



## Bystander Empowerment Programs Overview

2018-2019 Academic Year

Bystander empowerment is an interactive, skills building program that is designed to help participants identify, respond to, and potentially prevent harmful situations.

Although bystander strategies can be applied to a variety of situations, these workshops focus on raising awareness of warning signs and indicators of sexual assault, intimate partner abuse, and stalking.

Whether or not bystanders choose to intervene is determined by five factors:

- Do they **NOTICE** that something is occurring?
- Do they **INTERPRET** the event as potentially harmful?
- Do they **ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY** in assisting?
- Do they have **STRATEGIES** for how to help?
- Are they ready to take **ACTION**?

Workshops were offered to all of the incoming sorority and fraternity members.

- **691 students** participated in **29 Greek Sessions**

Some of the students who were sanctioned after a conduct violation were required to take a bystander empowerment workshop.

- **154 students** participated in **16 Sanction Sessions**

Classes, student organizations, and others can book a Bystander Empowerment Workshop through the Health Promotion and Wellness website.

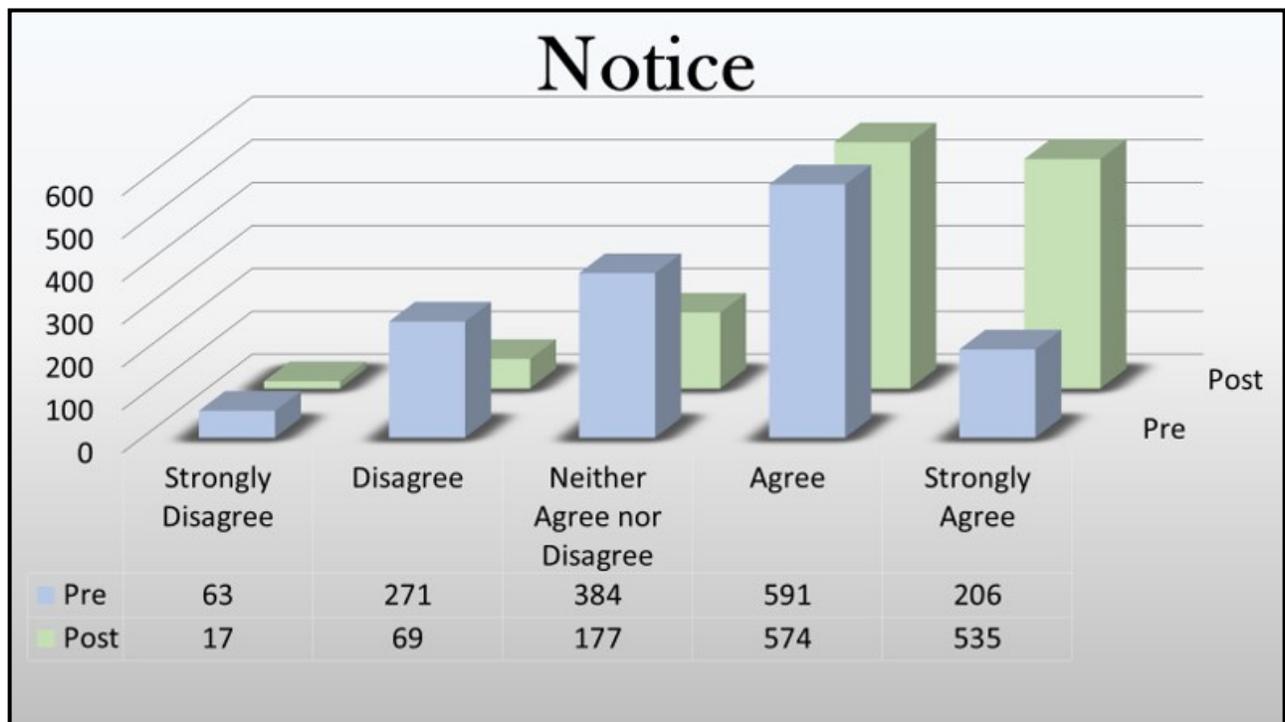
- **341 students** participated in **17 Workshop Request Sessions**

In total, **1,186 students** participated in **62 sessions**

# Step 1: Notice

Students may **fail to notice** a specific event or **fail to realize** there is a campus concern because they are in a hurry, distracted, or being willfully ignorant.

Being aware of **common high-risk** or harmful situations on campus, knowing the **prevalence** of these events, and having an **accurate understanding** of who is at risk are all components of noticing.



