



**PREVENTION  
INNOVATIONS™**

Research and Practices for Ending  
Violence Against Women



**University of New Hampshire**

# Promising Practices for Training: Engaging Bystanders to Intervene

Sharyn J. Potter PhD, MPH

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Executive Director of Research,

Prevention Innovations Research Center

University of New Hampshire



# Presentation Overview

- 1) Context of our bystander work**
- 2) Main tenets of bystander intervention strategies**
- 2) Elements that make bystander intervention prevention strategies effective and**
- 3) Applying bystander responsibility concepts to sexual violence and sexual harassment**

# Context: Approaching Prevention and Response



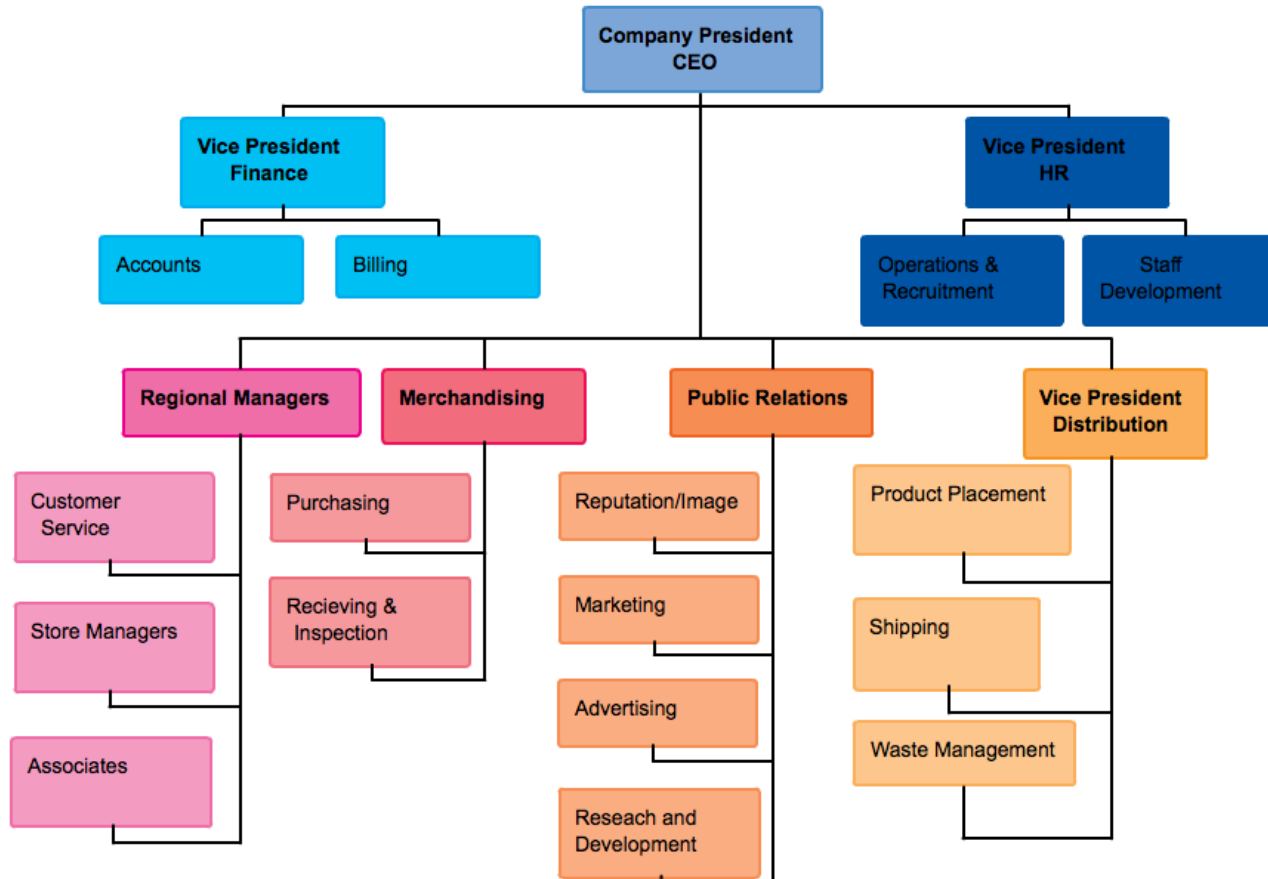
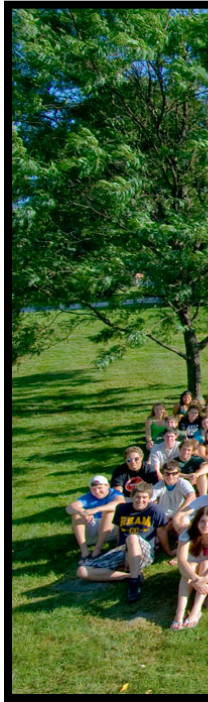
# Context: Prevention Definition

