

# Network Against Islamophobia

The Network Against Islamophobia (NAI), a project of [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), was created to serve as a resource to, and work with, JVP chapters and other groups interested in organizing against Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism and to be a partner to the broader, Muslim-led movement against Islamophobia.

We created these materials – a two-session curriculum and resources; a series of modules; and a facilitator guide – so we can be effective, accountable partners in this work.

Many thanks to Nina Mehta, Krysta Williams, and Emilia Pfannl from the Participatory Action Research Center (PARCEO) for reviewing and contributing so meaningfully to the curriculum and for co-creating the facilitator guide.

## Bystander Module

### **Purpose of Module:**

This module looks at the ways that bystanders of injustices can intervene, support, and prioritize the person being targeted. It analyzes how instances of injustice can lead to the violations of rights and connect to cultural and structural racism. It also looks at how individuals and communities can respond in meaningful ways during crisis moments. The content of this training was adapted from the Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) online discussion on “Protecting One Another: Being Better Bystanders,” recorded on December 5th, 2016 as part of the JVP Ready to Fight Training Series.

### **Goals:**

- To develop an understanding of how bystanders can become supportive to individuals and communities that they witness being targeted during moments of crisis
- To help those of us who are bystanders understand how our positionality--who we are in particular contexts and social locations-- can affect our responses to episodes where we witness harassment and intimidation firsthand
- To equip potential bystanders and communities with concrete tools to confront situations involving harassment and intimidation

### **Materials:**

- Bystander Handout #1: Taking Action: How Do We Show Up for Each Other?

- Bystander Handout #2: Taking Action: What to Do If You Are Witnessing Islamophobia Harassment
- “Picture Captures Person Accosting Woman Wearing Hijab in Food and Drug Store” [video](#)

**Additional Resources:**

- [“Protecting One Another: Being Better Bystanders” Online Webinar Video](#)
- [“Protecting One Another: Being Better Bystanders” PowerPoint Presentation](#)

## I. Introductions and opening (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

5 minutes: Introduce themselves; give a brief overview of the agenda of the module and the rationale.

Ask participants to respond to one or more of the following 3 prompts:

- Briefly describe any concerns that you brought with you here.
- Briefly describe any questions that you brought with you today.
- Tell us about any resources/ideas/experiences you brought to share.

10 minutes: Pass out index cards on which participants can jot down their responses. After a few minutes, facilitators collect the cards, pass them around, and have everyone read another person’s responses to the group.

## II. Bystanders and Community (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

10 minutes: Write the word “bystander” on the center of chart paper or board. Ask participants for phrases or thoughts that come to mind when they hear that word associated with a crisis moment involving harassment or intimidation where a person is being targeted because of their religion, race, gender, etc. Jot down their responses on chart paper or board. Guide a discussion about these definitions and thoughts. Ask questions:

- How can we better show up?
- What are reasons for inaction? (Examples: “I don’t know what to do”; “Nobody else is doing anything”; “I could make it worse”; “I feel scared”; “It’s not my problem”; “Maybe they’ll turn on me”; “I can’t make a difference.”)
- How does my personality affect how I react in a given situation? How can people with different personality types (introverts, extroverts, etc.) respond productively to the same situation?
- How can we take bolder and more clear and committed action together?

### III. Protecting one another: How do we show up for each other? (85 minutes)

#### Part 1: Values (25 minutes)

Facilitator:

5 minutes: Briefly discuss going from inaction to action and how we can move ourselves into action.

Share “Picture Captures Person Accosting Woman Wearing Hijab in Food and Drug Store” [video](#).

5 minutes: Guide group conversation:

- What values did the people in the video demonstrate?
- What other values would you want to bring to the situation?
- What are your values? What values do you want to show up with in a crisis moment?

15 minutes: Divide the group into pairs (or fours, depending on the size of the group) for a discussion that draws on personal experiences and/or what participants have heard from friends or colleagues about crisis moments and bystanders taking action. For example, participants can discuss their own experiences, and/or those they’ve heard from others, in the media or in public discourse. Ask the group to focus on the values displayed in these situations.

#### Part 2: Personal Response (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

15 minutes: Lead a full-group discussion based on the prompts, and jot down answers and comments on chart paper or on the board.

- How do you react to harassment/intimidation when you see it (examples: fight, flight, appease or freeze)? What is your initial reaction?
- How does your positionality affect your response? Based on your positionality, what resilience and strength do you bring to these moments? How does your privilege or lack of privilege affect your response? How does what you show up with--based on who you are and your lived experiences--affect your willingness to jump into action?
- Why are you committed?