Between the pre and post-assessments:

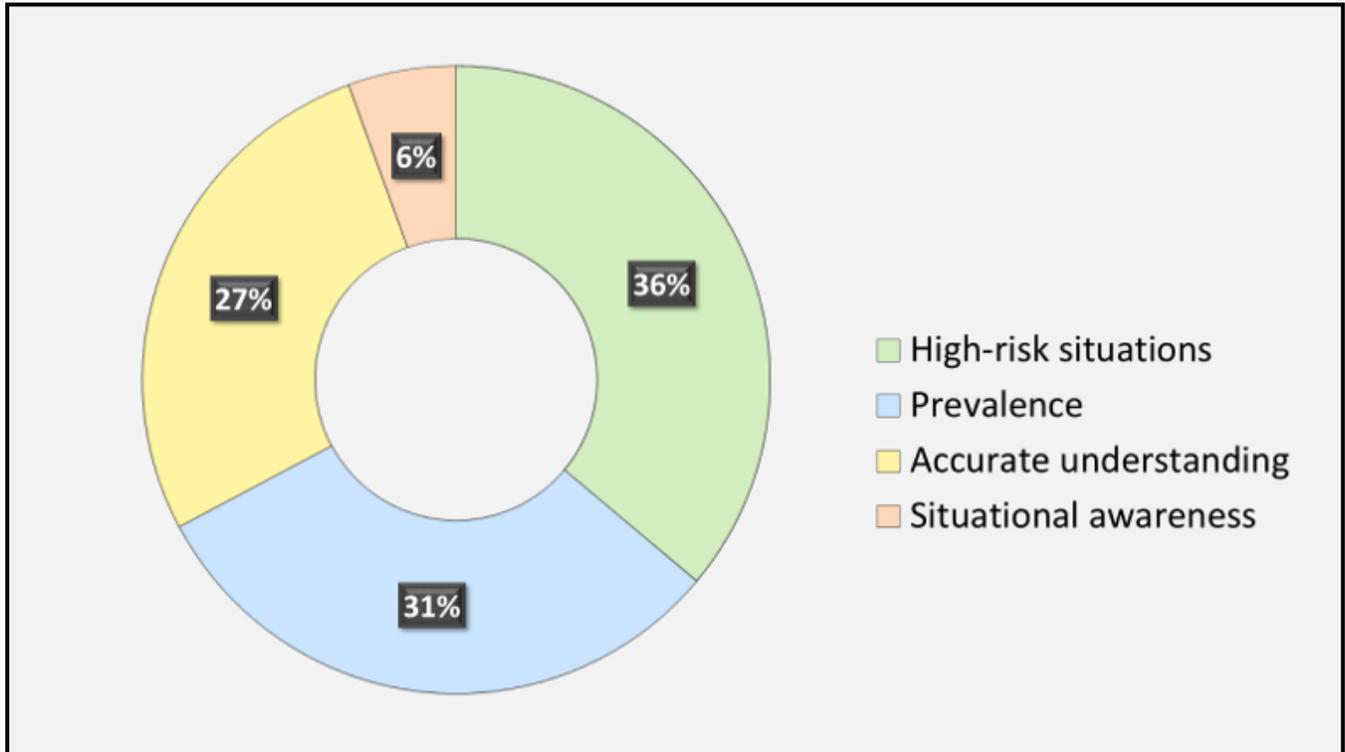
- Those students who **Disagreed**, or **Strongly Disagreed**, that they are able to notice specific events and are aware of common issues on college campuses decreased from 22% to only 6%.

- Those students who **Agreed**, or **Strongly Agreed**, that they are able to notice specific events and are aware of common issues on college campuses increased from 52% to 81%.

When asked,

“What was the most useful information you've learned from this session?”

180 responses related to *noticing*.



One common theme that emerged (mentioned in 18% of the responses) was the importance of understanding how gender does and does not relate to risk.

