SAY SOMETHING
LEARN. ACT. BE.

Field Guide
A MANUAL FOR ELIMINATING INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

A PROJECT OF safe passage
This Field Guide was, and is, a labor of love and a team effort. Many individuals contributed their big brains, editing skills, deep thoughts, creativity, guidance, encouragement, time, knowledge, vision, and support to the creation of this Field Guide and the Say Something project.

Say Something is a representation of a community effort to end violence and we are grateful to our community for the opportunity to work together in this way. And we want to explicitly thank the individuals whose talents, knowledge, and skills made this Field Guide so excellent.

Say Something is a project of Safe Passage, Inc. Northampton, Massachusetts

Project Director: Laura Penney-Edwards

Field Guide, Lead Author: Lynne Marie Wanamaker

Material in this Field Guide draws heavily on the anti-violence education curriculum of Lynne Marie Wanamaker. Learn more at: www.lmwsafe.com

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Welcome to Say Something!

Thanks for stopping by! We are really glad you are here and hope that this field guide will give you the information and tools you are looking for. We are excited you found the Say Something program, and want to welcome you to the growing community of individuals taking action to prevent interpersonal violence!

At Safe Passage, ending domestic violence has always been an important part of our mission; and prevention messages and theory have always been a part of our work. Now, we are taking our prevention efforts a step further by creating Say Something—a community engagement initiative based in international best practices and research on prevention.

Here is the bottom line—it doesn’t matter who you are, what your profession is, who you come into contact with—you can Say Something that can help prevent interpersonal violence. This prevention initiative is designed for maximum community engagement and built to support people in taking action toward ending domestic, sexual and other types of violence.

So, take a look around, learn some information, gain some skills, and come back to us anytime you need some support or help while you Say Something. We are here for you!

The L.A.B.

This Field Guide was created to support real life opportunities to prevent violence in your community and can be used entirely on its own! It is also a helpful tool for Say Something Prevention LAB participants. The Prevention LAB is an in-person training where we invite community members to join us to:

**LEARN** about violence, trauma, privilege, gender and related ideas

**ACT** with others to build skills to promote safety

**BEcome part of an anti-violence community**

We work together to prevent interpersonal violence in our community.

How to use this Book

This Field Guide is your interactive guide to unleashing your personal power and reducing the level of interpersonal violence in your community. It is designed to support anyone who wants to Say Something.

Think of the Field Guide as both a guidebook and a workbook. Within it, you will find facts to build your knowledge and interactive exercises designed to help you to develop new skills.

Within the Field Guide you will see two special kinds of text:

**Sidebars** invite your reflection on some of the complexities and “what ifs?” that arise in this work.

**Exercises** invite you to get to work! You can complete the exercises by yourself or with a friend. Most exercises are open-ended and ask you to apply your growing knowledge, observe scenarios, and consider your options for response.

The scenarios presented may remind you of situations you have heard of or experienced. That’s great! Real life examples are very helpful for learning how to Say Something. But remember: thinking about alternative responses or reactions to the situation doesn’t mean you did anything wrong in the past. We are all learning together.

Other exercises give you a chance to practice a skill. The practice opportunities in this Field Guide are just a starting place—we encourage you to find lots more. To connect with others working on the same skills, access the Say Something community online.

As you read the facts and complete the exercises in this Field Guide, keep in mind that you are part of an expansive, diverse movement of people working to reduce interpersonal violence in their local communities and throughout the world. Remember that people of all genders, ages, races, cultures, sexualities, faiths, abilities and nationalities are reflected on these pages. Challenge yourself to imagine the people described in the scenarios as similar to you—or different from you—regardless of their role in the situation. As you will see, all people are affected by violence—whether as survivors, witnesses, or perpetrators. The great hope of this work lies in the fact that any one of us can Say Something to make a difference.
Hey, you. Yes, you there. You’re invited...

You’re invited to share our vision of a community:

- free of domestic and sexual violence
- where neighbors step up to protect one another
- where people who want to end violence know what to do and how to do it
- where survivors are honored and perpetrators are held accountable
- where all are safe

You’re invited to help end domestic and sexual violence.

Public health experts tell us that when people just like you decide not to allow domestic violence in your community, you create a deterrent to domestic violence. Where neighbors Say Something against perpetration, domestic violence decreases. The folks in the know about child sexual abuse prevention arena tell us that when communities maintain standards of behavior incompatible with sexual abuse, people are stopped from abusing before it happens. And at college campuses across the nation, young people are learning how to interrupt sexual violation at its earliest warning signs. Efforts like these, where community members take action to interrupt violence, are sometimes called bystander intervention. Being a powerful bystander means feeling connected to and responsible for the people around you—friends, family, and neighbors. It means knowing the warning signs of domestic and sexual violence. It means trusting your gut when you feel like something’s not right. It means being willing to be awkward. It means exercising judgment about when to act and when to ask for help.

Being an empowered bystander means you do more than stand by -- you Say Something!
You’re invited to know more.

The American Medical Association named sexual violence as an epidemic in 1995. Yet few are aware how many people are affected by domestic and sexual violence, the cultural attitudes and warning signs that precede it: or the powerful effect ordinary people have to halt it. In this Field Guide, you will learn how many of the people in your life experience domestic and sexual violence. You will learn how gender affects individuals’ risks or experiences of violence. You will learn the warning signs that violence may occur or already be present in an intimate partnership.

You will also learn what it takes for a community to reduce domestic and sexual violence. Rigid gender roles, victim-blaming and secrecy are out. Healthy and powerful masculinities and femininities, accountability for abusive behaviors and shared responsibility for safety are in. We’ll show you how to take action to strengthen your violence-prevention skills and capacities in your own world.

When you know the real deal about domestic and sexual violence, you can correct misinformation when you hear it stated as fact. You can increase awareness for abusive behaviors and shared responsibility for safety are in. We’ll show you how to take action to strengthen your violence-prevention skills and capacities in your own world.

Let’s get started!

Research tells us that bystanders who “are confident in their ability to intervene, either from past experience or skills and training, are more likely to intervene.”2 The information, interactive exercises and suggestions for practice in this Field Guide will build your confidence and help you Say Something when it really counts!

What is violence?

It’s hard to pick up a newspaper or watch the news without hearing about violence. But what exactly is violence?

Violence is commonly understood as the use of physical force—via weapons or body parts—by one person to harm another person’s body. An expanded definition of violence includes the use of power—via coercion, manipulation, or threat—to cause harm to another person. The form that violence takes may be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or spiritual.

