

From bystander to ally among faculty colleagues: construction and validation of the bystander intervention behavior scale

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faculty
colleagues

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Abstract

Purpose – Bystander intervention mitigates the negative impact of bias incidents in the workplace. However, intervention tends to be viewed as binary: intervention occurred or it did not. Consequently, research has focused on conditions under which witnesses of bias incidents choose to intervene, and less is known about how witnesses may intervene. This paper elucidates the intervention behavior choices available to witnesses of bias incidents and develops a bystander intervention behavior (BIB) scale.

Design/methodology/approach – To develop the scale, the authors used the three-phased act frequency methodology. In phase I, the authors surveyed faculty who had both witnessed a bias incident and seen someone intervene to address it. The authors asked these faculties to list the observed bystander intervention behaviors they had personally observed. In Phase II, different survey respondents and subject matter experts assessed the prototypicality of each of the behaviors in relation to the concept of bystander intervention. In phase III, the authors tested the validity and reliability of the resulting 18-item scale and assessed the ability of bystander intervention behavior to mitigate the negative impact of bias incidents on the academic workplace.

Findings – The BIB scale consists of two theoretically derived, empirically validated and reliable dimensions; it can be used as a summary score to evaluate the extent to which colleagues intervene indirectly and directly when a bias incident occurs in the academic workplace.

Originality/value – This scale is valuable in advancing efforts to mitigate the negative effect of bias in the workplace and training colleagues to intervene in various ways when bias occurs.

Keywords Scale development, Bystander intervention, Academic workplace climate, Bias incidents

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Bystander intervention, or the encouragement of individuals not directly involved in a problematic encounter to speak up or act in support of a targeted individual or group, is perhaps the most empirically supported method for addressing undesirable interpersonal behavior (McDonald *et al.*, 2016; Medeiros and Griffith, 2019; Polanin *et al.*, 2012). Bystanders can intervene to address biased or undesirable behaviors in myriad ways, such as speaking with an offender in private after an incident or interrupting an incident in the moment.

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Following [Latané and Darley's \(1968\)](#) ground-breaking work exploring the diffusion of responsibility in emergency circumstances, scholars have devoted decades of research in order to understand the mechanisms that drive the diffusion of responsibility and ultimately bystander intervention. To that end, bystander intervention has been applied to a variety of troublesome phenomena including prejudice ([Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008](#)), harassment ([Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly, 2005](#)) and bullying ([Saam, 2010](#)). While these studies highlight the valuable role bystander intervention can play to address undesirable behavior, the theoretical development of the construct remains somewhat limited.

Bystander intervention is often described and presented as a binary choice – to intervene or to not intervene – after considering a series of factors regarding *when* to respond and the personal *cost* to responding ([Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly, 2005](#)). However, bystanders consistently point to one barrier impeding their intervention: that they simply do not know *how* to intervene successfully ([Bennett et al., 2014](#)). Because scholarship on bystander intervention has tended to focus on *why* bystanders act or do not act rather than *how* bystanders might act, much of what we have learned in this domain is centered on the characteristics and perceptions of those who do (not) intervene. Of course, intervening in any form carries some risk; however, providing options that span varying levels of assumed risk could increase bystander activation. Likewise, there is also little understanding of the potentially divergent consequences that follow from intervening in distinct ways (e.g. directly addressing someone who uses a racial slur *vs* offering support to the target of bias after an incident).

By compiling a typology of bystander intervention behaviors and subsequently developing and validating a scale of bystander intervention behavior, we aim to address these gaps. First, we bridge together previously siloed research on bystander intervention behavior to extend the theoretical typology proposed by [Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly \(2005\)](#) to include considerations for *how* to act as a bystander, with options to (a) act *now or later* and whether to (b) *directly* address the perpetrator or act in *indirect* ways. We rely primarily on the Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly typology because it is the root of multiple models. For example, Ashburn-Nardo and colleagues' (2008) confronting prejudice model; [Banyard's \(2011\)](#) ecological model of bystander intervention and [O'Reilly and Aquino's \(2011\)](#) moral motivation to mistreatment model are, at least in part, derived from the Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly typology. Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly's typology also informs a wide range of empirical studies, such as [Miceli and colleagues' \(2012\)](#) exploration of whistleblowing; [Saam's \(2010\)](#) review of workplace bullying interventions and [Miner-Rubino and Cortina's \(2007\)](#) consideration of vicarious exposure of misogyny.