*“Breaking down stereotypes”*

*“We should look for warning signs rather than the sex of a person”*

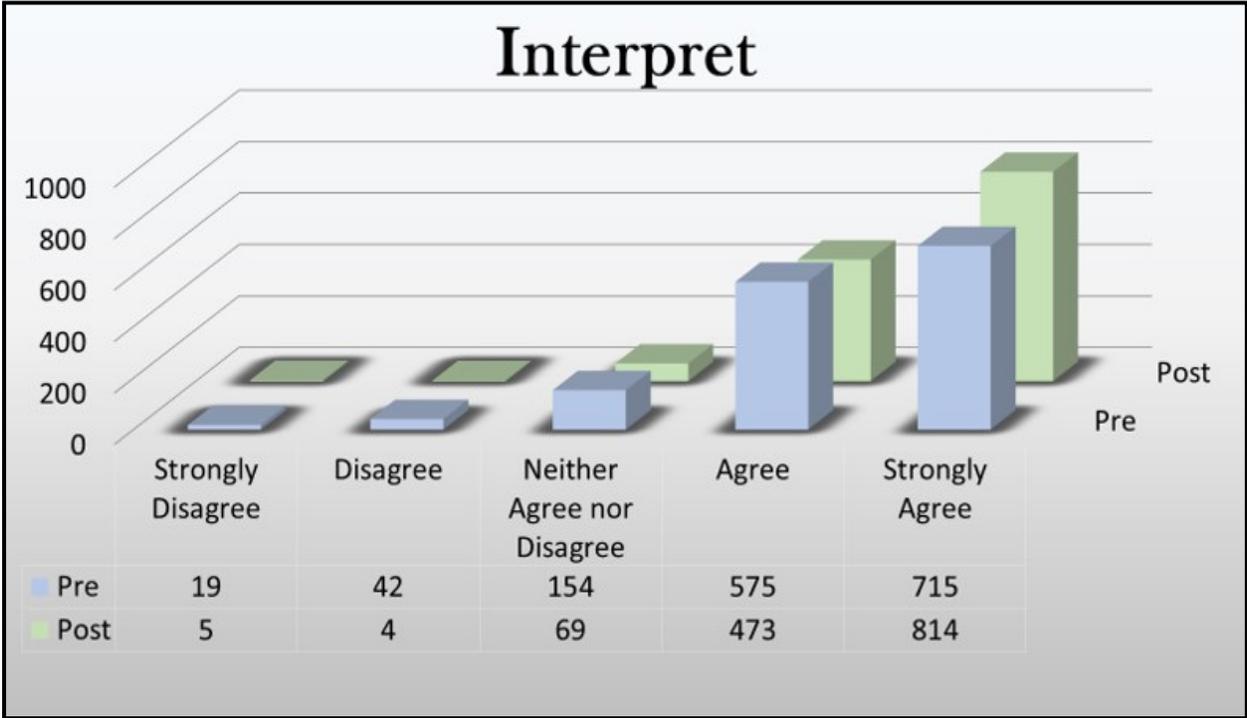
*“It was eye-opening to see how many people are sexually assaulted by someone they know versus a stranger”*

# Step 2: Interpret

Once students notice an event, they must ascertain whether it is problematic enough to require intervention.

Students with greater awareness of **warning signs** evaluate situations more accurately, and are more likely to take **protective measures** to ensure their safety.

**Campus policies and laws** outline unacceptable behavior.



Between the pre and post-assessments:

- Those students who **Disagreed**, or **Strongly Disagreed**, that they could interpret whether an event required intervention decreased from 4% to less than 1%.
- Those students who **Agreed**, or **Strongly Agreed**, that they could interpret whether an event required intervention increased from 86% to 94%.

When asked,

“What was the most useful information you've learned from this session?”

386 responses related to *interpreting*.