We use the umbrella term interpersonal violence to describe what happens when one person hurts another person.

Different types of violence follow recognizable patterns and dynamics. It’s important to understand how these kinds of violence operate in people’s lives.

What does a safe community look like?

In communities with lower rates of interpersonal violence:

- People have the knowledge, skills and courage to take action when they see the warning signs of violence.
- Acts of aggression and violation are not tolerated.
- Behavior that contributes to violence is seen and stopped.
- People of all genders express strength and gentleness, courage and compassion.
- Gender roles are fluid and people are free to express their true selves.
- Survivors of violence are believed, supported and celebrated for their resilience.
- Perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.
- Victims are not blamed.
- Neighbors, friends and family members commit to one another’s safety.
- The privacy of family, personal or romantic relationships does not lead to secrecy or silence around violence in relationships.
- Safety is everybody’s business.

2) LEARN
Facts

What we know:

- Lots of people experience domestic and sexual violence.
- People of all genders experience domestic and sexual violence as victims, witnesses and survivors.
- Most perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence are men.
- Most victims of domestic and sexual violence are women.
- Domestic and sexual violence often co-exist.
- Men who experience violence in their lives first experience it when they are children, teens or young adults.
- Violence has short- and long-term negative effects on survivors.

Lots of people experience domestic and sexual violence. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control conducted the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.

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"One of the most important risk factors for women — in terms of their vulnerability to sexual assault — is being married or cohabitating with a [male] partner."


Perpetrators
Most perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence are men.

- The majority of women who experienced sexual and/or domestic violence reported that their perpetrators were male.
- The majority of men who experienced rape reported that their perpetrators were male.

Children and Youth
Most people who experience violence in their lives first experience it when they are children, teens or young adults.

- 80% of women who experienced completed rape were first raped before their 25th birthday; 42% before the age of 18.
- 28% of men who experienced completed rape were first raped at or before age 10.
- 22% of women and 15% of men who ever experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner first experienced some form of intimate partner violence between ages 11 and 17.

Effects of violence
Violence has short- and long-term negative effects on survivors.

- People who experienced violence were more likely to report frequent headaches, chronic pain, and difficulty with sleeping, activity limitations, poor physical health, poor mental health, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, and diabetes than those who had not been victimized.

There are no groups who are immune to interpersonal violence. However, communities that are at a social disadvantage due to oppression are affected more deeply.

- Black women experience interpersonal violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white women.
- 66% of transgender folks will experience sexual assault in their lives (US Office for Victims of Crimes).
- 84.3% of American Indian and Alaska Native Women experience violence in their lifetime, with 56.1% experiencing sexual violence.
- Those with a disability are twice as likely to be sexual assaulted than a person without a disability.


*The CDC references two exclusive gender categories: “men” and “women.” This means the fact that women are disproportionately affected by sexual and domestic violence, but obscures the experiences of people of other gender identities. For more information, go to page 14-15.

Statistics
Lots of people experience domestic and sexual violence. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control conducted the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.

Here are some of their findings:

- 18% of women have been raped in their lifetime.
- 1 in 4 women have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner.
- 16% of women have been stalked during their lifetime.
- 51% of women who were raped were assaulted by a current or former intimate partner and 41% by an acquaintance.
- 45% of women experienced a sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lives.

Men
People of all genders experience domestic and sexual violence.

- 1% of men have been raped in their lifetime.
- 1 in 7 men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner.
- 5% of men have been stalked during their lifetime.
- 52% of men who were raped were assaulted by an acquaintance.
- 22% of men experience a sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lives.

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Multi-Oppression Lens

As we’ve seen from the research, there is a gendered element to domestic and sexual violence. That is to say, women are disproportionately affected as victims and survivors, and men are disproportionately represented as perpetrators. The terms violence against women and gendered violence are sometimes used to describe this social reality.

At Say Something, we believe that the epidemic of domestic and sexual violence perpetrated against women is supported by a culture of sexism: attitudes, speech, behavior, social structures, laws, and institutions throughout our society that are systematically biased in favor of men.

We also understand that sexism exists alongside many other types of discrimination, oppression and violence. Each of these expressions of bias reduces the safety, diminishes the quality of life, limits the access to privilege and resources, and denigrates the humanity of those affected. Our concerns include racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism, prejudice against immigrants, religious intolerance and other oppressions that systematically put individuals at a disadvantage because of some aspect of their identity or membership in a target group.

Say Something is proud to align with others engaged in multicultural, social justice and anti-oppression work. We owe a debt of inspiration to the pioneering black feminists of the 1970s for seeking “an integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking.”

Gender

Say Something rejects the gender binary.

Traditional models of gender hold that people fit into one of two clearly defined categories: male or female. This is called the gender binary. At Say Something, we understand that the gender binary is an incomplete model for understanding the human experience of gender.

Gender is better understood as a social construct, within which individuals fall along an “expansive spectrum of identities.” Gender norming—the social expectation that individuals would fit squarely into a culturally defined “man box” or “woman box” box—affects all of us.

Paradox: Domestic and sexual violence and the gender bind

At Say Something, we honor and champion survivors of all genders. We acknowledge that people of all genders may perpetuate and experience violence. We reject the gender binary and recognize that gender is a fluid, social construct.

Statistics from major public health resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control, are organized into two gender categories: “men” and “women.” If we want to refer to research, we are stuck using these limited categories. Within the binary-bound research, men are disproportionately represented as perpetrators and women as victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

The gender differential is dramatic. As a single example, the CDC concludes that one in two women has experienced sexual violence other than rape, compared to one in five men. That single category of violence alone affects 20% of men, but 50% of women, and the disparity repeats across other types of domestic and sexual violence. This argues that gender is a pretty significant component of interpersonal violence.

If we ignore the gendered nature of domestic and sexual violence, we would fail to define and understand the problem accurately. We would ignore the connection between cultural sexism and men’s violence against women.

But if we talk about violence in only gendered terms, using the inaccurate categories provided to us by social science, we risk erasing the experience of transgender and gender non-conforming people, of male survivors, and of those who were harmed by female perpetrators.


Bias Creates a Culture of Violence

At Say Something, we believe that Bias forms a solid foundation for more egregious forms of violence to occur. These are things that we hear and see every day that people may not view as harmful or “serious.” But we believe they create a culture that is desensitized and more likely to promote violence and allow it to occur. That is why, at Say Something, we focus most of our efforts in addressing how to Say Something when we see or hear bias being enacted in our day to day lives, in our communities, and in ourselves.

