

IMBRA Bystander Intervention Sheet

This one-page guide is for participants at IMBRA events. If you witness behaviour that makes someone uncomfortable, unsafe, or excluded, your intervention can make a real difference. Prioritise safety — yours and others' — and choose a response that feels appropriate to the situation.

The quick checklist

- Notice what is happening.
- Assess safety for yourself and others.
- Intervene using one of the options below, or seek help.
- Support the person affected and encourage reporting.
- Document what you observed (facts, time, place, witnesses).

Five safe options to intervene

Choose the option(s) that fit the situation and your level of comfort.

1. Direct — Address the behaviour

- Brief, calm and non-judgemental: "Please stop — that language isn't OK here."
- Use "I" statements: "I feel uncomfortable when you say that."
- If you are comfortable, check in with the target: "Are you alright? Do you want me to stay with you?"

2. Distract — Create a diversion

- Interrupt the interaction to break the dynamic: "Hey, the speaker's about to start — let's get our seats."
- Offer an alternative focus: "Who wants a coffee? I need a break."
- Use a neutral excuse to separate people.

3. Delegate — Get help from others

- Seek venue staff, security, a conference chair, or an event organiser.
- Ask someone with positional authority to step in: "Could you speak to them? I don't feel safe doing it."
- If immediate danger exists, contact local emergency services or venue security.

4. Delay — Check in after the event

- If intervention in the moment isn't safe, approach the target afterwards: "I saw what happened and I'm sorry. Do you want support?"
- Offer to accompany them to report the incident or to find private help.

5. Document — Record what you observed

- Write down the date, time, location, people involved, witnesses and a factual description.
- Preserve any relevant evidence (messages, photos) if appropriate.
- Documentation helps if the person chooses to report later.

Short example phrases

- Direct: "That comment isn't appropriate — please stop."
- Distract: "Excuse me, can I grab your attention about the schedule?"
- Delegate: "Can an organiser come over for a moment?"
- Delay: "I'm sorry that happened. Are you okay? Would you like me to help you report it?"

If you are the person affected

- If safe, tell the person to stop and make your boundaries clear.
- Seek a friend, colleague or safe space; ask someone to accompany you.
- Report the incident to an IMBRA Executive Committee member or the Conduct Officer — contact details are in the event programme and IMBRA governance materials.
- Preserve any evidence you feel comfortable keeping.

Reporting and support

- Reports can be made verbally or in writing to any IMBRA Executive Committee member or the designated Conduct Officer. Contact details are provided in event materials and membership communications.
- IMBRA handles reports with a victim-centred approach and will treat information sensitively and confidentially on a need-to-know basis.
- If you require urgent assistance or there is an immediate threat, contact venue security or local emergency services first.

Safety reminders

- Never put yourself at unnecessary risk; do not use physical force unless there is imminent danger and you are trained to intervene.
- Respect requests for privacy and confidentiality from people affected.
- Be mindful of power dynamics and cultural differences when intervening.