

M2

MODULE 2

BARBERSHOP
TOOLKIT

ESTD

2025

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION
& ALLYSHIP



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BYSTANDER INTERVENTION & ALLYSHIP

→ Why This Module Matter?

Even the most well-intentioned men often stay silent in the face of everyday sexism, homophobia, or harmful behavior. Silence and passive observation of these injustices—whether in a workplace, school, or community—can be perceived/interpreted as endorsing such misbehaviors. This module encourages men and boys to move from passive bystanders to active allies, offering practical tools to speak up, stand up, and support targets of harm. It reframes allyship not as heroism, but as consistent, relational, and humble practice of showing up in solidarity and speaking up.

→ Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- + Understand what it means to be a bystander and an active ally.
- + Recognize different forms of gender-based microaggressions and harm in daily life.
- + Practice concrete tools to intervene safely and effectively.
Reflect on personal barriers to intervention and how to overcome them.
- + Identify ongoing ways to practice allyship in personal, professional, and public spaces.

→ Who This Module Is For

- + Youth and student leaders
- + Middle management professionals
- + Educators, school and university staff
- + Men in workplaces or community roles who witness gender-based discrimination but feel unsure how to respond
- + HR teams building inclusive workplace culture

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

1. THE ACT MODEL (ASSESS-CHOOSE-TAKE ACTION)

➔ **Goal:** Provide a simple, three-step process for safe and effective intervention.

➔ **How To Facilitate**

+ Introduce the model:

Asses the situation (Is it safe to intervene? What are the dynamics? Who is impacted, who has power, and what does the target want?)

Choose your strategy (Direct, Distract, Delegate, Delay; consider Document only if safe and consented)

Take Action respectfully and clearly (use brief, specific language; avoid escalation; center the target's wishes; follow up after)

+ Share real-world examples: a sexist joke in the break room, a colleague repeatedly interrupting women, or a man dominating space in a meeting. Offer sample scripts (e.g., "Let's keep it respectful"; "Hold on, let her finish"; "Can we hear from those who haven't spoken yet?") and note when to involve HR/security or a senior ally.

➔ **Practice Activity**

+ Give small groups 2–3 different scenarios and have them apply the ACT model to each. They should discuss which intervention would be safest and most impactful, assign roles (who assesses, who intervenes, who supports), and draft a one-sentence intervention script plus a follow-up step for the target..

➔ **Debrief Questions**

- + Which strategy feels most natural to you?
- + What fears or concerns might stop you from acting?
- + What support would make it easier to speak up?

➔ **Reflection Question**

- + What 'ally' actions resist both authoritarian control and outdated masculine ideals at work or in public life?

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

2. SCENARIO-BASED ROLE PLAYS

➔ **Goal:** Practice real-time intervention skills and build confidence.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Prepare 3–5 realistic workplace or social scenarios. Examples:
 - ➔ A colleague makes a sexist “joke.”
 - ➔ Someone misgenders a nonbinary coworker and no one corrects it.
 - ➔ A man repeatedly interrupts a woman during a meeting.
- + Assign participants to roles (bystander, target, perpetrator, observer).
- + Ask them to role-play two versions: doing nothing, and intervening using the ACT model (Acknowledge harm, Center the target’s needs, Take a safe action—Distract, Delegate, Direct, or Delay).

➔ Facilitator Tip

- + Encourage reflection, not perfection. The goal is not to get it “right,” but to try and learn.

➔ Debrief Questions

- + What did it feel like to intervene? What felt hard or uncomfortable?
- + What response did you get? How did that affect your confidence?
- + How might you prepare for these situations in real life?

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

3. ALLYSHIP CHECKLIST & COMMITMENT ACTIVITY

➔ **Goal:** Reinforce that allyship is not a one-time act, but a daily commitment.

➔ **How To Facilitate**

- + Distribute or project a checklist of everyday ally actions (sample below).
- + Invite participants to select 2–3 behaviors they want to commit to for the next month.
- + Encourage writing it down with clear “what/when/how,” sharing with a partner, or posting publicly.

➔ **Sample Checklist Items:**

- + I amplify women’s ideas and voices in meetings (e.g., redirect credit, invite completion after interruptions).
- + I intervene or follow up when I hear sexist or exclusionary comments choosing a safe option (distract, delegate, direct, or delay).
- + I educate myself on issues affecting LGBTQIA+ and marginalized communities and adjust my language and behavior accordingly.
- + I advocate for equitable hiring, promotion, and leave policies, and I use my influence to sponsor underrepresented colleagues.
- + I check in privately with someone I suspect may have been harmed, ask what support they want, and respect confidentiality.

➔ **Debrief Questions**

- + Which actions feel easiest for you? Which feels hardest, and why?
- + How will you hold yourself accountable (buddy, calendar reminder, manager check-in, public commitment)?
- + Who do you look to as a role model for allyship , and what specific behavior of theirs will you emulate this month?

FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR NEW OR INEXPERIENCED TRAINERS

➔ Core Concepts to Know

- + **Bystander:** A person who witnesses a problematic situation but isn't directly involved.
- + **Allyship:** The ongoing, active practice of using your privilege and position to support, protect, and uplift those who face systemic discrimination.
- + **Microaggressions:** Subtle, often unintentional comments or actions that perpetuate stereotypes or exclusion (e.g., "She's too emotional to lead," "You're so articulate—for a woman").