*“When it doesn’t feel right, it’s probably not”*

*“Definitely the stalking section! Incredibly revealing and informative”*

*“It's important to always err on the safe side”*

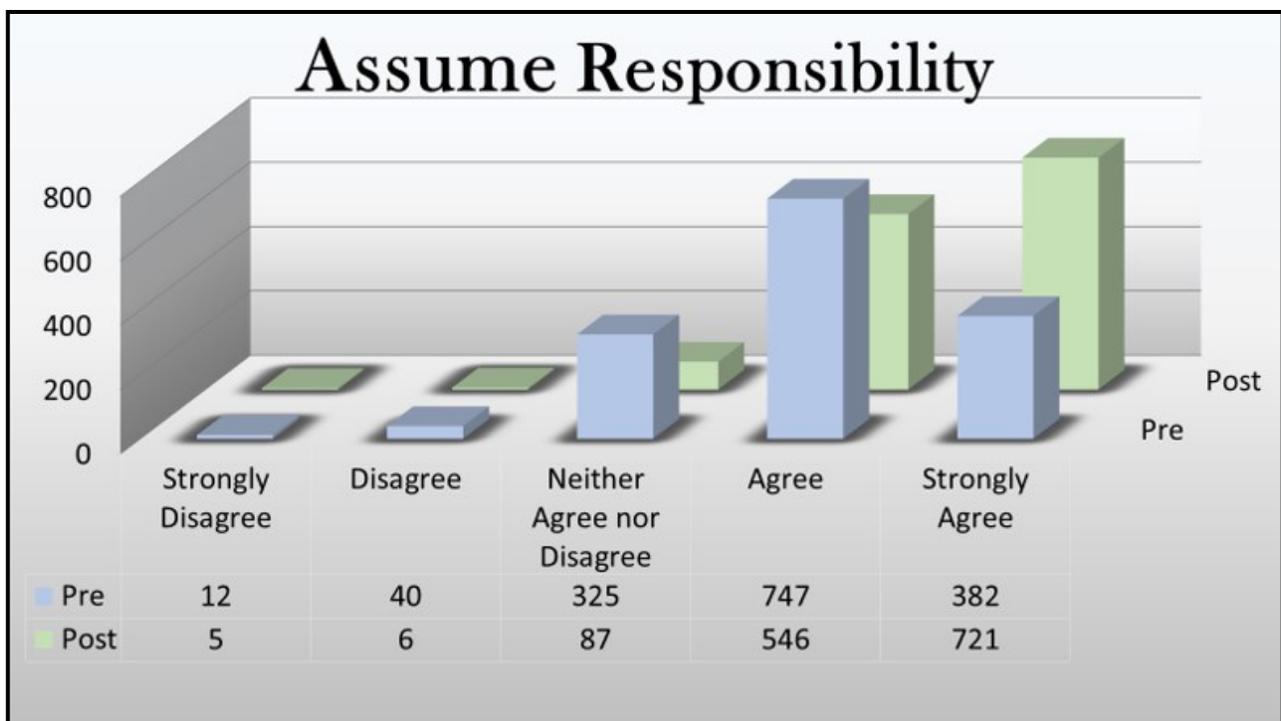
## Step 3: Assume Responsibility

There are many reasons why, even after establishing that a situation that warrants concern, bystanders will choose to stand by or walk away.

One of the main reasons for bystander apathy is **diffusion of responsibility**, the belief that someone else will help.

Students who feel a strong connection to the campus community and have a greater propensity for **empathy**, the ability to see “through another’s eyes” to understand what they are feeling, are more likely to intervene.

Bystanders who realize the **potential consequences** of inaction will act more frequently.



Between the pre and post-assessments:

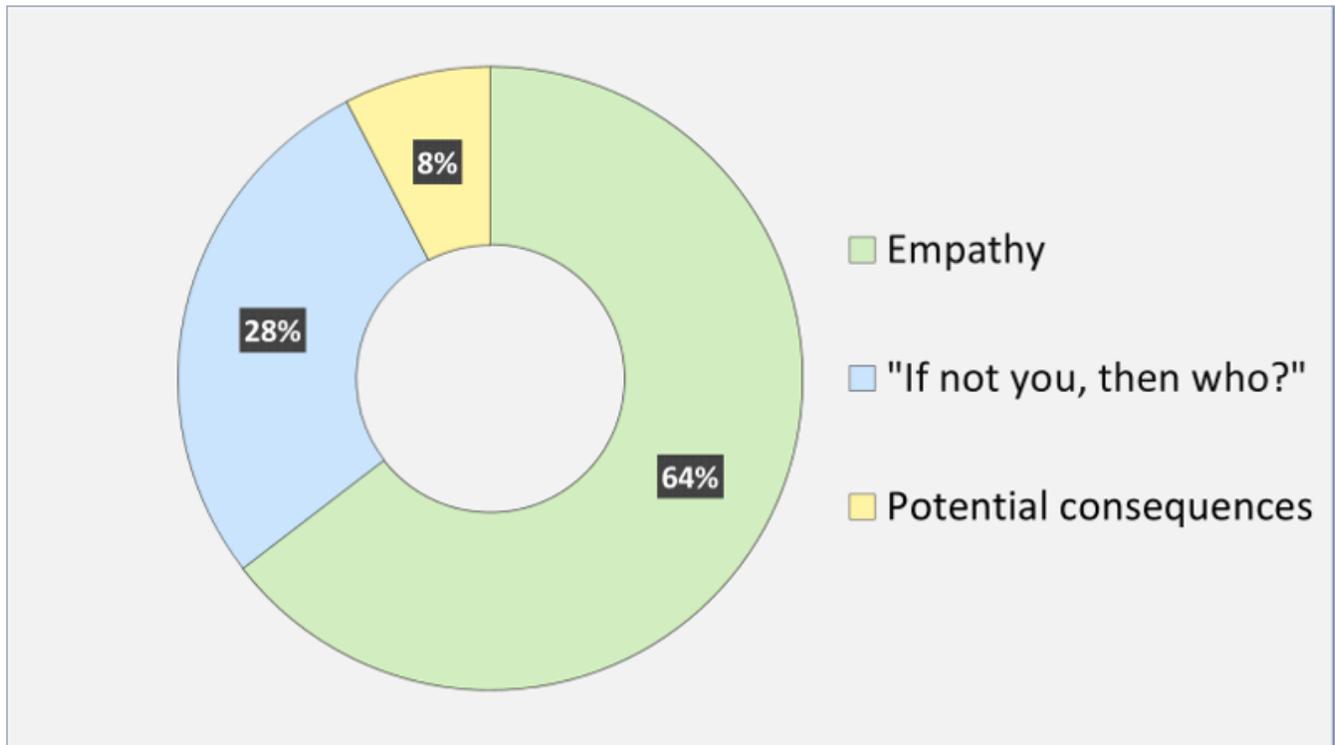
- Those students who **Disagreed**, or **Strongly Disagreed**, that they felt personally responsible for helping others decreased from 3% to less than 1%.

