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# Enabling Intervention: Speaking Up Safely



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Discuss “Snackman” video

- Plan briefly discuss what it takes to be an intervenor
- Then what it takes to build an intervention-supportive culture

# Agenda

- What it takes to intervene
- Building a culture of intervention, and why

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Story: "Bystander Intervention" common topic. AF sexual assault prevention. Focus here is NOT on criminal incidents

## Scenario

Omar fields support requests for his Department. A student comes in for assistance. The student is in an agitated state, and begins complaining loudly. Omar is working to de-escalate the situation when his supervisor rushes in and says, **“I’ll take care of this for you.”**

You look over at Omar and he seems deflated.



*Story for illustration purposes only*

- Before deciding if something has gone wrong here, have to decide is this a situation where intervention is possible



## Is this an Intervention Situation?

- **What impact do you see?**  
Start with apparent results, not causes.
- **Could a different impact be possible?**  
Imagine a "reasonable better"
- **Should I intervene?**  
Safety, power, and your values

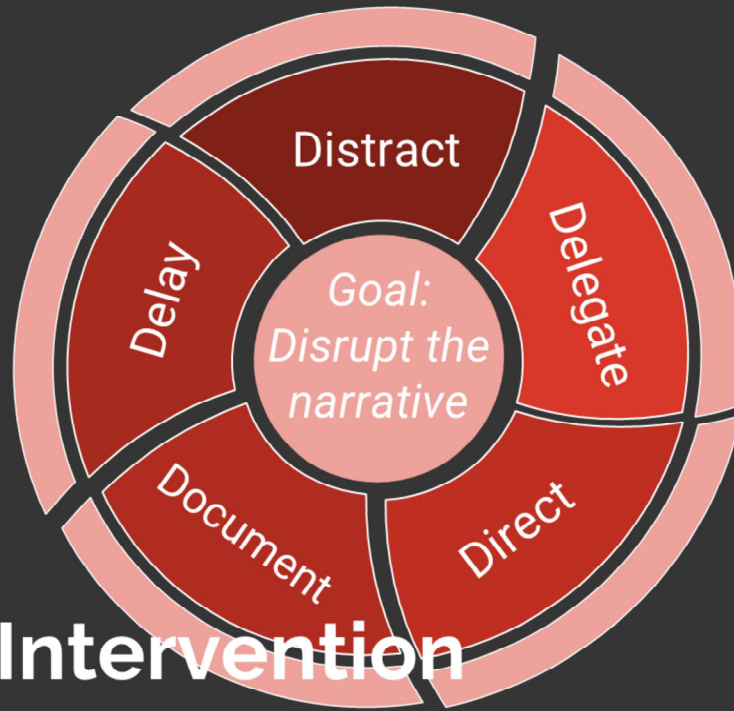
A word about...

# SAFETY

Intervention does *not*  
always equal “the direct  
approach”



- 
- **No value judgments**
  - **Preserve autonomy**
  - **Time is not absolute**



# Tools of Intervention

## Scenario

Tanner is a staff member on your team. Imaan is a new employee in the Department. Tanner and Imaan are on a Zoom call with another Department. Imaan is wearing a hijab. During the call, someone asks Imaan, **“you’re not going to wear that scarf when you’re meeting with other people, right?”**

Tanner quickly says, **“We’ll talk about that in our office”** and moves on to another topic.



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ISLANDS

- Switch gears to intervention culture



## Barriers to Intervention

- **Doubt**  
I don't know enough.
- **Fear**  
The cost of intervention is too high.
- **Distrust**  
It won't help







## Meet Tanner.

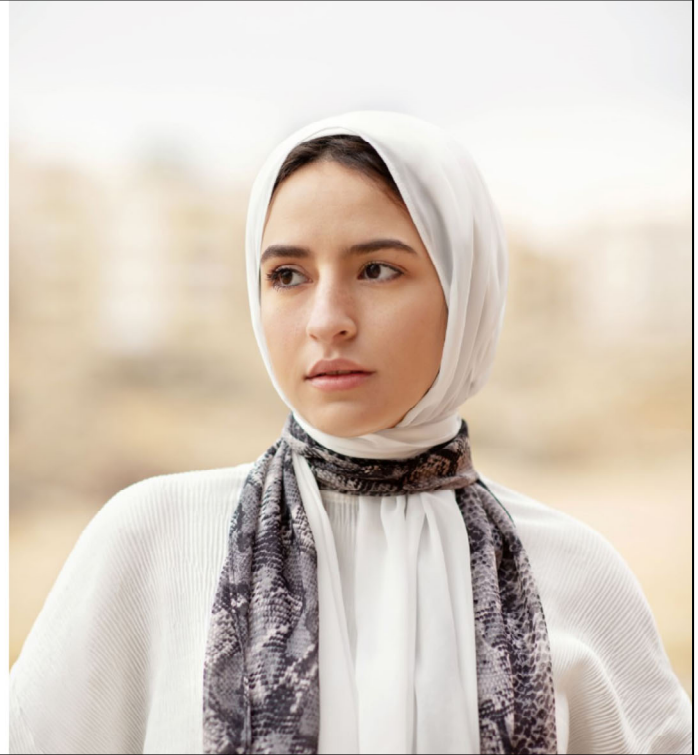
He has been working at CSUCI for two years and is working on his MAEd degree.

He is a single parent.

## Meet Imaan.

She is a new grad, and previously worked in a different Division as a Student Assistant.

Her immigration status is uncertain.





## Meet Yourself.


You have been in charge of the office for just over a year. You came to the office from the other Department on the call with Tanner and Imaan.



