
October 29, 2020

ELECTION EDITION

Bearing Witness

Active Bystander Training



Mission Impact
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE U.S.

Housekeeping



This webinar will be
recorded.



Use the Q/A section to
add your questions
and direct them to
certain speakers.



Use the Chat Box to
share commentary
and to participate in
scenarios activity.
Staff will be
monitoring it.



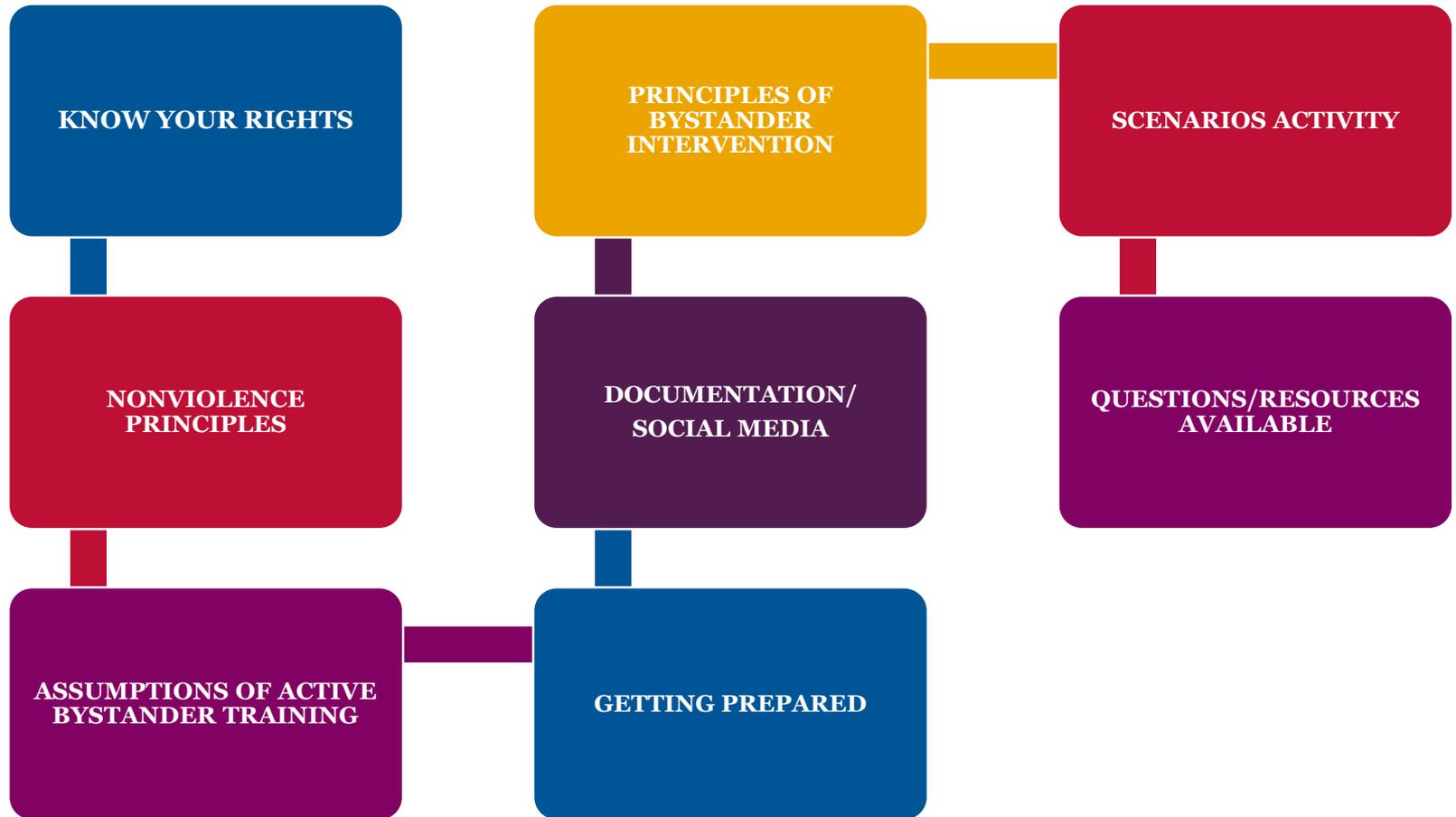
Note: Double check
send your message in
the chat box to “All
Panelists and
Attendees”



Alma Couverthie

National Organizing Director (she/her/ella)

Agenda



By the end of this training, you will understand:

You will know your rights, free of intimidation



Background and Principles of non-violence discipline



Improved skills of de-escalation based on principles



Resources Available

Community Norms



Bring your full self and limit distractions.



What is learned here, leaves here.



Use active and reflective listening.



Protect
Democracy

Rachel Homer

Counsel at Protect Democracy

Know Your Rights: Federal Law Prohibits Voter Intimidation

You have the right to feel safe while you vote.

*Federal law prohibits
intimidation, threats, or
coercion that interfere with, or
that attempt to interfere with,
your right to vote.*

42 U.S.C. § 1985(3); 52 U.S.C. § 10101(b); 52 U.S.C. § 10307(b)



What Does Modern Voter Intimidation Look Like?

- Armed militia members harassing voters waiting in line
- Overly aggressive poll monitors following voters to the polls and photographing voters' license plates

What Does Modern Voter Intimidation Look Like?

- Falsely telling voters that if they vote, someone will check if they outstanding warrants and unpaid debts
- Threatening to call ICE because a voter "looks illegal"

What Does Modern Voter Intimidation Look Like?