- Those students who **Agreed**, or **Strongly Agreed**, that they felt personally responsible for helping others increased from 75% to 93%.

When asked,

“What was the most useful information you've learned from this session?”

79 responses related to *assuming responsibility*.



A common theme that emerged (mentioned in 23% of the responses) was an empathetic reaction, resulting from hearing a personal story shared by participants, facilitators, or through a video clip shown.

*“It is my responsibility to stand up for others  
even if I don’t know them personally”*

*“If someone’s life is at stake, it is worth taking an L and getting a ticket”*

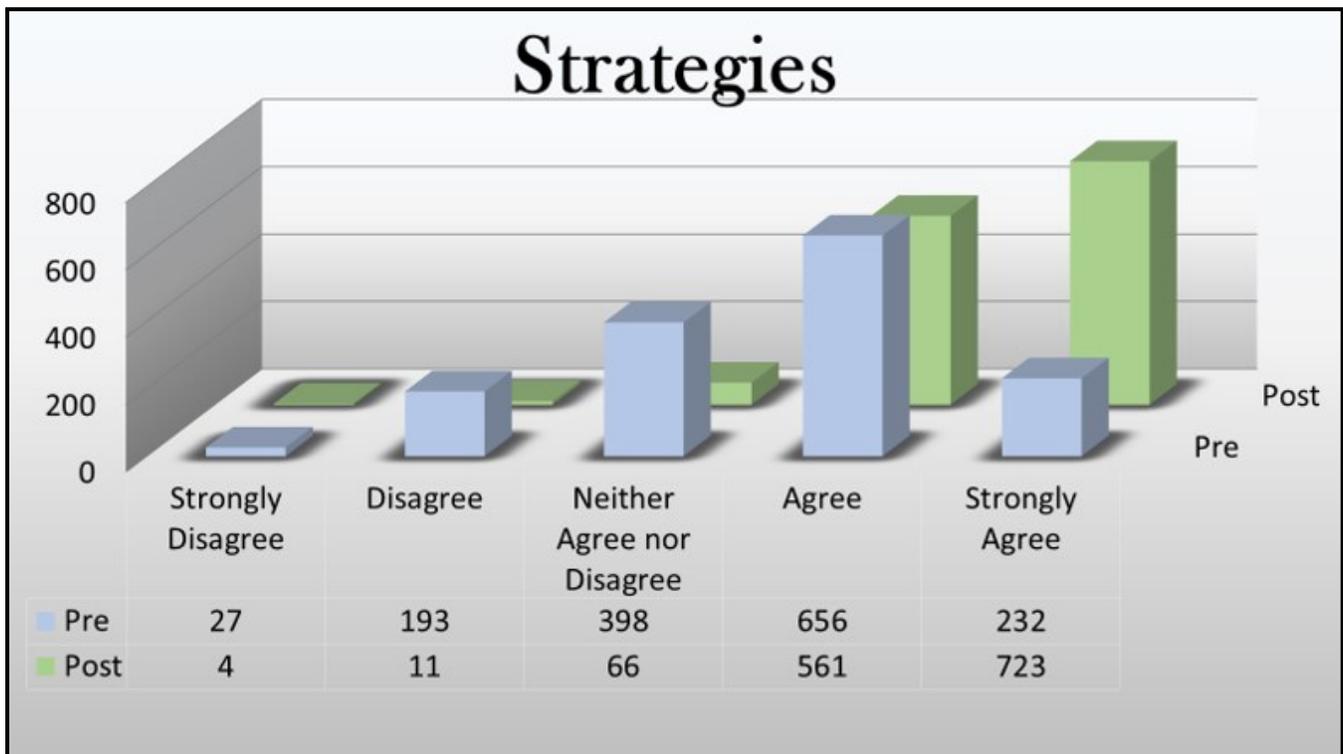
*“The stories were very eye-opening and made me want to  
speak up more whenever I am in a situation like these”*

## Step 4: Strategies

In order to intervene effectively, bystanders must be equipped with a variety of strategies to select from, based on situational factors including severity, comfort level, and personality traits.