Second, in addition to generating items derived from the current bystander intervention literature, we employ the act frequency methodology (AFM) ([Buss and Craik, 1983](#)) to collect representative bystander intervention behaviors from individuals who have experienced bias and bystander intervention. We use the AFM to develop a bystander intervention behavior (BIB) scale. Using the AFM ensures that the behaviors incorporated into the scale align with the lived experiences of those who have encountered bias incidents, as well as the behaviors exhibited by those who intervened in such circumstances, boosting the ecological validity of this effort. Third, in conjunction with our validation effort, we conduct exploratory analysis regarding the mechanisms by which bystander intervention may impact occupational health and performance outcomes (i.e. burnout and turnover intentions) by mitigating the negative effect of bias on workplace climate. This analysis supports the possibility that bystander intervention, either in terms of direct or indirect third-party action, can have a meaningful impact on organizational outcomes of interest.

Fourth, we provide the complete validated scale for personal and professional use to all researchers and practitioners with interests in bystander intervention or training of bystander intervention. While there are many models and frameworks for understanding

bystander behavior, a means of explicitly measuring various types of behavior with an understanding of how said behavior impacts organizational outcomes is absent in the literature. We believe the development and utilization of such a scale will better aid researchers in more fully exploring the relationships between bystander intervention behaviors and organizational and societal outcomes of interest while simultaneously providing practitioners with a starting point for guiding bystander intervention training as well as measuring intervention behaviors in their organizations following employee training or development interventions.

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To construct and test our BIB scale, we rely upon a series of surveys conducted at five universities across the contiguous United States of America. A university setting is an appropriate space to begin this work as many universities have placed strong emphasis on creating inclusive climates, with hopes that this will facilitate the recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty and student body (Taylor *et al.*, 2010). Research has demonstrated the pivotal role faculty can play in breaking down barriers that impede the participation and effectiveness of historically underrepresented groups on campus, and the ways in which faculty can engage their universities to promote an inclusive and productive campus climate (Bilimoria *et al.*, 2008). Inhospitable campus climates can undermine diversity initiatives as women and other historically and commonly excluded groups often report that they experience a chilly climate on campus (Greene *et al.*, 2010; Maranto and Griffin, 2011). Commonly excluded groups, such as faculty who identify as women, people of color and LGBTQ, are significantly more likely to report witnessing a bias incident at their university (Shea *et al.*, 2018). Being targeted by a bias incident, or even simply witnessing a bias incident, can make a campus climate less hospitable (Carnes *et al.*, 2012; Shea *et al.*, 2021). As an inhospitable campus climate can undermine university pledges to promote diversity and inclusivity, we relied upon the university setting to construct a new bystander intervention scale. Since universities tend to place more emphasis on creating inclusive climates, they provide an excellent starting point for the construction of our BIB scale as bystander behavior should align with university goals of promoting diversity and inclusivity.