Pyramid of Harm

The Pyramid of Harm is one of our judgment tools. When we encounter a Say Something scenario, it is important to take a moment to assess the situation for physical safety. At Say Something, we are not preparing you with the skills it requires to interrupt an act of physical violence. You may already have those skills, and we would encourage you to use them if the situation arises. But we are here to help interrupt the language and patterns of behavior that lead to physical violence.

Therefore, we have coded the pyramid in three sections — Red, Yellow, and Green (like a stoplight) — to encourage you to Say Something as often as you can when you hear or see Bias, and operate with some caution as you traverse the pyramid.

When we place scenarios on the pyramid, we do so based on our individual experience of the world. This experience often varies depending on our identity.

For this reason, some identity groups who have historically been subjected to disproportionate violence may experience jokes, for example, as verbal violence and a sign that their safety may be in jeopardy.

Similarly, people with certain personal histories with violence may place a scenario higher differently on the pyramid, taking the jump from the bottom to the top of the pyramid more quickly. People with more security and privilege will likely feel less of a threat to their safety and therefore may place a larger number of scenarios at the bottom in bias.

The pyramid is a tool to assess our own safety in any given situation. There is no right or wrong way to place a scenario.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program uses the Pyramid of Abuse to describe the social forces that support gendered violence: domestic and sexual violence perpetrated primarily by men against women. Say Something was inspired by the Pyramid of Abuse to create a Pyramid of Harm that describes the continuum of damage caused by many types of bias. The image represents our understanding that bias forms a foundation for discrimination and violence.

Violence: Emotional, physical, sexual, and/or verbal harm inflicted by one person to another, often because of their identity.

Institutional Discrimination: Policies, rules, laws and customs (of religion, law, education, health care, employment etc) that create inequality in our lives based on our identity.

Individual Bias: The everyday attitudes and actions (cultural norms) of prejudice against specific social groups, that supports all forms of violence.
Continuum of Assaults

Our first judgment tool — the Pyramid of Harm — is useful to help us assess our physical safety when encountering a Say Something scenario. But it is equally important to help us assess our emotional safety and readiness to Say Something. Our second judgment tool, the Continuum of Assaults does just that!

Feminist self-defense instructor Nadia Telsey describes a continuum of assaults — from irritating/annoying to life-threatening/terrifying — that may be perpetrated by one person against another.¹³

Some of the situations along the continuum go almost unnoticed. Others are mild irritations and still others cause much more physical or psychological trauma. Unfortunately, the warnings of serious assault frequently are the same as mild intrusions...Because those often DON'T escalate, we become desensitized to those looks, gestures or verbal intrusions that are clues a serious attack is in progress.¹⁴

By developing skills of Awareness, Intuition, and Preparation, we can become re-sensitized. When the bias at the base of the pyramids becomes visible, we can recognize it as for what it is: a warning sign of danger, whether imminent or cultural. This can increase our safety in individual circumstances and contribute to a safer community.

Just like the Pyramid of Harm, you will see that we have color-coded the Continuum of Assaults like a stop light — Red, Yellow, Green. It's important to remember that not everyone will place a scenario in the same place. You might find something irritating one day that feels scary or humiliating another day. It's also important to remember that if you assess a situation to be life-threatening, it might not be a good idea for you to Say Something at that time. It's okay to take care of yourself first — the good news is, the more practice you get as you Say Something when you’re in the green and yellow zones, the easier it will be to Say Something in any scenario!

You’re invited to build skills.

Speaking up requires more than will and knowledge—it takes skills. Thankfully, they are not complicated skills—like riding a unicycle. But like any skills, they get better with time and practice. The basics include trusting your instincts, speaking assertively, and flying fearlessly in the face of awkwardness.

Violence prevention experts tell us that intuition is our top tool for identifying risky individuals or situations. We might not be able to say why something doesn’t feel right but we can learn to listen to our own sense of what’s okay or not okay.

Assertive communication is a method of speaking with authority. It incorporates elements of verbal and nonverbal communication. It’s awesome and can be practiced in lots of situations.

We know that speaking up can be awkward. But we also know that being awkward isn’t the end of the world. Tolerating awkwardness is another skill that will help you step up successfully.

This Field Guide will help you learn the skills for assessing a situation, communicating assertively, and taking care of yourself. It will help you figure out what to say and how to say it.
Most violence does not appear out of the blue:

- Domestic violence is a systematic pattern of abuse that includes escalating violations.
- Individual instances of violence are frequently preceded by identifiable warning signs.
- Individuals who perpetrate violence often display identifiable warning behaviors.
- Acts that are universally recognized as violent—sexual assault, physical assault, homicide—are made possible by cultural norms, including minimizing warning signs and normalizing bias, inequality, incivility and violation.

Bystanders can take action to interrupt violence in its early stages. We can also undermine social attitudes that support interpersonal violence. This makes it harder for people to cross the line and abuse others.

Wouldn’t it be great if we could tell who the bad guys were just by looking at them? In real life, they often identify themselves with warning behaviors. Unfortunately, many of these behaviors are minimized or given a pass in our culture. Becoming alert to behaviors that may signal the potential for interpersonal violence is an important Say Something skill.

Imagine...

Research says that people are more likely to get involved in a violent situation if the person being targeted is someone they cared about. At Say Something, we would like to imagine how the world would be different if everyone felt compelled to Say Something because they instead cared about the person who was participating in violent speech and behaviors.

When we think about the Pyramid of Harm and the warning signs of violence, we see lots of behaviors that our friends, our peers — and even ourselves — have participated in. And that’s completely normal. But, we can work to change this by committing to holding one another (and ourselves!) accountable to different ways of speaking and behaving that promote safety and peace.

When we know the warning signs, we Say Something!

Warning Signs

It’s important to note that not all of these warning signs rise to the same level of alert in every situation. Everybody loses their temper or says something insulting sometimes. There are lots of reasons that a person might stand closer than another person welcomes. Personality, family and culture all contribute to our social styles and preferences. Sometimes violations do happen truly by accident.

It’s equally important to pay attention to behaviors that make you uncomfortable—even if you can’t say exactly why. (For more about this, see the section on Intuition, pages 24-27).