The “Bystander’s Toolkit” includes strategies divided into four main categories: **Delay, Distract, Delegate, and Diffuse** (the 4Ds)

Students puzzle through **practice scenarios** that require they discuss the advantages of solo intervention versus recruiting assistance, direct versus indirect intervention, and stepping in personally versus **reaching out to resources**.



Between the pre and post-assessments:

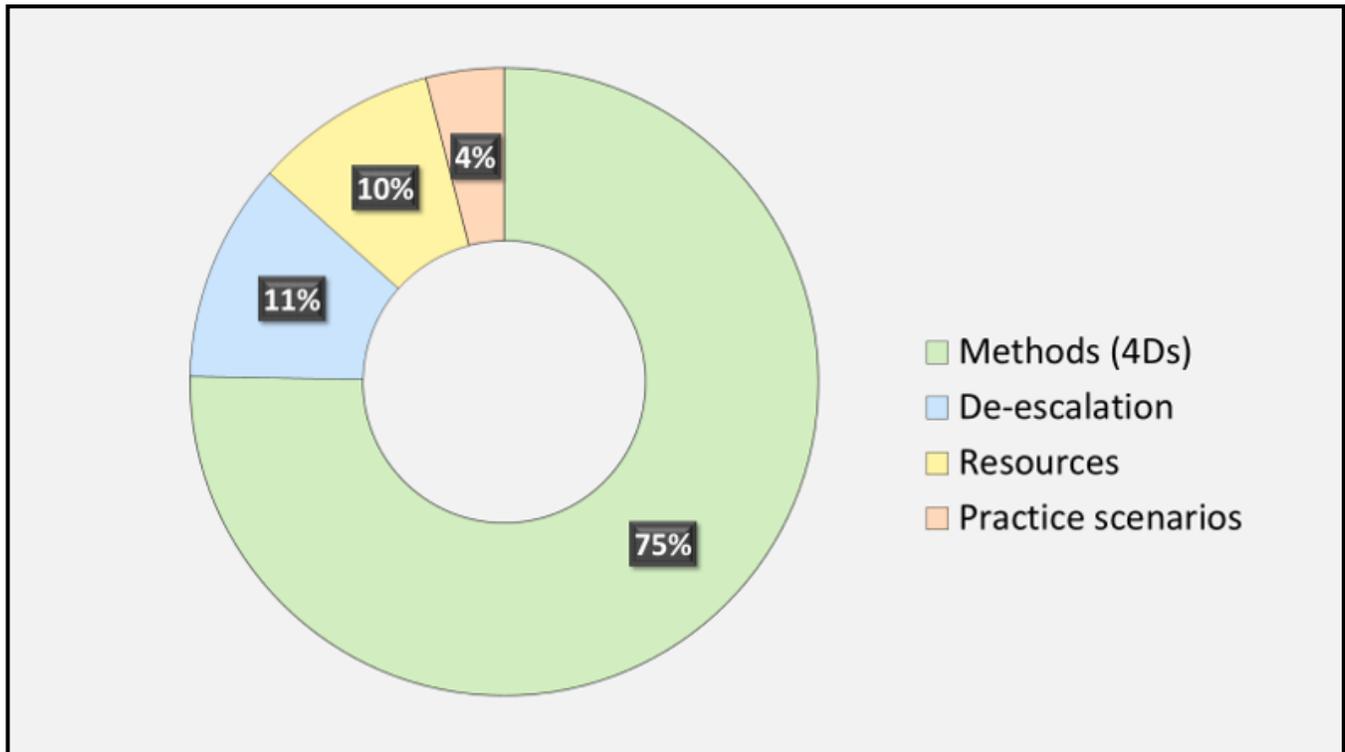
- Those students who **Disagreed**, or **Strongly Disagreed**, that they were equipped with the tools and strategies needed to intervene effectively decreased from 15% to 1%.

- Those students who **Agreed**, or **Strongly Agreed**, that they were equipped with the tools and strategies needed to intervene effectively increased from 59% to 94%.

When asked,

“What was the most useful information you've learned from this session?”

425 responses related to *strategies*.



