

TERPS STEP UP: RESPONDING TO BIAS INCIDENTS

There are multiple ways to respond to and intervene during a biased incident. What is most important is to do so in ways that are **safe** and feel appropriate to you. When responding to a bias incident, always be aware of your surroundings and assess if it is physically safe for you to intervene directly and if it's not, consider other ways that you can take action (see below for suggestions). **Always take into account your personal safety.** Here are some possible action steps when you witness an incident:

- **Direct Approach:** One way to intervene is to directly interact with the people involved, in the moment to prevent a problem from happening or escalating. Ask the offender for clarification (e.g. "What did you mean by that?"). Give a disapproving look. You might also try taking the individual aside to have a personal conversation. Additionally, you should use "I" statements, such as "I feel uncomfortable when you say that" or "I'm not ok with what you're doing/saying right now."
- **Distract:** If you do not feel safe confronting the offender directly, you could interrupt the situation through distraction. You can also engage with the person who's being targeted, even if you don't know them -- talk with them, stand/sit with them, walk away with them. The focus of this approach is diversion. If you see the situation and can think of a way to divert the attention of the people in the situation, distracting is a great option. Use humor when appropriate. Yell things or knock something over to create a diversion. Tell the offender that their car is getting ticketed, or their friend wants to talk to them in the other room. Pretend you know one of them and ask a random question (e.g. "Don't I know you from...")
- **Delegate:** When you recognize a situation and you are uncomfortable saying or doing something yourself, or if you feel like someone else is better suited to handle it (e.g. a friend or someone in authority or a police officer), this may be the best option. You could also film the situation. This has the added benefit of making someone else aware of what is going on and that something needs to be done.

Please remember: If you are in a situation in which you feel you or someone else is being threatened, call the UMPD at (301) 405-3555. Or dial #3333 from a cell phone. For more information, go to www.umpd.umd.edu/contact/.

Reporting Bias Incidents

If you would like the option of filing a complaint after an incident, you can submit a complaint of bias or discrimination at the [Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct](#) (OCRSM). Please be aware that documenting complaints is helpful even if you don't know the name or identity of the perpetrator. The online reporting links are:

- For Sexual Misconduct -- <http://ter.ps/reportsm>
- For Discrimination -- <http://ter.ps/DISCRIM>

For more information about your rights, reporting options and available resources, see www.umd.edu/ocrsm/.

