cause analysis: *Leadership representation gap*

- There aren’t enough people who look like me and share my interests or point of view, in positions of authority.
  - The Risk/Reward ratio is unfavorable
  - I’m lucky to be here and am not going to jeopardize this opportunity trying to be “the hero” just to do the right thing.
Reason #3: Fearful

Root cause analysis: *Unknown outcomes*

- For personal safety or professional consequences?
- *What will happen if I get involved?*
- *What happens if someone gets hurt...like myself?*
- *If I say something, will I get in trouble?*
- *This is a person in authority. I can’t speak up without risking my career!*
- *What’s the point? No one would believe me anyway.*
Very often the Bystander and the Upstander share the same feelings when witnessing harm. They both may have empathy for the victim and perpetrator depending on the situation.

Empathy is not required to act.

The difference between the two is in how they respond to a situation.
Risks & Rewards

• The role of the “Observer” is fluid. Being a Bystander or an Upstander is not a fixed point.

• Just because you stand up one time, doesn’t guarantee that you’ll stand up again.

• Just because you didn’t say something when you saw something, doesn’t mean you’ll never take action.

• This isn’t a Hollywood script. Be kind to yourself! Be in a position to learn and grow from all experiences (positive and negative) in the process to affect change within an environment

• Try not to attach yourself to an outcome.

• **Remember to breathe** (to avoid “buck auge”)

Part III: Cultural Paradigm (World View)
Scientists are discovering how deeply culture—including language, logic and values—shape the brain, and are rethinking the implications of studies derived exclusively from Western participants. A region behind the forehead called the medial prefrontal cortex, which supposedly represents the self, is active when Americans in a personality study thought of their own identity and traits. For Chinese participants however, the "me" circuit hummed not only when they considered whether a particular adjective described themselves, but also if it applied to their mothers. The Westerners showed no such overlap. Depending on whether one comes from a culture that views the self as an “individual,” or as an extension of a larger whole, this neural circuit exhibits strikingly different functions.
Going beneath the surface: Dynamics at play when harm occurs
Reason #4: The “Passive” observer who doesn’t get involved

Root cause analysis: Individualism vs. Collectivism

Why should I get involved? My needs are being met and I’m not negatively impacted by this situation. It’s not my problem—(This is an internal dialogue connected to feelings that might tell another story)

An inability to see oneself (the “observer”), the perpetrator and the “victim” as interdependent parts of a larger whole.

A failure to recognize that those who are culturally different from you, might perceive themselves as connected to a larger whole.
Reason #4: The “Passive” observer who doesn’t get involved (cont.)

Root cause analysis: Individualism vs. Collectivism

Where I come from the needs of the many outweigh the individual. How will the collective or group benefit if I say something *in this community*?

That’s just the way things are here, I can’t change them.

In the past I might have been compelled to speak up, but now after learning how things work here, it’s not worth it. I’m not putting myself at risk.
Debunking the myth of “solving it on your own.”

You do not (or should not) feel you must handle any situation alone.

It’s okay to take a pause and think things through.

Consider when might be an appropriate time to say something.

Lead with questions:

- May I speak with you about something that’s been bothering me?
- May I ask you a question about what happened? I’d like to understand where you were coming from.
- Would it be okay if we spoke with you about something we observed/experienced?
The Upstander (from an individualistic paradigm)-
*from the Gundersen Health System – La Crosse, Wisconsin*

- Courageous
- Action-oriented
- Assertive
- Compassionate
- Leader
Perspective One

**Upstander**
- *Assertive* – I get involved
- *Action-oriented* - I can make a difference in this situation
- *Courageous* - I can handle this
- *Compassionate* - I empathize with this person
- *Leader* - I’m going to do something

**Bystander**
- *Passive* – I’m not going to say anything
- *Fearful* - I’m terrified
- *Cynical* – What difference can I make?
- *Cowardice* – I’m scared for myself
- *Apathetic* – It’s not my problem
- *Follower* – Someone else should speak up
The Upstander (from a collective cultural paradigm)

Ubuntu - “I am because we all are”

Within every bystander exists an upstander

What is my relationship to this community?

What is my relationship to others?

What are my responsibilities as a citizen at NIH?

Where do opportunities exist to partner with others?

Who else shares my concerns and perspective?
Perspective Two

Upstander

• Assertive – Let’s get some help.
• Action-oriented - Together we make a difference in this situation.
• Courageous - We can find resolution
• Compassionate - We need to find a way to help both the “victim” and “offender” for the sake of our community
• Leader - Let’s figure this out together!

Bystander

• Cautious – Should we get involved?
• Open – I’ve never done this before, but together, maybe we can help
• Doubtful– Can this be resolved?
• Clarity – How should we proceed?
• Follower – I’m down to help as long as there’s support and guidance.
Part IV:

Things you can do
“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” – Benjamin Franklin
DISRUPTORS: Tools for the Bystander/Upstander

- Is everything okay?
- Hey, I thought I recognized you! How have you been?
- Can either of you tell me how I can get to this address?
- Ouch! What did you mean by that?
- Would you like to sit over here?
- Would you mind helping with this?
- Let’s go over there and help them out.
- I’m uncomfortable too, but we’ll get through this together.
Steps to take from Ubuntu worldview

• **Step #1**: Be proactive! Observe your surroundings and see what’s missing

• **Step #2**: Ask questions! What are other people’s experience at NIH? What do others see as lingering issues or concerns that could lead to harmful interactions?