*“Going through all of the scenarios that we outlined allowed me to realize how I may react to a certain situation, and how I may need to mold my own behavior when it comes to being a bystander”*

*“The examples used were awesome! I’d recommend adding more!”*

*“I learned to use the 4 D’s when in an high-octane situation, that’s my best bet on bringing the situation down to a non-critical level.”*

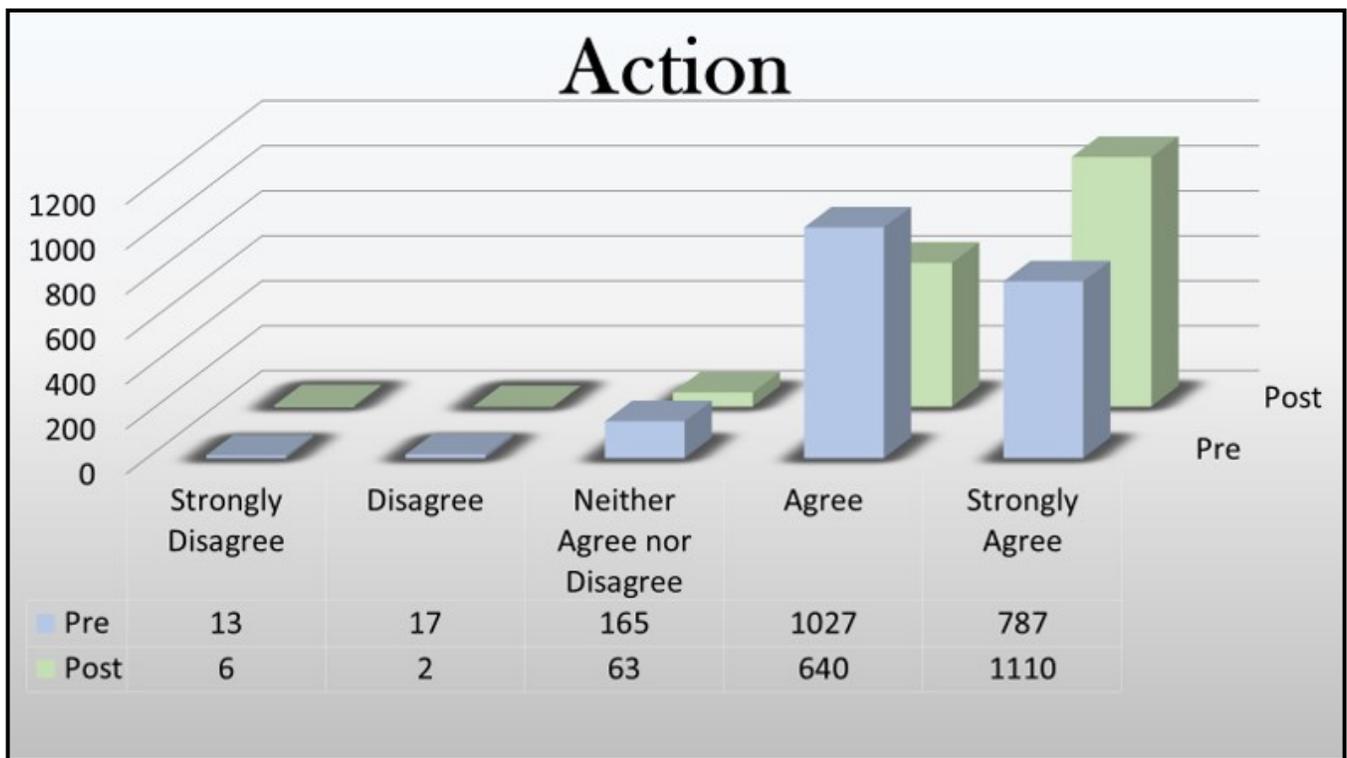
*“You have the ability to do something, even if it’s discouraged.”*

# Step 5: Action

Once students have decided on a strategy, the final step is to act in an attempt to change the outcome of the situation.

**STEP UP! STEP IN! SAY SOMETHING! DO SOMETHING!**

Students who feel **prepared**, believe **small interventions** can make a difference, and are aware of the **potential impact** are more likely to take action.