**Prevention is knowledge of the problems of sexual violence and harassment, PLUS skills to stop these problems.**

# Main tenets of **BYSTANDER INTERVENTION**



# Main Tenets: Bystander Intervention



# Main Tenets:

## Bystander Definitions

- *Bystanders* have the opportunity to provide assistance, do nothing, or contribute to the negative behavior.
- *Prosocial bystanders* are individuals whose behaviors intervene in ways that impact the outcome positively.

# Main Tenets: Bystander Intervention Historical Context



**Kitty Genovese**



# Main Tenets:

## Bystander Effect

(Darley and Latane, 1969)

- **How can good people sit by and watch bad things happen?**
- **What situational factors contribute to bystander behaviors?**
- **What are the characteristics of bystanders?**

# Main Tenets:

## Bystanders step in to help when they:

- (1) possess the knowledge to be aware of problems,**
- (2) recognize that they have a responsibility to act,**
- (3) realize that they have both the skills and confidence to take positive action.**
- (4) are being asked to intervene and have a role model.**

# Elements that facilitate EFFECTIVE BYSTANDER INTERVENTION PREVENTION STRATEGIES

# Effective Bystander Intervention: The Bystander Framework

- Awareness and skill building
- Invites community members to get involved in prevention in order to help others in their community.
- “Everyone has a role to play”
- Break down dichotomy of perpetrators/harassers and victims

# Effective Bystander Intervention: Shift Existing Social Norms

**Social pressure to do or say something in situations are often ignored...**

- **Asymmetrical power dynamics**
- **Threat of retaliation**

# Social Norms & Anti-Drunk Driving Messages



1983: US Department of Transportation and the Ad Council. Michael Jackson's song *Beat It* is playing in the background. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=262r7Wuut2A>



**Potter SJ. (2016).**  
“Reducing Sexual Assault on Campus: Lessons from the Movement to Prevent Drunk Driving.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 106:822-829.



# Applying bystander responsibility concepts to **SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

# Two Bystander Intervention Prevention Strategies

- 1) The Bringing in the Bystander® In-Person Prevention Program
- 2) Know Your Power® Bystander Social Marketing Campaign

**Both Prevention Strategies Incorporate**

- **Formative Evaluation**
- **Pilot Evaluation**
- **Pretest/Posttest and Follow-up Evaluation**



# What we know: Target Audience Engagement



University of New Hampshire

# What we know: Familiar Context (Social Self-Identification)

**Three men gang raped a woman in 1987 in Stoke Hall, a residence hall at UNH.**

**Multiple bystanders witnessed this crime and did not intervene.**



# What we know: Importance of Engaging all community members



**Strategies  
Vary by  
Person and  
the  
Situation**

# What we know:

## Program Evaluation and Precise Program Measures

- 1. Formative evaluation during program development (e.g., focus groups, surveys).**
- 2. Pretest and posttest methodologies, 5 week, 6 month and 12 month follow-up surveys.**

# Need Different Strategies

- **One prevention dosage will not end sexual harassment and sexual violence in our communities.**



# In Conclusion...



# Prevention and Cultural Change





**PREVENTION  
INNOVATIONS™**

Research and Practices for Ending  
Violence Against Women



University of New Hampshire

**Thank You.**

**Please contact me with any questions...**

**Sharyn.Potter@unh.edu**

**Sharyn J. Potter PhD, MPH**

**Executive Director, Prevention Innovations Associate**

**Professor, Department of Sociology**

**University of New Hampshire**

