



Overcoming the bystander effect

How to stand up to intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) often happens in public without being challenged. This can be because of the bystander effect.

The bystander effect is when we see a person in need and decide not to help, because we think someone else will. We might think *“it’s not my business”* or *“someone else will handle this better.”* Unfortunately, this makes it easier for IPV to happen.

One person standing up to violence can make a difference — and others will often follow them.

This is why it’s so important to (safely) take action against IPV when we see it.

Taking a stand using the 5 D's

It can be difficult to know what to do when we see intimate partner violence. One way to consider your options is to remember the five D's.

Direct

Approach or challenge the person about their behaviour, if it feels safe to do so. Speak calmly and keep it short. You could say something like “hey, what’s happening here?” or “that’s not ok.” Avoid being drawn into an argument — remember your aim is to stay safe and stop the violence if possible.

Distract

If you're not comfortable confronting the violent person, you can try to distract them. For example, you could ask for directions or pretend you know the victim and start talking to them. If your aim is to distract, avoid talking about the violence.

Delegate

If you feel unsafe or can't deal with the situation by yourself, look for someone who's able and willing to help you. Explain what's happening and how you'd like them to help. You could also contact the emergency services or a local support organization.

Delay

It may feel too dangerous or difficult to react during the violence, but you can still help the victim afterwards. For example, you could see if they want to talk about it, calm them down, help them get support, or offer to report the violence to the police.

Document

It may be useful to take a photo or video as evidence (for example, if you're going to report the violence to the police.) Never livestream or share it online.

Tips for using the 5 D's

Your safety comes first.

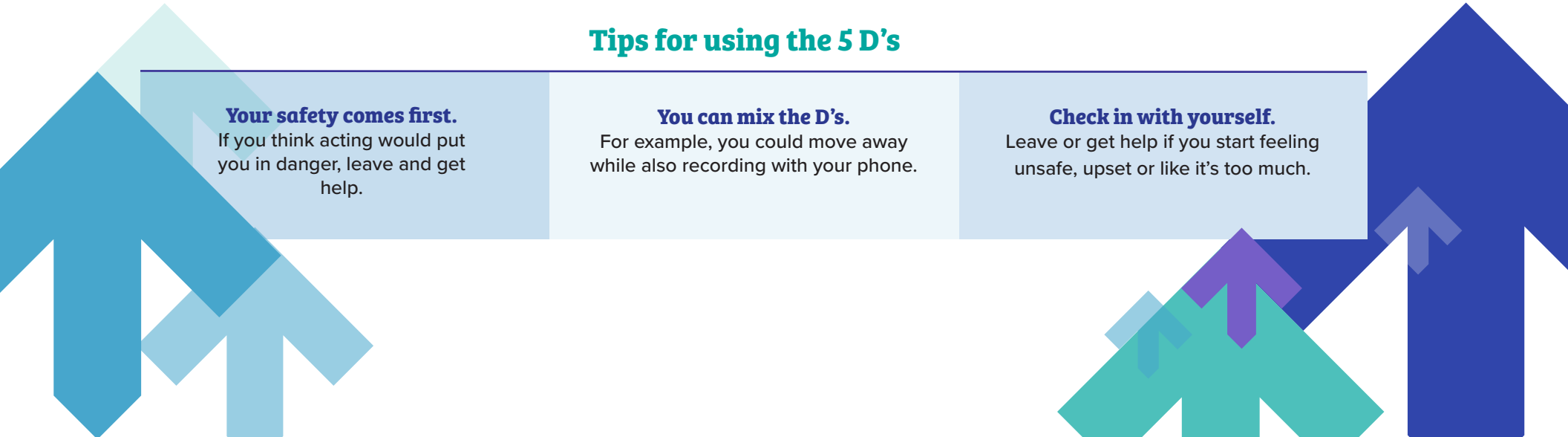
If you think acting would put you in danger, leave and get help.

You can mix the D's.

For example, you could move away while also recording with your phone.

Check in with yourself.

Leave or get help if you start feeling unsafe, upset or like it's too much.



What if intimate partner violence is happening to me?

You're not alone. There are many support services available to help you if you're being harmed by your partner, including:

Ottawa Victim Services

Website: ovs-svo.com

Email: info@ovs-svo.com

Telephone: 613-238-2762

Immigrant Women Services Ottawa

Website: immigrantwomenservices.com

Email: infomail@iwso.ca

Telephone: 613-729-3145

Interval House Ottawa

Website: www.intervalhouseottawa.org

Email: residential@intervalhouseottawa.org

Telephone: 613-234-5181

About See It, Name It, Change It

See It, Name It, Change It (SINICI) is an educational campaign against intimate partner violence. We help people learn what violence is, what it looks like and how to stand up against it. Together, we can build a safer Ottawa for everyone.

The SINICI campaign in Ottawa is run by Ottawa Victim Services, a not-for-profit organization supporting survivors of crime and tragedy in Ottawa since 1998.

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