

Ouch! Your Silence Hurts

“When we speak, we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed.
But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.”

– Audre Lorde

Key Concepts

Silent Collusion: Going along with something by remaining silent.

Bystander: A person present but not involved; chance spectator; onlooker.

Passive Bystander: Someone who witnesses a negative situation which requires positive action, considers taking that action, then responds by remaining silent and doing nothing.

Pro-Active Ally: A person who witnesses a negative situation which requires positive action and responds by taking action to address the situation.

Sources: *Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts* by Leslie Aguilar; Dictionary.com; Concepts of Passive Bystander and Pro-Active Ally adapted from the works of Drs. Latané & Darley, Staub, and other researchers and social psychologists

Discussion

Directions: Consider the following questions. Out of respect for others, please avoid identifying specific individuals in your discussions. If you use yourself as an example, let your partner(s) know if the situation is to remain confidential.

1. What was the impact on you of hearing these individuals' life experiences?

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2. When have you seen or been a Passive Bystander?

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3. What can you do to become a Pro-Active Ally? What skills have you used / can you use to speak up?

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