

# BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR

research



Within the field of Social Psychology, there is decades of research documenting basic principles of bystander behavior that have a broad impact on individual and group choices. This body of research seeks to understand why individuals choose to intervene or remain passive when they are in the role of a bystander in a potentially risky, dangerous or emergency situation. The current body of knowledge demonstrates bystander influences such as: (1) diffusion of responsibility – when faced with a crisis situation, individuals are less likely to respond when more people are present because each assumes that someone else will handle it (Darley & Latane, 1968; Chekroun & Brauer, 2002); (2) evaluation apprehension - when faced with a high risk situation, individuals are reluctant to respond because they are afraid they will look foolish (Latane & Darley, 1970); (3) pluralistic ignorance – when faced with an ambiguous, but potentially high-risk situation, individuals will defer to the cues of those around them when deciding whether to respond (Clark & Word, 1974; Latane & Darely, 1970); (4) confidence in skills – individuals are more likely to intervene in a high-risk situations when they feel confident in their ability to do so effectively; (5) modeling – individuals are more likely to intervene in a high risk situation when they have seen someone else model it first (Bryan & Test, 1967; Rushton & Campbell, 1977). These well documented principles not only suggest what inhibits bystanders from intervening, but also, strategies for effectively overcoming these inhibitions and increasing the pro-active response of bystanders.

## **Application to Violence Prevention:**

As the Social Diffusion Theory demonstrates the power of identifying socially influential individuals to endorse and exhibit targeted behaviors, the Bystander research provides the targeted behavior we want endorsed. The behaviors include actively intervening in situations that are imminently or potentially high-risk for violence, as well as effective means to elicit that targeted behavior. Further, this body of research provides specific strategies to increase the likelihood that the trained participants will actually intervene when they are in the role of a bystander.

**The research listed below was utilized to develop the Green Dot strategy. Links are provided (when available), just click and you will be redirected to the document!**

Fritzsche, Barbara A. "To Help or Not To Help: Capturing Individuals' Decision Policies." *Social Behavior and Personality* 28.6 (2000): 561-578.

Herbert Harari, Oren Harari, and Robert V. White. "The Reaction to Rape by American Male Bystanders." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 125.5 (2001): 653-658.

**PDF Link to research article:** [The Reaction to Rape by American Male Bystanders](#)

Jeffrey A. Kelly, PhD, Janet S. St. Lawrence, PhD, Yolanda E. Diaz, MSW, et.al. "HIV Risk Behavior Reduction following Intervention with Key Opinion Leaders of Population: An Experimental Analysis." *American Journal of Public Health* 81.2 (1991): 168-171.

Latane, John M. Darley and Bibb. "Bystander Intervention in Emergencies." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 8.4 (1968): 377-383.

Linda Zener Solomon, Henry Solomon, and Joseph Maiorca. "The Effects of Bystander's Anonymity, Situational Ambiguity, and Victim's Status on Helping." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 117 (1982): 285-294.

**PDF Link to research article:** [The Effects of Bystander's Anonymity...](#)

Peter Fischer, Tobias Greitemeyer, Fabian Pollozek, and Dieter Frey. "The unresponsive behavior bystander: Are bystanders more responsive in dangerous emergencies?" *European Journal of Social Psychology* 36 (2006): 267-278.

Philip Brickman, Vita Carulli Rabinowitz, Jurgis Karuza Jr., et.al. "Models of Helping and Coping." *American Psychologist* 37.4 (1982): 368-384.

*For more information about WOU Green Dot, the research used to develop the Green Dot Strategy, or how you can make a difference in our campus community, please contact:*

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