- Displaying false signs about "voter fraud" that threaten false criminal penalties
- Harassing or aggressively questioning voters who are speaking a language other than English

What about campaigning? What about people carrying guns?

- Supporters have a right to campaign (subject to state laws about location)
- Depending on state law, individuals might have the right to carry firearms, but cannot use them to intimidate voters
- No one has a right to intimidate voters

Bearing Witness

If we are aware of an injustice, there is a responsibility on us to do what we can to reduce that injustice.



GREENPEACE

Jonathan Butler

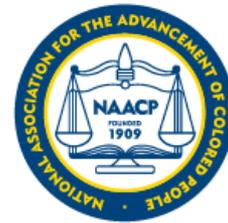
Democracy Campaigner (they/them)

When you engage in nonviolent activism, you are part of a long line of activists who have done the same thing across history

What are some examples of this that come to mind? **Put it in the chat.**

Principles Laid Out by Dr. King

- Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people
- Nonviolence seeks to win through friendship and understanding
- Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people
- Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform (geared toward peaceful protest and civil disobedience)
- Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate
- Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.



NAACP
Youth & College

Wisdom Cole

National Organizing Manager (he/him/his)

Bystander Intervention Training Assumes:



#1

We have an ethical, social and political **obligation** to help each other, when we are in a position (situationally and psychologically) to do so.

#2

Stepping up to act in **solidarity** with others can help to reduce the impact of a problematic situation.

#3

The best way of responding as a bystander is through **de-escalation**.

#4

As a bystander, you are there to **support** what the targeted person wants.

#5

Practicing how to respond helps us to get past our hesitations so we can step up when necessary.

How to Prepare Yourself



As yourself certain
questions



Be aware of what's
happening around
you



Don't assume
someone else will
do something



Don't do it alone-
use teamwork



Make contact



Brittny Baxter

Training & Movement Building Coordinator (she/her/hers)

Documentation/Social Media

- Put your phone in “Do Not Disturb” mode
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Always record with the phone sideways.
- Keep your phone as stable as possible.
- Provide necessary context but don’t distract from what is happening
- When posting on social media be sure to add time and location
- Always check your local laws around recording and documentation

Principles of Bystander Intervention

We want to show moral courage:

- by acting from a centered place despite our fears
- by choosing principles over emotion (anxiety, anger, self-righteousness)

We want to engage in de-escalation:

- by limiting the ability of a situation to become more intense
- by reducing the drama in the situation

Principles of Bystander Intervention

We want to shift the attention:

- by interacting as much as we can only with the targeted person
- by ignoring the attacker
- by creating a safer space for the targeted person
- by bringing in other people for additional support and varied responses



Principles of Bystander Intervention

We want to reach out to the targeted person:

- by being present as an ally and an equal
- by not taking away the ability of the targeted person to respond
- by asking if they want our help
- by asking before we touch them
- by asking how we can best help them
- by offering possible solutions
- by offering emotional support and empathy



What would
you do?

Scenarios



Maddie Schumacher

Legislative & Policy Specialist for Justice Reform (they/them)

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Community-Based Scenarios

SCENARIO 1

During early voting, a group of demonstrators at the polling place are displaying banners and signs while loudly chanting support for their preferred candidate.

RESPONSE

- Under the law, this is not voter intimidation.
- This may feel awkward for some, but this is a protected activity under the 1st amendment.
- Best recommendation: Ignore
- Remain alert in case conditions change.



Community-Based Scenarios

SCENARIO 2

Man harassing a women with a hijab who is waiting in line to vote 10 feet ahead of you.

RESPONSE

- Approach the targeted person (ask them if you can join) and ignore the attacker.
- Recruit other people-ask the targeted person if they would like to move somewhere else with you.

What to do if you are witnessing Islamophobic harassment

A bystander's guide to help the person who's being targeted



- 1 Engage conversation.**
Go to them, sit beside them and say hello. Try to appear calm, collected and welcoming. **IGNORE THE ATTACKER.**



- 3 Keep building the safe space.**
Keep eye contact with them and don't acknowledge the attacker's presence: the absence of response from you two will push them to leave the area shortly.



- 2 Pick a random subject and start discussing it.**
It can be anything: a movie you liked, the weather, saying you like something they wear and asking where they got it...



- 4 Continue the conversation until the attacker leaves & escort them to a safe place if necessary.**
Bring them to a neutral area where they can recollect themselves; respect their wishes if they tell you they're ok and just want to go.



Community-Based Scenarios

SCENARIO 3

Person harassing a Latino man speaking Spanish while waiting in line to vote.

RESPONSE

- Approach the targeted person (especially if you speak Spanish) Don't worry about losing your place.
- Find an election official



Final Thoughts

- This is an active bystander training. We cannot train you for immediate life-threatening incidents.
- During emergencies we strongly encourage to leave the area as quickly as possible with as many as people as possible.
- Do not attempt to engage or de-escalate a dangerous situation.



Resources

- Voter Intimidation Explainer
- Active Bystander Handout & Training Materials
- **Election Protection Hotlines**
 - English 866-OUR-VOTE
 - SPANISH/ENGLISH 888-VE-Y-VOTA
 - ASIAN LANGUAGES/ENGLISH 888-API-VOTE
 - ARABIC/ENGLISH 844-YALLA-US

Election Protection Hotline

Make sure you are prepared to vote in your state's upcoming elections. Find state-specific information including voter registration deadlines, absentee ballot information, and election dates.



Questions?