Most people will adjust their behavior in response to a direct request. When behaviors are repeated, when they are not corrected in response to a direct request, or when they are minimized, defended or blamed on the person who is negatively affected by them, that elevates the warning.

In other words, behavior that might have been not-so-creepy if delivered by honest mistake or followed by accountability and correction rises to a-lot-more-creepy if accompanied by an unwillingness to consider another person’s comfort or boundaries.

It’s true that people of all genders can do creepy things. It’s also true that many behaviors that might predict the potential for interpersonal violence are minimized, considered normal, or given a pass when they are displayed by men. We think it does all of us a disservice to equate masculinity with creepiness. (See Sidebar: “Boys will be...”, page 15)

Developing the ability to identify and set boundaries around creepy behavior is one of the fundamental Say Something skills.

VERBAL
- unwelcome interaction
- insults
- harassment
- hate speech
- rape jokes
- belittling
- mocking
- mean-spirited teasing

SOCIAL
- manipulates or coerces
- demands excessive time or attention
- controls behavior or decision making
- isolates from friends or family
- invades privacy

EMOTIONAL
- poor anger or frustration tolerance
- uncontrolled temper
- damages property
- blames others for behaviors
- unable to apologize
- abuses animals

PHYSICAL
- intrudes upon personal space, crowds
- delivers unwanted physical affection
- engages in unwelcome touch and rough-housing
- gets handsy, “cops a feel”
- “accidentally” touches body
- does not honor sexual boundaries
- sexually selfish, won’t negotiate enthusiastic mutual consent
Trust Your Intuition

Nadia Telsey says, “Acting on your intuition requires trusting yourself and believing in your right to speak up even if there is a chance you could be mistaken. Many times you will never find out.”

So how do we Say Something and go about cultivating our intuition? The steps are simple, but not easy.

It is important that we begin to notice things in our everyday lives that support violence. Getting back in touch with our intuition and trusting our gut when we feel like something isn’t okay is an important part of getting ready to Say Something. These are things you may have ignored or didn’t pay attention to. Things that are so common. Things that are often minimized. Trust what you notice, feel, and know.

Notice the following scenarios in light of what you’ve learned about the Pyramids of Harm, the Continuum of Assault, and the Warning Signs.

Consider:

- Which types of creepy and/or violent behavior are present in each scenario?
- How would you feel if you witnessed this scenario?
- Is this an early warning sign or a sign of imminent danger?

You see a friend at a party talking to someone in a dark room. Your friend is between them and the door. They look uncomfortable, and each time they lean away, your friend leans closer.

You are at work and you overhear your colleague making sexually suggestive comments about a co-worker at your office.

You’re hanging out with your two best friends when one of them tells a joke using words like “slut” and “whore.”

A group of young men are hanging out on the steps of your local library. When women walk by, they whistle and cat-call them.
Creepy or Clueless?

Julie goes out to a club with a group of friends—girls and guys. While she’s dancing with a few friends, one of the guys—Justin—joins in. Justin dances very close to her and touches her arms in a very familiar way. He positions his body so that he’s blocking Julie from her friends.

Julie feels very uncomfortable being in such close physical proximity with, and being touched by, a guy who she isn’t in a relationship with. She also feels a little nervous being separated from her other friends.

Is Justin being creepy or clueless?

At this point in the scenario, it’s impossible to know. There are any number of reasons why Justin might stand closer than Julie likes:

- His family or cultural background may mean he needs less personal space.
- He might be very comfortable with casual touch.

He might be really nervous, because social situations are tough!

He might find it hard to hear over the music.

The point is, people have different comfort levels and boundaries and—unless we are cave-dwelling hermits—we have to communicate and negotiate about them.

Julie looks him in the eye. She raises her arm a little in front of her, waist high and palm out. This is her moment to Say Something. She might say:

- “Hey, I can’t see the rest of the gang! Step back.”
- “You’re too close.”
- “I need more space.”
- “We don’t know each other that well. Don’t touch me.”

Clueless Justin will accommodate Julie’s request. He’ll be apologetic, stammering and chagrined. Or he’ll be confident, respectful and understanding. Clueless Justin will understand that Julie has communicated a preference about how to physically interact with her. If he’s genuinely interested in and concerned for her—as a friend or as a potential date—he’ll want to respect her wishes. Because that’s what decent folks do.

Creepy Justin takes offense at Julie’s gentle yet assertive boundary setting. He might be defensive: “I didn’t mean anything by it!” He might be blaming: “Why did you come out to a club wearing that if you didn’t want guys to pay attention to you?” He might call her names.

To make it even more complicated: “Creepy” and “clueless”—like most other tidy little categories—are not mutually exclusive and clearly defined. For example, a well-intentioned person, embarrassed by their own cluelessness, might exhibit some defensive creepiness. As we’ve discussed, a lot of “creepy” behaviors are considered ordinary. It may take more than a single Say Something intervention before someone fully understands that they should change their ways. That’s why it’s important to Say Something when we can.

Julie’s friends have an opportunity to Say Something too. At various points they might say:

- “Knock it off, Justin.”
- “Give Julie her space.”
- “That’s not cool.”
- “We don’t talk like that.”
- “Let’s take a walk.”

Everybody makes mistakes. The difference between creepy and clueless lies in whether or not someone can take accountability for their actions and respond appropriately when you Say Something.
SAY SOMETHING FIELD GUIDE

3) **ACT**

**Practice Judgment**

**Say Something or Ask for Help**

If you’ve ever trained in CPR or First Aid you know that the first step toward helping someone else is securing the scene and ensuring that you will not be putting yourself at risk by helping. We believe you should take similar steps to preserve your own safety as you Say Something. Assessing each situation and exercising your judgment are important steps in determining what action to take.

Components that indicate a situation could be more dangerous:
- Isolation from other people who could help
- Barriers to escape
- Environmental risks, such as being at the top of a flight of stairs or in a location with hard surfaces (i.e.: bathroom)
- Access to weapons (intentional, such as firearms, or improvisational, such as kitchen knives, a bottle or a baseball bat)
- Escalated emotions (explosive rage)
- Property damage

You are never required to engage with a scenario that risks your safety. While the skills of Intuition and Judgment can help you make the best decision you can, there is no right answer about how to respond. Only you can know what is right for you to do in any given situation.

Remember, even though we can do a great deal to stop violence in our communities, there is only one person responsible for the violence in any situation: The perpetrator. As important as it is to Say Something, it’s equally important to know when to get help instead.

