1. Exploring bystanders

**Group size**



Small groups



**Suggested timing**

20-25 minutes

**Method**



Discussion

Learning objectives

* Learn about the bystander effect
* Understand why people might not feel able to help
* Think about what motivates people to help others
* Feel able to help someone in need of first aid

## Overview

## Learn about the impact of the bystander effect by discussing what is means and then thinking through a range of scenarios.

## Delivering the activity

1. Ask learners to get into pairs and discuss the term ‘bystander’. What do they think the word means? If they break down the word down does it give them a clue? e.g. standing by.

*\*The bystander effect describes a situation where many people see someone in need of help but no-one steps forward to help. We know that once people understand the bystander effect and barriers to action they are more likely to help someone in need of first aid.*

1. Ask learners, what might this mean in terms of giving first aid – how might someone be a bystander in this situation?
2. You could ask learners to create a definition of the term, inviting some pairs to share their ideas with the group.

*Share the definition: ‘someone who is present at an incident, but does not step in to help’.*

1. Ask learners to imagine a scenario. They are walking down the street when someone collapses in front of them.
2. Ask them to discuss – in small groups – how might they respond if:

* They were alone in the street but it was getting dark
* They were alone in the street during daytime
* They were with one or two friends, but no one else was around
* The street was busy with lots of other people.

1. Next, ask how their responses might change if the person who collapsed was:

* The same age as them and/or wearing a school uniform?
* An older man in scruffy clothing?
* A young woman in a suit?

Learners can discuss the scenarios in their small groups. When they have had time to do this, bring the discussion together as a whole group.

Prompt questions

* Did you choose to intervene/stop to help in all of the situations?
* What made you decide to help or not?
* If you chose not to intervene – what might have been another way of getting help (e.g. calling 999)?
* What might influence your decisions to help or not help?
* Is this based on the number of people who are around; if you are with friends, or on your own?
* Does the time of day or our circumstances affect your decisions?
* What if you feel you don’t have the skills to help?
* Are you more comfortable to help if the person is of a similar age?
* Would you try to help even if you weren’t sure what to do?
* How might you ensure your own safety?

## Summing up

Discuss what learners have found out about the bystander effect – did anything surprise them?

Now follow this activity with the Bystander effect in action – practise activity on the [Exploring bystanders web page](http://www.firstaidchampions.redcross.org.uk/secondary/helping-others/exploring-bystanders).