• **Step #3**: Seek to engage others! Everyone at NIH had to work very hard to get here. Everyone is educated, high achieving, dedicated to their profession and ambitious. This is a solid foundation to branch out and interact with others who are different. See this as an opportunity to learn.

• **Step #4**: Be humble. If you don’t know, don’t assume, ask questions. If you make a mistake and offend, apologize. Defensiveness only makes it more difficult and deepens wounds.
More questions to ask yourself as a Bystander/Upstander

• What’s the nature of my relationship to the people involved? Are they complete strangers, or, do we know each other?
  • What happened?
  • Who has been harmed?
  • Has this happened before?
  • Did anyone else speak up?
• Is there a power differential between you and who you’re upstanding to?
  • What might be some of the consequences for speaking up?
• What might be some of the unintended consequences for failing to speak up?
Some tips for the “Perpetrator” (when someone speaks up)

Do’s
- Take a deep breath
- Listen
- Remain open
- Ask questions if you don’t understand something
- Offer an apology
- Say, “Thanks for the feedback.”

Don’ts
- Defend your actions
- Justify
- Assign blame
- Invalidate someone else’s experience
- Express anger
- Make it about yourself
Some tips for the “Victim” *(when seeking support)*

**Do’s**
- Take a deep breath
- Remain calm
- Express your discomfort in the situation
- Ask questions
- Ask for what you need in that moment
- Seek help from someone else

**Don’ts**
- Remain silent
- Blame yourself
- Make excuses for the Perpetrator
- Treat others the same way
Power dynamics
An *Interdependent* Relationship

**The Supervisor Upstander**
- The Expert (Leader)
- Responsible for the group
- Enforces the rules
- Hold others accountable

**The Student Upstander**
- The Novice (Follower)
- Responsible for self
- Complies with the rules
- Expects responsible leadership
- Demands equity and justice
The supervisor and staff/students must establish community agreements for the environment to be safe and equitable.

These agreements are a set of standards/norms that require the input of all participants.

This is not a top down compliance driven exercise.

When harm occurs, these agreements serve as an anchor to recalibrate; everyone has ownership.

This supervisor is still “in charge”, however his or her voice is not the only voice when there’s a crisis.
Actionable steps for the “student upstander”

Challenge – Fear
• “If I say something it might affect my grade or reputation.”
• “I’m afraid to go to their office by myself.”

Resolution – Seek Allies
• Go to your supervisor with someone – a peer, or another supervisor as a sponsor
• Appropriate institutional and program leadership
Actionable steps for the “supervisor upstander”

Challenge – Privilege Inertia
• “I can’t solve everyone’s problems.”
• “That wasn’t so bad - I’ve heard worse.”
• “I can’t address what happened in a room full of other people.”
• “They’re my colleague and peer – what can I do?”
• The important that everyone does their job.

Resolution – Dealing with discomfort
• If you see something – say something
• Try not to judge someone else’s experience.
• Pull the “perpetrator” aside for a private conversation
• Privately check in with the “victim”
• Difficult conversations can happen in an office, over lunch or coffee.
Steps to take when harm has occurred

- **Step #1: Assess** the situation – is it dangerous? If so, seek help and/or get to safety

- **Step #2: Engage** – With whom do you have the primary relationship in the scenario? Whomever it is, engage them first in an attempt to diffuse the situation

  - If you do not have an existing relationship with either person, assess who you have the most commonality with and attempt to engage that person.

- **Step #3: Interrupt** - Ask the person if he or she is okay. Depending on the response, offer to get support or just listen.

- **Step #4: Document** – Keep a record of what happened. Evidence matters!
For things to really change...

- Is *leadership* invested at all levels within the learning/research community to implement policies and procedures to support necessary changes?
- Will the process be inclusive of different *voices* and *perspectives*?
- How will *S.M.A.R.T goals* be set?
- How will *progress* be measured?
- What *resources* will be allocated and how will they be prioritized?
- What will be your *role* in this process?
- What *risks* are you willing to take?
- What might prevent you from engaging in this work?
- What kind of *supports* and *structures* would you need to feel secure enough to try to evolve from *bystander* to *upstander*?
More proactive tips! Simple salutations:

- “Good morning!”
- “Welcome!”
- “How are you?”
- “Nice to see you today.”
- “May I ask you a question?”
- “Thank you!”
- “You’re welcome!”
- “Have a good day!”

- Extends an invitation
- Heals
- Builds Community
- Shows respect
- Acknowledges each others humanity
- Keeps things simple
The Four Agreements

- **Be Impeccable With Your Word**
  Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

- **Don’t Take Anything Personally**
  Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won’t be the victim of needless suffering.

- **Don’t Make Assumptions**
  Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

- **Always Do Your Best**
  Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse, and regret.
Remember: Words matter!
Anecdote

Shortly after the news of the spread of Covid-19 in Wuhan, a trainee told their PI that they were upset because someone yelled an anti-Asian slur on the Metro (“take your virus and go back where you belong”). The PI responded by saying, “Well, there are crazy people out there; let’s get to work.” Other staff present said nothing.
“Go further, go harder. Is that not why we came? ‘Cause if not, then why bother?”

–Jay-Z