We don’t always Say Something. Sometimes we get help.

**Assess the Scene**

Use the judgment tools to assess your physical and emotional safety in the scenarios below.

Draw a line to where you would place each scenario on the Pyramid of Harm and the Continuum of Assaults and then circle the warning signs that you notice in each situation: Verbal, Social, Emotional, and/or Physical.

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You see a friend at a party talking to someone in a dark room. Your friend is between them and the door. They look uncomfortable, and each time they lean away, your friend leans closer.

You are at work and you overhear your colleague making sexually suggestive comments about a co-worker at your office.

You’re hanging out with your two best friends when one of them tells a joke using words like “slut” and “whore”.

A group of young men are hanging out on the steps of your local library. When women walk by, they whistle and cat-call them.

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**V** | **S** | **E** | **P**
---|---|---|---
Annoyance | Fear | Terror

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28 SAY SOMETHING FIELD GUIDE

SAY SOMETHING FIELD GUIDE 29
How to say it

How you Say Something is as important as what you say. The preferred communication style of Say Something is Assertiveness.

Just like a performer who masters pre-performance jitters, it is possible to act assertively even when you feel nervous. Some things that might help you calm your nerves include:
- Expecting to be authentic and effective, but not perfect
- Taking a deep breath
- Practicing what you will say ahead of time
- Acting as if you are not nervous (fake it till you make it)
- Getting support before and after

How you Say Something is through the use of Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive tones.

Passive
- Quiet tone
- Questioning inflection
- Downcast, shifting, or averted eyes
- Weak body language: shoulders slumped, head down, taking up minimal space, retreating or defeated posture

Assertive
- Audible tone
- Firm, declarative inflection
- Steady eye contact
- Confident body language: shoulders square, head up, taking up appropriate space, strong posture

Aggressive
- Loud tone
- Threatening, mocking and/or intimidating inflection
- Intrusive eye contact and/or physical presence
- Menacing body language: arms raised, finger wagging and/or fist shaking, stomping feet, taking up excessive space, advancing or attacking posture

Act it Out

Note: This exercise is best practiced with a buddy. Work with a friend who is committed to helping you build your Say Something skills. Don’t choose a buddy who may be threatened by your assertiveness or who will be excessively concerned about whether you seem nice or polite (See Sidebar: “That’s so rude...”, page 33.) You can also do this exercise by yourself, looking in a mirror.

1. Choose a Say Something phrase:
   - “Stop right now.”
   - “We don’t do that here.”
   - “Please go away.”
   - “That is not okay.”
   - “Those words are offensive and demeaning.”

2. Practice saying the phrase three times in a row, once in each of three ways: Passive, Assertive, and Aggressive.

Reflection Questions

How did it go?
What felt easiest?
What felt good to hear?
Which elements of assertive communication were easiest for you? Which ones do you need to work on?
When can you practice your assertive communication skills in your everyday life?
Want more assertiveness practice? Rewrite these following statements so they sound more assertive. Then practice saying them out loud using your assertive tone.

- “I’m just stating a fact, it’s not my fault that you are overly sensitive.”
- “What is your problem? Didn’t you see me standing here? I got here first.”
- “I am not sure, but I think that you might be somewhat wrong about that.”
- “Just forget it, anything I say just goes right over your head anyway.”
- “I’m so sorry but I was wondering if maybe you could possibly help me for just a minute.”
**Matching**

- You see a friend at a party talking to someone in a dark room. Your friend is between them and the door. They look uncomfortable, and each time they lean away, your friend leans closer.

- You are at work and you overhear your colleague making sexually suggestive comments about a co-worker at your office.

- You’re hanging out with your two best friends when one of them tells a joke using words like “slut” and “whore”.

- A group of young men are hanging out on the steps of your local library. When women walk by, they whistle and cat-call them.

“*I don’t like those words. Don’t use them around me.*”

“*That’s not OK.*”

“*Please speak more respectfully around me.*”

“*No one deserves to be assaulted.*”

“*Stop that right now.*”

“*Let’s take a walk.*”

“*Words that like are demeaning and offensive.*”

**What to Say**

The great news is that we all can usually think of terrific things to say in challenging scenarios.

Unfortunately, we often think of them a day later and while we’re in the shower. To reduce the frequency and inevitable disappointment of delayed shower epiphanies, we can practice Preparation.

- **Talk to yourself.** Practice saying any of the phrases on the next page. (For tips on saying them in the most assertive manner possible, see the section on Assertiveness, p. 30.)

- **Notice** what other people say to interrupt violence or stand up for themselves. Steal their lines!

- **Plan ahead.** Think of what you might say if you witness creepiness, warning signs, aggression, or if someone discloses to you that they are experiencing or have experienced violence in their life.

  (If you aren’t able to Say Something in the moment, all is not lost! See “Plan B” on page 36.)

**That’s so rude**

Sometimes people worry that being assertive is the same as being rude. It is, of course, completely possible to be rudely assertive (or assertively rude), but the two are not synonymous. Assertive communication may be unsettling, uncomfortable or outside social convention, but it is not necessarily impolite.

Sometimes there is a gender component to the suggestion that being assertive equates with being rude. While men and boys are socially rewarded for strong, direct speech, girls and women are often criticized for it. Young girls may hear, “Be nice,” or “Be a lady,” when they speak out. Adult women might be called “aggressive” or “bitchy,” when they communicate directly and assertively.

This is another cultural norm that contributes to gendered violence.

Whoever you are: Your voice is powerful and valuable. You are on an important Say Something mission. You have a right to speak up.
Support survivors.

“I believe you.”
“That wasn’t your fault.”
“Whatever you did to survive was the right thing to do.”
“Let’s get more help.”

Promote progressive gender roles.

“The world needs all genders!”
“Girls can do anything, be anything!”
“People of all genders are gentle and loving.”
“There’s no such thing as ‘boys’ toys or ‘girls’ toys. Children can be who they are!”

Demand accountability.

“Those words are offensive and demeaning.”
“They told you to stop that and you’re still doing it.”
“Rape is rape. It doesn’t matter what they were wearing.”
“No one makes you hit them. You feel angry, and then you choose to hit them.”

Stand up for someone else.

“We don’t do that here.”
“Hateful speech is everyone’s business.”
“Your safety is important to me.”
“It’s not OK to talk to your partner like that.”

Interrupt unwelcome behavior.

“That’s not okay.”
“They said, ‘No.’”
“Stop right now.”
“Please go away.”