## The bases for intervention

- **13-50% incidents are witnessed**
- **92% talk to coworkers about incidents**
- **Witnesses are often seen as more credible than reporters**





## Why create a culture of intervention?

- **Knowledge**  
You can only address what you know.
- **Team Integrity**  
We've got our backs.
- **Individual Confidence**  
Intervening builds people up,  
independent of results



## Scenario

Ryan is a colleague you are friendly with. They haven't responded to a few recent texts asking how things are going, though. When Ryan finally responds, the response is cryptic: **"It's fine. Things have just been complicated."**

You know from earlier conversations that Ryan does not get along with the faculty director for his program. When you last spoke, Ryan hinted at concerns about a certain grant.

*Story for illustration purposes only*



So...

- Highly likely Ryan has talked to someone else about his "complicated" feelings
- Quite probable others have similar concerns about the grant

Is this an "intervention situation"?

What steps could you take?

What steps could Ryan's dept take before this happens to make it easier for this info to come to light *through intervenors*?

- To answer, let's revisit....

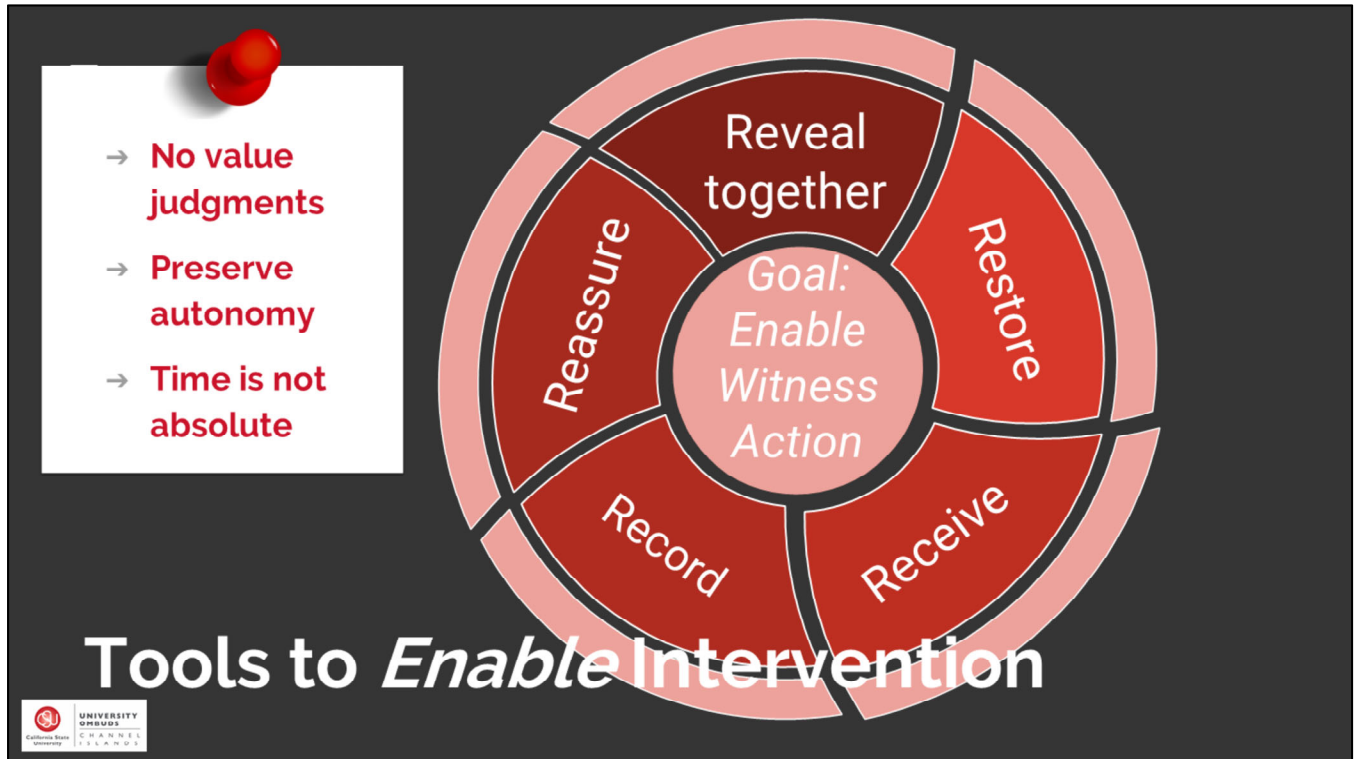
Let's revisit

## Barriers to Intervention

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- Consider breakout rooms here, depending on size of the group



- Just as w/ intervention itself, goal is not to “fix” the situation
- Qualifiers are the same as well
  - Reveal together: Offer and encourage allies in disclosure
  - Reassure: Affirm continued place on the team even if sharing difficult info
  - Record: Offer or develop means for supporting witness(es)
  - Receive: Offer to listen and encourage others to the same
  - Restore: Commit to restore or find ways to make whole those who identify issues



# What steps could you take to address these barriers?

Top



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- Distrust: Separate the response from the remedy
  - Note and describe the behavior in neutral terms (like a reporter) for self
  - Delineate personal responsibility to address, if any
    - May be defined in terms of personal commitments (e.g., speaking up against racism)
      - Determine to act only within bounds of authority, whatever that may be
- Fear: Assess what matters in contextual relationships—access to resources, administrative efficiency, or something deeper?
  - Are there strategies to preserve or maintain those benefits independently?
- Doubt: Detach hypotheses from judgment
  - Acknowledge and note as many explanations as possible
  - If any plausible bad explanations exist, act on those ... with acknowledgment of alternatives

Bystanders *stand by*, by definition. **POSITIVE INTERVENORS** enable action to bring to light to bad and good situations.

