



## BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

Throughout the EVERFI program, your student is encouraged to be an “active bystander” to help create a community of support and respect at their school. One of the greatest things that a family member can do is to model similar values at home. Below, we’ve outlined five steps that you can take to do just that.

### 1. START A DIALOGUE

As a loved one, you don’t necessarily need to have all of the answers. Simply asking about the opinions of your student can be a wonderful way to begin a dialogue around healthy relationships and sexualized violence. Chances are, this is an issue that they have been increasingly educated about on their campus, in the media, and through programs like Haven.

Some helpful questions to start the discussion could be:

- Do you know anyone that this has happened to?
- Why do you think it happens so frequently in college?
- Have you ever had to step in or intervene in a situation? How did you feel? What did you do to intervene?
- Do you and your friends talk about violence on your campus? How?
- What do you think a healthy relationship looks like?
- How do you think you’d know if you were in a relationship that wasn’t healthy?

### 2. CHECK YOUR GENDER BIASES

Think about some of the preconceived notions about gender that exist in our society, and how they might play into an unhealthy culture at college. How might such beliefs as “women should be nurturing and passive” or “men should be aggressive and competitive” be problematic? A great first step in becoming an ally is to evaluate your own perspective and underlying beliefs, and to explore any biases you might have.

### 3. MODEL APPROPRIATE INTERVENTION

During their participation in Haven, your student has been encouraged to speak up or safely intervene in situations that could become problematic. Some examples of bystander intervention include:

- Speaking up if someone makes an offensive comment.
- Helping out if someone seems too intoxicated to get home safely.
- Stepping in if a person is treating another person disrespectfully.
- Providing words of support or comfort to someone who has experienced sexual assault.

Begin to think about the ways in which you model your own values. Think about ways that you might be able to intervene when presented with these situations in your own life.

### 4. REFRAIN FROM VICTIM BLAMING LANGUAGE

Within the EVERFI program, your student has been taught that sexual assault is never the fault of the survivor. As a parent, it is important to echo this sentiment. Where a person was when an assault occurred, what they were wearing, whether or not they were drinking, or whether or not they had been intimate with their assaulter in the past are all irrelevant. The only person to blame following an assault is the person who committed it.

### 5. LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Consider your own values, expectations, and beliefs. Your loved one is being taught to be a part of a community where each individual is respected and valued. How can and do you mirror this at home? What can you do to demonstrate such behaviors to your student and others in your life? By witnessing examples of such actions, your student will recognize that these universal values translate beyond their institution.