Invite dialogue.

“I’m curious why you think that.”
“I think we can do better.”
“Language like that makes me uncomfortable. Can I tell you why?”
“Wow, I have a really different perspective. Would you consider thinking about it in a different way?”

Correct misinformation.

“No one ever deserves to be sexually assaulted.”
“Healthy relationships don’t include possessive and controlling behaviors.”
“There are lots of reasons people stay with partners who are abusive. You don’t know the whole story.”
“No one ever deserves to be hit, no matter what.”

Directions: For each scenario below, generate your own Say Something response. Try your best to be authentic and assertive in your response — remember that deciding to Say Something already makes you pretty awesome!

You see a friend at a party talking to someone in a dark room. Your friend is between them and the door. They look uncomfortable, and each time they lean away, your friend leans closer.

You are at work and you overhear your colleague making sexually suggestive comments about a co-worker at your office.

You’re hanging out with your two best friends when one of them tells a joke using words like ‘slut’ and ‘whore’.

A group of young men are hanging out on the steps of your local library. When women walk by, they whistle and cat-call them.

For each response, consider:

• Do I feel safe to say something in this situation?
• What other actions could I take instead?
• What might happen next?
Steps for an effective Plan B

We might not always be able to Say Something in the moment. Maybe we used our judgment tools and decided it wasn’t safe. Maybe we missed the chance. Maybe we couldn’t think of anything to say until we were driving home later that night. The great news is that most often the people to whom we need to Say Something are people we will see again, like our friends or family members. This means that we can always try to Say Something when we have another opportunity.

The following are some helpful steps for an effective Plan B:

**Take care of yourself.** Thinking about violence, and noticing behaviors and speech that contribute to violence, can be hard. We may feel angry, sad, disappointed, or frightened. If we are survivors, noticing violence and violation may remind us of how we have been hurt before. If you are having a very strong emotional response to something you’ve witnessed, you need to take care of yourself before taking a Say Something action. (See Section: “Take Care of You”, page 45, for tips.)

**Exercise judgment.** You decided not to speak up because you felt it wasn’t safe to do so. That’s okay! Keep using your judgment tools and continue to assess whether or not to take action as a bystander and Say Something.

**Revisit the conversation.** When you’re ready, and if you believe it is safe to do so, you can ask for another audience. Here are some tips:

- Choose a neutral, quiet but public location.
- Take a break.
- Use your assertive communication skills (see the section on Assertiveness, p. 30).
- Criticize the behavior, not the person.
- Use your tools for Awkwardness (p. 36).
- Take more breaths.
- Give yourself excellent Self Care (p. 45) and a treat. It’s not easy to Say Something. You did a hard, brave thing.

**Take the big view.** Sometimes people are unable to take in your feedback in the moment. You may have been the first person to point this out, or the 5th. But the more we (and others) Say Something, the more likely they are to change. We won’t be able to interrupt every instance of aggression, abuse or violation. Ultimately, there is only one person responsible for any act of aggression—the perpetrator. Balance your commitment to Say Something with an understanding that you are growing new skills. You may not respond to every situation as perfectly as you wish to, but by practicing and talking to others you are creating a positive force for change. Changing the world takes time.

**Tools for Awkwardness**

We can’t lie to you: Some of the time you will feel uncomfortable when you Say Something. It gets easier with practice, but even those of us with loads of Say Something experience feel extremely awkward when they bring attention to behavior they would like to see changed—and to themselves in the process.

With practice, you can develop a sense of inner equilibrium and a thicker skin to help you deal with the social awkwardness when you Say Something. Here are some things that help:

**Know that you can make a difference.**

The behaviors that contribute to violence are not invisible; they are hiding in plain sight. Many of them are considered social norms—and it is not normal to draw attention to them and suggest that they should change. When you do that, you step outside of social convention. Just think of yourself as the guy who said, “The emperor has no clothes!” It’s awkward! And also authentic, awesome, and truly revolutionary.

**Acknowledge the awkward.** You feel self-conscious. You’re about to Say Something the other person isn’t expecting. There’s a good chance they might not like hearing it. There’s probably some tension in the air. Call us crazy, but one way to diffuse it may be to say it out loud: “So, this is awkward . . .”

Know your objective.

It would be so awesome if everyone to whom we ever Say Something was immediately struck by the rightness of our perspective, leapt up to hug us (asking permission first, of course), and committed immediately to the Say Something mission. It would also be awesome to have world peace and an unending supply of chocolate. These may not be reasonable short-term goals. When you Say Something, your immediate reward may be nothing more than the satisfaction of having said your piece. That’s ok.

People are watching.

You can’t know how your decision to Say Something may affect others. Folks who are directly affected by the violation—the person whose boundary is being crossed, or a member of the group against whom someone has just uttered a derogatory term—may not feel empowered to speak on their own behalf in that moment. The less you have on the line, the easier it is for you to Say Something. Folks who have not engaged in bystander training may feel unprepared to take action—but they just might learn from watching you. We can use our privilege and preparation to benefit those who aren’t ready or able to Say Something.

Expect feelings.

You can’t know how the other person will feel when you Say Something. You can expect that they will feel something. Responses may include defensiveness, anger, frustration, sadness, confusion or other uncomfortable feelings. Feelings can be awkward! But they are very human and authentic. Be prepared for feelings and resist being derailed by them. You may choose to cut the conversation short in order to give the other person space to process their emotions. You don’t need to apologize or justify what you said.

Continued...
Remember: You didn’t invite the icky.
When we step up to Say Something, it can feel like we’re the buzz-kill who brought the icky feeling of social awkwardness to the party. But the truth is, the icky was present when the other person did whatever it is you need to Say Something about. Maybe they touched someone in an unwelcome manner; maybe they used hate speech or blamed a survivor for their own victimization. That’s what’s icky. You’re just pointing it out and handing it back.

Connect with like-minded others.
Depending upon where and to whom you Say Something, you may feel isolated. Being the only person who speaks up, saying something unpopular, and breaking social norms can lead to feelings of loneliness or isolation. It’s awkward! That’s why it’s important to connect with others in the vibrant, global movement to interrupt the culture of violence. (See Part of a Community, page 42, for more information.)