Bystander and third-party intervention theory

Although consideration of observers' perspectives is not new, a surge of interest in bystander intervention behavior and training in the workplace in recent years has brought a need to more fully explicate the construct of bystander intervention behavior to the fore. A critical first step in doing so is to merge the siloed literature studies that have advanced our knowledge with theory and empirical work on allyship (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Madsen *et al.*, 2019; Sabat *et al.*, 2013, 2014; Wagner *et al.*, 2012), employee voice and silence (Bashshur and Oc, 2015; Morrison, 2011, 2014; Ng and Feldman, 2011), constructive confrontation (Ashburn-Nardo *et al.*, 2008; Herschovis *et al.*, 2018), oppositional courage (Thoroughgood *et al.*, 2021) and third-party/observer responses to bullying (D'Cruz and Noronha, 2011; Heames and Harvey, 2006; Lassiter *et al.*, 2021; Tye-Williams and Krone, 2015), discrimination and prejudice (Rosette *et al.*, 2013), incivility (Pearson *et al.*, 2000) and harassment (Berdahl and Raver, 2011; Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Ryan and Wessel, 2012). Exploration of these literature studies results in fruitful theoretical scaffolding of core third-party intervention behaviors, which are summarized below.

In their pioneering typology of observer behaviors during sexual harassment incidents, Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) propose two distinct dimensions of third-party observer behavior: immediacy and involvement of intervention. These dimensions encapsulate when and to what degree a third-party observer becomes involved in the situation. Immediacy of intervention refers to the timeframe in which the intervention occurs. For instance, an observer reaching out to offer support to the target after the fact would

constitute a low immediacy intervention, whereas interrupting the agent of harassment in the moment would constitute a high immediacy intervention. The authors describe involvement of intervention as “how much observers publicly embroil themselves” in a harassment incident (p. 290). For example, an observer privately encouraging the target of harassment to report the incident would be categorized as a low involvement intervention, compared to a high involvement intervention like an observer publicly confronting the agent of harassment after the incident. These dimensions provide a broader array of bystander behavior options that consider the various empirically tested moderators that influence the choice to intervene (e.g. personality, status and power, and physical risk; [Fischer et al., 2011](#); [Miceli et al., 2012](#)).

More contemporary explorations of intervention options have confirmed and expanded on the Bowes-Sperry and O’Leary-Kelly typology from a variety of perspectives outside of the sexual harassment domain (e.g. racism, bullying, LGBTQ + bias). For instance, constructive confrontation, or “verbally expressing one’s dissatisfaction with a perpetrator’s negative behaviors, attitudes, or assumptions” ([Martinez et al., 2017](#), p. 72), and oppositional courage, or the act of speaking up when social injustice occurs in the workplace ([Thoroughgood et al., 2021](#)), both speak to the robust work supporting high immediacy and high involvement types of interventions. Other work also highlights the potential of low immediacy and low involvement behaviors, including some indirect avenues of allyship (e.g. advocating for a target of bias behind the scenes or after an event has occurred; see [Ashburn-Nardo, 2018](#); [Madsen et al., 2019](#)). Because there has been no comprehensive assessment of how differing bystander intervention behaviors may vary in terms of organizational outcomes, it is difficult to conclude which behaviors are more effective than others. However, across the bystander intervention literature, there is a clear pattern – intervening in some way leads to more positive organizational and interpersonal outcomes. Taken together, this body of work, with the Bowes-Sperry and O’Leary-Kelly typology as a lynchpin, provides a clear framework on which to build a measurement instrument centered on bystander intervention behaviors that result in pro-social outcomes.

It bears noting that [Bowes-Sperry and O’Leary-Kelly’s \(2005\)](#) typology was developed specifically for intervention during sexual harassment, which may be considerably less subtle and therefore easier to spot than bias incidents. Indeed, the authors draw attention to this fact in their own work, stating that their typology is “not intended to explain intervention in . . . negative work conduct [outside of sexual harassment]” (pp. 291–292). Still, this typology has informed the study of interventions in a variety of areas. For example, in their assessment of microaggression interventions, Sue and colleagues ([2019](#)) report four key goals for engaging in “microinterventions” that overlap considerably with proposed intervention strategies for bullying, harassment and forms of bias. In particular, scholars exploring behavioral reactions to prejudice ([Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008](#)) and misogyny ([Miner-Rubino and Cortina, 2007](#)) have drawn inspiration from [Bowes-Sperry and O’Leary-Kelly’s \(2005\)](#) proposed typology. As such, we believe their typology is a logical theoretical framework on which to ground this effort, which centers on reacting to bias incidents more broadly. Bias incidents refer to acts of incivility, perpetrated by people who feel a sense of power over targets that tend to be minoritized based on their gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation ([Shea et al., 2018](#)). Bias incidents are often prompted by an unconscious, stereotypical, prejudicial belief or oversimplified generalization about a person or group. Bias incidents can be overt, but they may also be of a subtle nature or entirely unintentional. Examples might range from degrading comments about an individual’s sex, gender identification or race and ethnicity; jokes about people with different abilities or sexual orientations; or comments that misrepresent the customs of a particular religion. Workplace bias incidents often involve a perpetrator who is responsible for the incident, a victim or target, and a bystander colleague who not only witnesses but also recognizes the incident as a form of bias.