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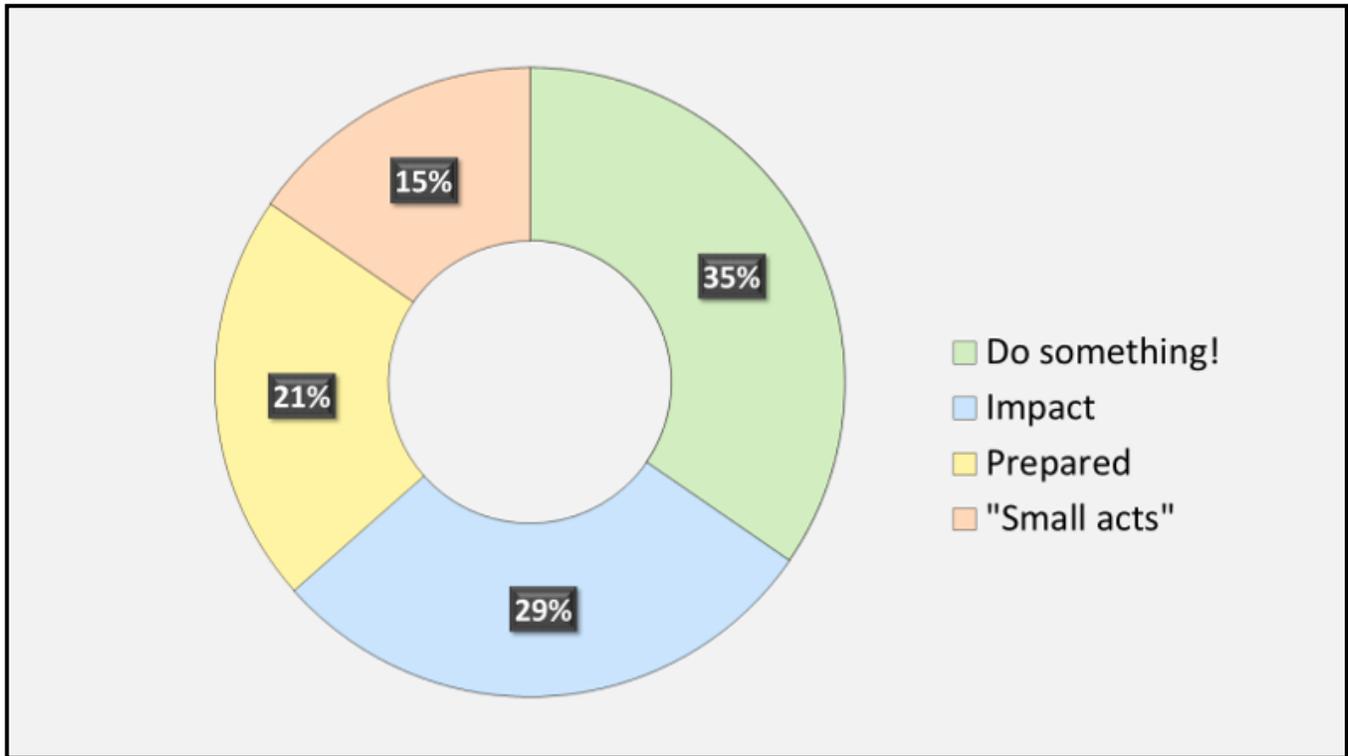
- Those students who **Disagreed**, or **Strongly Disagreed**, that they would take action as a bystander decreased from 1% to less than one-half of a percent.

- Those students who **Agreed**, or **Strongly Agreed**, that they would take action as a bystander increased from 90% to 96%.

When asked,

“What was the most useful information you've learned from this session?”

52 responses related to *acting*.



*“It isn’t hard to step up, you just got to do it.”*

*“That we can help no matter what the situation.”*

*“Learning about the difference I can make, I feel empowered and eager to help out wherever I see stuff like this happening.”*

*“That it’s very important to be a hero! Even to a stranger!”*

*“It was important to learn about how small of an act can change someone’s night/future by stepping in.”*

## Additional Comments

51% of the students provided additional comments. Of those:

90%

praised the program and/or thanked the presenters

*“I liked that there were gender neutral examples.”*

5%

provided **suggestions**

*“More real-life stories”*

3%

were **critical** of the program and/or the material

*“Absolutely worthless and a complete waste of time.”*

2%

**disclosed** having experienced one of the topics being discussed

*“I didn't know what the cycle of abuse was before today, and I realized that I've been through the love-bombing/honeymoon phase before with a partner. Thank you for teaching me about this and giving me new vocabulary to describe how I was feeling.”*

# Moving Forward

We plan to modify our content and expand our audience by:

- ⇒ Targeting specific student audiences  
(ex: athletes, incoming freshman, and student organizations)
- ⇒ Reaching out to faculty about classroom presentations
- ⇒ Adding additional practice scenarios
- ⇒ Adding intoxication warning signs
- ⇒ Asking for additional demographic information on the assessment

*“They did a fantastic job and were wonderful. I am super impressed!”*

*“Great speakers and presentation. Definitely took a lot away from it.”*

*“I was initially hesitant, but knowing that I wasn’t seen as a boogeyman helped me to be receptive and attentive to the message.  
Great job.”*

*“ It was perfect.”*