Lean into Awkwardness
Build up your awkwardness skills with practice! It can be very uncomfortable when we step out of our comfort zone and Say Something. Sometimes practicing when the stakes aren’t as high can help us when we find ourselves in a Say Something scenario. We encourage you to lean in to the awkwardness as you try one or more of the following awkward activities. The more opportunities you have to practice managing your discomfort with all things awkward, the easier it will be to manage when it counts! To build your awkward skills:

- Stand backwards in the elevator
- Dance down the street
- Recite a poem to your friend when you see them next
- Wear your jacket backwards
- Sing your coffee order
- Do your best silly walk down the street.
- Next time you are talking to a friend listen to their story carefully and respond normally but every time they use the word “the”, “a” or “and” stick your tongue out casually

Remember: being awkward around other people can elicit reactions, so be prepared to practice self-care and boundaries. Think about your safety and managing other people’s emotions. Some things might feel harder or easier to do depending on your identity and experience. So do what feels safe, but remember that learning how to manage your discomfort with awkwardness is what will help you build your skills for next time!
One of the greatest strengths to have for our Say Something mission is self-awareness. Our work begins with taking a look at our language and actions and noticing how we may inadvertently be contributing to a culture of violence.

The Pyramid of Harm describes how acts commonly understood to be violent—murder, sexual assault, physical assault—are built on a foundation of cultural norms and systematic inequalities. These forces are sneaky: they seem normal, so we may not even notice that we are promoting them.

The keys to rooting-out your contributions to the Pyramid are compassion and curiosity. Be kind to yourself. Your unconscious participation in these unsavory elements of our culture is understandable. We are all products of our environment and reflections of the world in which we live. Understanding that we all make these mistakes, you can approach your own behavior with curiosity.

What messages about gender and violence have you accidentally accepted or repeated?

How can you change your actions to reflect your new knowledge and values?

We may feel humbled or upset to realize that we have contributed in any way to violence. But we can also feel empowered. Because we can begin to create positive change simply by how we speak and carry ourselves.

Say This Not That

One of the most common ways that well-meaning people play into cultural violence is through language. Changing how we speak is hard work. Sometimes a commitment to careful, respectful speech is dismissed as unthinking conformity or political correctness. In truth, committing to careful, respectful speech is a radical act that can increase safety and change the world.

When you begin to scrub your speech of terms that contribute to a culture of violence, you may find at first that you are left with a G-rated, sometimes clumsy vocabulary. Embrace the awkward! Then go forth and cultivate new forms of expression that are creative, egalitarian and violence-free.

It’s important to remember that this is a process. If you make a mistake in any of these areas, Say Something—it will be awkward—make amends, and move on. We aren’t always perfect, but we can model taking responsibility for hurtful speech.

Directions: Think about statements you hear that use oppressive or violence language as a part of normal speech. Especially include things that you say yourself. Write them down on the lines below and then create a new way for your to express yourself. Planning a new statement in advance will help you have something at the ready and make replacing the old language much easier.

EXAMPLES

I was totally Facebook stalking them last night!

RE-WRITE

I spent way too much time looking at their Facebook last night!!
Part of a Community

Say Something Support

The Say Something website is your portal to connection with others in the Say Something squad. There, you can:
- Access resources and support
- Connect with like-minded others
- Take inspiration from others in the global movement for peace and safety

Visit us at www.saysomethingnow.org often.

Say Something recognizes that the experience of being victimized includes within it many acts of courage and determination. We know, for example, that people living with domestic violence take brave actions every day to protect themselves and their children.

We don’t Say Something because we think those who are victimized by interpersonal violence need pity or protection. We speak out in solidarity with survivors’ strength and tenacity.

Imagine

The statistics regarding sexual violence are astonishingly high—almost incomprehensibly so. The Centers for Disease Control tells us that one in two women has experienced sexual violence other than rape, and one in five have been raped. One in five men has experienced non-rape sexual violence, and one in 71 has been raped.17

In a social setting where one hundred men and one hundred women are present, fifty of the women and twenty of the men will be survivors of sexual violence other than rape. Twenty of the women and one of the men will be rape survivors.

What was the last crowded social event you attended? A music festival with thousands in the audience, a sold-out movie, an open-house at the neighborhood elementary school? Based on what we know about sexual violence, how many of your neighbors at that event are survivors? What does this tell you about our collective knowledge of victimization, and our individual and community powers of resilience and survival?

Survivors: We are many. We are mighty.


When you feel supported, you Say Something more often!

Resilient

We are Many

Survivors are among us in every part of every community. At school and at work, in our religious, civic and recreational gatherings, and among our families and friends, survivors of violence contribute to the vitality of our collective life. We may be survivors ourselves.

We may never be aware of the survivor-statuses of those around us. As we move through various social settings, we may choose to disclose more or less about our own experiences with interpersonal violence—and we may hear more or less about our neighbors’ experiences. Whether or not we hear individual stories, the statistics alone affirm that many people we know are survivors of interpersonal violence.

We are Mighty

Resilience describes the human capacity to cope with adversity. At Say Something, we believe that survivors of interpersonal violence demonstrate resilience in many ways. We take inspiration and courage from their examples, and we strive to honor their experience in what we do and say. (See: Trauma Aware, page 44.)

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Survivors: We are many. We are mighty.

Trauma-aware (sometimes called trauma-sensitivity) is a term used by social workers, therapists, anti-violence educators and others to describe behaving in ways that are most helpful and supportive to people who have experienced or are currently experiencing trauma.

Trauma refers to overwhelming, shocking experiences that create intense feelings of terror or distress. Traumatic events are part of everyone’s life. Trauma comes in many forms: the sudden death of a loved one or the loss of our home to natural disaster; the experience of combat or that of sexual assault; a car accident or an unexpected job loss. But no one is immune from traumatic stress.

The human body and mind respond to trauma in predictable ways. Emerging evidence indicates that the social environment following a traumatic experience can have a dramatic impact on a survivor’s resilience and recovery. This is exciting because it indicates another way to Say Something important and impactful.

Even after it happens, we can mitigate the negative effects of interpersonal violence in how we choose to care for one another.

Trauma-aware behaviors:
- Avoid stigmatizing survivors as "other" and distinguishing them from the rest of the folks. Assume that survivors are present in any gathering. Most people have experienced or witnessed interpersonal violence in some form. We are all survivors.
- Be aware of your own triggers and practice self care. (See page 45)
- Avoid victim-blaming language in all forms, including questioning a survivor’s behavior or choices.
- Indicate your belief in and support for survivors.
- Never defend the act of perpetration. Be sensitive to the possibility of triggering, the experience by which trauma symptoms are evoked by experiences reminiscent of the original injury. Take care when talking about issues of interpersonal violence.
- Be aware of support services for survivors in your community and encourage individuals to access these resources. Referrals are available by calling Safe Passage at 413-586-5066 or visiting www.safepass.org.