➔ Before The Session

- + Prepare a few example scenarios that reflect the group's context (workplace, school, community).
- + Print or project the ACT model diagram and allyship checklist.
- + Set ground rules that encourage learning over perfectionism.
- + Consider co-facilitating with a colleague or ally from a marginalized group to share perspectives.

➔ Suggested Session Flow (90 Minutes)

Time	Activity
00:00 - 00:10	Welcome & Introduction to Allyship
00:10 - 00:25	ACT Model Overview & Group Discussion
00:25 - 00:50	Role Play Scenarios + Debrief
00:50 - 01:10	Allyship Checklist + Personal Commitment
01:10 - 01:20	Group Reflection & Closing: "One thing I will do differently"

FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR NEW OR INEXPERIENCED TRAINERS

➔ Sample Script Openers

- + “Allyship counters authoritarian and patriarchal norms by spreading influence and inviting diverse voices, instead of consolidating decision-making in the hands of a few.”
- + “Allyship is not about being perfect—it’s about being present.”
- + “We’ve all been bystanders. Today is about learning how to move toward action.”
- + “Being a good man is not about avoiding harm. It’s about actively doing good.”

➔ Reflect On

- + **My Allyship Journey:** Where am I in my own development as an ally? What mistakes have I made, and how do I model learning from them? Am I prepared to share examples of my own imperfect allyship?
- + **Identity and Credibility:** How do my identities (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.) affect my credibility when teaching about allyship? What assumptions might participants make about me, and how will I address them?

➔ Cautions & Tips

- + Watch for performative allyship—remind participants that words without follow-through are not enough.
- + Encourage vulnerability: “We’ve all stayed silent at times. What matters is what we choose to do next.”
- + Validate participants who speak up, especially if they’re from marginalized backgrounds—but don’t make them responsible for teaching the group.

➔ Key Takeaways

- + Speaking up can be hard—but silence enables harm.
- + Allyship is about consistency, humility, and risk-taking.
- + Practicing in a safe space builds the confidence to act in real life.

+ **Bystander Moments:** When have I failed to speak up when I witnessed discrimination or bias? What prevented me from acting, and how can I help participants navigate similar barriers?

+ **Emotional Regulation:** How do I respond when participants express frustration about “walking on eggshells” or feeling that allyship is “too complicated”? Can I hold space for these concerns without dismissing the real impacts on marginalized people?

USEFUL RESOURCES

- 1 UNDP and UN Women. (2023). Promising Practices for Gender Equality. Retrieved from:
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/promising-practices-for-gender-equality-en.pdf>
- 2 UN Women. (2021). 9 Ways for Men to Become Allies in the Fight for Women's Human Rights. Retrieved from:
<https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/2/9-ways-for-men-to-become-allies-in-the-fight-for-womens-human-rights>
- 3 UN Women. (2021). Behaviorally-Informed Strategies to Engage Men in Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls. Retrieved from:
https://lac.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/report_behaviorallystrategiesengagemenpreventingviolencewomengirls_9may22_1.pdf
- 4 UN Women. (2023). Finding Strength in Allyship. Retrieved from:
<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2023/11/finding-strength-in-allyship>
- 5 UN Women. (2025). Gender Equality in the Private Sector: A Toolkit for Male Allies. Retrieved from:
https://arabstates.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/unwomen_maledallyship_eng_web.pdf
- 6 HeForShe. HeForShe Initiative. Retrieved from:
<https://www.heforshe.org>
- 7 HeForShe. (2024). HeForShe Alliance Launches Male Allyship Toolkit: A Resource for Building Inclusive Workplaces. Retrieved from:
<https://www.heforshe.org/en/heforshe-alliance-launches-male-allyship-toolkit-resource-building-inclusive-workplaces>
- 8 UN Women. (2022). Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit. Retrieved from:
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-en.pdf>
- 9 UN Women. (2022). LGBTIQ+ Equality and Rights: Internal Resource Guide. Retrieved from:
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/lgbtiq-equality-and-rights-internal-resource-guide-en.pdf>
- 10 UN Women. (2023). Toolkit: Youth Guide to End Online Gender-Based Violence. Retrieved from:
<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/12/youth-guide-to-end-online-gender-based-violence>
- 11 UN Women. (2021). Toolkit for Youth on Advocating and Achieving Gender Equality by 2030. Retrieved from:
<https://arabstates.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Arab%20States/Attachments/2018/Advocacy%20toolkit/Toolkit%20for%20youth%20on%20Advocating%20and%20Achieving%20Gender%20Equality%20by%202030.pdf>

SEE OTHER BARBERSHOP 2.0 MODULES

M1
MODULE 1
ACCOUNTABILITY
& POWER
SHARING
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M2
MODULE 2
BYSTANDER
INTERVENTION &
ALLYSHIP
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M3
MODULE 3
DIGITAL
MASCULINITIES &
ONLINE BEHAVIOR
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M4
MODULE 4
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& EMOTIONAL
EXPRESSION
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&
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M6
MODULE 6
CLIMATE JUSTICE
&
GENDER
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& INCLUSIVE
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M8
MODULE 8
MENSTRUAL
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SRHR
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M9
MODULE 9
GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE
(GBV)
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M10
MODULE 10
GENDER EQUALITY
IN THE
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