#### Part 2: Context (45 minutes)

Facilitator:

5 minutes: Ask participants to think about context. Guide group conversation based on what they saw in the video:

- What was happening?
- How can I prioritize the person being targeted?
- What resources are there in this environment?
- What allies can I enlist and/or delegate to?
- How can we assess risk/safety?

20 minutes: Divide into 3 groups for an in-depth discussion. Each group will analyze an example of a crisis moment (Handout #1) and be asked to think of themselves as bystanders in that situation. Ask each group to read the example assigned to it and to discuss the following:

- What is happening? How might we take action in this situation?
- How can we prioritize the person being targeted? How can we connect/engage with the person being targeted?
- What resources are there in this environment?
- What partners can we enlist and/or delegate to? How can we work together to build a safe space?
- How can we assess risk/safety?
- What values do we bring to this situation?
- How does our positionality affect our response?
- Why are we committed to taking action?

After the discussion, prepare a brief role play in which someone is the person being attacked, someone is the attacker, and others are the bystanders.

20 minutes: Each group presents their scenarios of crisis moments through role play and shares the main ideas drawn from their group discussions with the whole group.

## IV. Building Beyond the Individual (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

10 minutes: Remind participants that the strongest responses are always based in community. Link this to the group activity they just did where they worked together to think about ways to take action. List the following ideas on the board or on chart paper, and lead a brief brainstorming activity where participants provide examples of how they see these ideas possibly playing out in their communities:

- Bring people together
- Discuss together strategies for watching out for each other
- Share your personal reflections
- Role play together
- Practice, practice, practice
- Canvas (using NAI resources)
- Think about possible community-level interventions
- Build relationships
- Organize

Ask participants to share ways they see themselves using these strategies in their own communities.

## V. Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

5 minutes: Share and review Bystander Handout #2 with participants. Remind participants of the opening activity and ask them if they feel they have more strategies for dealing with their concerns and if any of their questions were answered. Ask them to discuss if they feel now differently about the role of bystanders than they did before the workshop, and what they will take away with them.

## Bystander Handout #1: Taking Action

How do we show up for each other?\*



**Maha Abdul Gawad**

23 hours ago



My first racist encounter after our new joke of a president, as I am at Walmart today a woman came up to me and pulled my Hijab of and said "this is not allowed anymore, so go hang yourself with it around your neck not on your head" I am traumatized.



**Lena Van Manen**

6 hrs · 🌐

And so the reign of fear begins....

I had a meeting with an associate at Starbucks this morning and arrived early. I set up my computer and received a FaceTime call from a Deaf friend. As we were chatting on the computer, I felt a glare from across the room. ASL users are used to having people stare but this was different. This guy came marching up to me and got up in my face. "This is White America now. Take your retarded self and go somewhere else. Trump is president now". He's 2 inches from my nose, screaming at me - and no one is saying or doing a thing. I was so shocked and shaken, I just packed up and left.

This is what America wanted. This is what America got. God help us all.

Today....in Napa in my blue state of CA - I experienced first hand the effects of Trump's election. At a gas station, while at my car, a man jumps out of his truck from the pump on the other side of mine - walks towards the car at the pump in front of mine and towards what I realized was a smaller Asian woman. He started yelling at her and I turned abruptly to face and listen. He said "We won. Now get the fuck out of my country" He said it over and over as I saw this poor woman crying - standing stunned - not moving. I ran to her. I threw my arms around her a turned her into me and my back towards him and sobbed with her. All I could think to say was "I'm so sorry" over and over again as we cried. I felt helpless. He then included me in his rant - saying "You can both get fuck out. We

\*Material in this handout comes from the JVP "protecting One Another: Better Bystanders" online training.

## Bystander Handout #2: Taking Action

What to do if you are witnessing Islamophobic harassment



- 1 Engage conversation.**  
Go to them, sit beside them and say hello. Try to appear calm, collected and welcoming. **IGNORE THE ATTACKER.**



- 3 Keep building the safe space.**  
Keep eye contact with them and don't acknowledge the attacker's presence: the absence of response from you two will push them to leave the area shortly.



- 2 Pick a random subject and start discussing it.**  
It can be anything: a movie you liked, the weather, saying you like something they wear and asking where they got it...



- 4 Continue the conversation until the attacker leaves & escort them to a safe place if necessary.**  
Bring them to a neutral area where they can recollect themselves; respect their wishes if they tell you they're ok and just want to go.



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