Take care of you

Thinking about violence, and noticing behaviors and speech that contribute to violence, can be hard. If you are someone who has experienced violence it can be especially challenging. Here are some tips to help you stay safe, centered, and super.

Develop a Self Care Practice
We remain super by committing to our own self care and regularly engaging in activities that relax, replenish, and re-energize us. Caring for ourselves is connected to caring for our community. No one survives violence alone. No one changes their community alone. No one heals alone. We need one another.

In the Moment

If you are having a strong emotional response your first task is to take care of your own body and feelings. Sometimes this is called emotional regulation. We invite you to try one of the following activities that can help when you might have big feelings or need some help regulating your emotions. Some might work for you, others might not. Try a few and see what helps!

Breathing & Stillness Exercises: Put your hand on your stomach or chest and try and breathe so that you can feel your hand moving up and down with each breath. Repeat 3 times.

Observation Exercises: Notice five blue things, then 4 red things, 3 green things, 2 yellow things, notice the color of your shirt and close your eyes. Take a deep breath.

Quick Movement Activities
- Rip up a piece of paper.
- Tense all your muscles as hard as you can for 10 seconds, then relax them all for 10 seconds.
- Take a deep breath, then repeat (as many times as desired).

Visualization: Have a friend read the following, or read it to yourself, and focus on creating the picture in your mind:

You open a door and find yourself on a beach. Standing in the doorway, you see the sun is shining, making a beautiful glint on the water, and the breeze tussles your hair against your face. You don’t feel too hot or cold, it’s just right. You step out of the door and feel the soft, fine sand between your toes. You feel the warmth from the sand travel into your body. You walk to the water’s edge. The sound of the waves crashes along the shore. Your toes get soaked with salt water. It feels cool and refreshing. Stand as long as you’d like with the waves splashing on your toes, and when you’re ready, walk back through the door and open your eyes.
If You’ve Been Hurt Before

If you’ve been hurt before, it’s never too late to tell someone you trust. Getting the help you deserve and healing from violence is one of the bravest and most bad-ass things you will ever do.

Even if you’ve engaged in healing before, your Say Something missions may bring up hard feelings. You may want to talk to a friend or a Say Something community member or staff. Or it might be time to engage the support of a professional helper, like a therapist or clergy-person. You deserve as much support and assistance as you need.

Contact Safe Passage and ask to speak to a counselor. You can talk with somebody one time or many times, you can attend a support group, or get some practical help with the ways that violence has impacted your life. If you need help building your support network, Safe Passage can help you find other people who can help you with your physical and mental health.

Know Your Terms

Safe Passage Hotline
(413) 586-5066
Toll-Free: (888) 345-5282

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233
TTY: 1-800-787-3224

For additional resources for survivors visit the Safe Passage website at www.safepass.org.
Child sexual abuse occurs any time a child is compelled, by power or force, to participate in sexual activities or is subjected to sexual content or behavior. 

Discrimination Action based on prejudice against a group or person because of their identity. Discrimination occurs on levels—individual, institutional, societal and can be conscious or unconscious.

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior that is used by one person in a relationship to gain and/or maintain power and control over another. Domestic violence happens to people from every ethnicity and economic background, and affects people who are straight, gay, lesbian, and bisexual, queer, and trans.

Gender binary refers to the categorization of gender into two distinctly separate and opposite groups, namely male and female. At Say Something, we understand that the gender binary is an incomplete model for understanding the human experience of gender.

Gender expression refers to the external display of one's gender, through a combination of dress demeanor, social behavior, and other factors. 

Gender identity refers to how people label themselves, based on how much they align or don’t align with what they understand their gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans, and more.

Gender norms are the social expectations that individuals would fit squarely into a culturally defined “man box” or “woman box.”

Spiritual abuse is the use of derogatory/degrading/disrespectful language toward one or more parts of a person’s identity. Often used intentionally to make others feel disempowered.

Heterosexism is discrimination against those who are perceived as not heterosexual (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and transgender). 

Interpersonal Violence: An umbrella term to describe any form of violence that occurs from one individual to another. This includes domestic and sexual violence, and any violence directed towards someone due to their identity. At Say Something, the entirety of the pyramid of harm can be defined as interpersonal violence.

Intersectionality refers to the overlapping of various marginalized identities. It reminds us that everyone carries a multiplicity of identities and the way that they intersect make up who we are and can determine the extent of violence that one faces.

Microaggression is a term used to describe subtle everyday actions (conscious, or unconscious) such as staring at someone, telling them they “speak good English” asking someone “where are you from”, that may on the surface appear innocent/harmless but over time have lasting harmful effects.

Multi-oppressions lens is a way of looking at the world that acknowledges different parts of an individual's identity at the same time. That is, one person can experience both racism and sexism simultaneously. Experiencing oppression from multiple angles often makes one’s experience more acute.

Oppression: When one social or identity group is denied access to resources (on an individual, institutional, AND cultural level) because of the identity they hold. 

Perpetrator is the person who creates harm to another person by means of power or force. The perpetrator is solely responsible for the violence they enact. 

Privilege is “unearned access to resources (social power) made available as a result of social group membership.”

Racism is a system of advantages and disadvantages based on race that privileges white people and creates discrimination, oppression, and exclusion for groups of color.

Sex is a medical term commonly used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics from which people classify an individual as female or male at birth. Sex is often falsely seen as binary and conflated with the gender binary.

Sexism is a system of advantages and disadvantages based on perceived gender that privileges men and creates discrimination, oppression, and exclusion for gender minorities and women.

Sexual violence refers to any forced, unwanted or coerced sexual activity.

Stalking refers to threatening or harassing behavior that occurs repeatedly. It can include following someone, showing up at their home, business or other frequented locations, or causing property damage. Stalkers may also make use of phone calls, written messages, technology or social media.

Survivors are individuals who have experienced any kind of interpersonal violence. Because violence is so prevalent in our society, we can assume that survivors are among us in every community and gathering. Many people prefer the term survivor to victim because it is more empowering.

Trauma refers to overwhelming, shocking experiences that create intense feelings or distress.

Victim refers to an individual during or immediately following the experience of assault, often used in criminal justice settings.
It's the beginning of...

the end.