To address such bias incidents, bystander intervention has increasingly received attention, and scholars have expanded upon Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly's (2005) typology to take into account additional factors, such as the characteristics of the potential bystanders, their relationship to the target and the perpetrator (Ashburn-Nardo *et al.*, 2008; Coyne *et al.*, 2019; McDonald *et al.*, 2016). These factors are not explicitly considered in Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly's (2005) observer behavior typology. However, the empirical evidence suggests that they can shape intervention behaviors and their outcomes. Thus, we aim to incorporate such findings in the construction of our BIB scale to include guidance on bystander intervention behaviors that are specifically targeted at the perpetrator or at some other individual (e.g. target of bias) or process (e.g. clarify a rubric).

With this theoretical foundation, we rely upon the three-phased AFM (Buss and Craik, 1983; Howell *et al.*, 2005; Montgomery, 2014) to develop taxonomy of bystander intervention behaviors in the academic workplace. In the following sections, we detail the methodological process through which we developed and validated the BIB scale and the results achieved at each study phase.

Methodology and results

To develop our bystander intervention scale, we rely upon the AFM to gather empirical data on potential bias intervention acts through survey methodology (Buss and Craik, 1983). The AFM entails a three-phased approach to behavioral scale development and has been used effectively to develop measures ranging from championship behavior (Howell *et al.*, 2005) to social justice behavior (Montgomery, 2014). To maximize the representativeness and diversity of our sample, we recruited participants for each phase from various geographical regions across the United States, including one university in the Northeast, one in the South, one in the Midwest and two on the West Coast. To recruit faculty respondents, we relied upon representatives from each institution who worked in areas related to personnel, diversity and/or inclusion. These representatives held titles such as vice provost for faculty recruitment and retention, executive director of the office of inclusive excellence and vice provost for academic personnel.

Phase I: act nomination

In phase I of our study, we aimed to generate a list of all possible intervention behaviors based on input from a diverse faculty sample. Based upon the AFM, we needed to recruit a sufficient number of faculties to elicit a comprehensive list of behaviors with minimal redundancy. Targeting about 300 faculty members, we asked representatives at each participating institution to randomly select approximately 60 faculties and send them email invitations with a link to an online Qualtrics survey. In addition, since the AFM does not require random sampling, we were able to enhance the diversity of our sample by including a purposive sample of 20 attendees at the American Association of Colleges and Universities 2018 Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Democracy conference. A survey link was distributed to the members of a discussion group reserved for attendees who were faculty members at their respective institutions. In total, 344 faculties received the invitation to participate in our survey. Each faculty member who participated was invited to submit their name anonymously for a drawing to win a \$500 professional development grant. We randomly selected one participant from each university and one from among the conference attendees who had replied to the survey for the drawing, for a total of six professional development grant awards.

In order to be included in our study, faculty needed to have reported that they had (a) witnessed at least one bias incident at work, *and* also that they had (b) seen a bystander intervene to address it. The first inclusion criterion is common, the second, less so. In this nomination phase, 65 out of 344 faculty recipients met the criteria and completed the survey.

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In the phase I survey, participants were first asked to consider their workplace during their academic careers and indicate whether they had:

... ever witnessed a co-worker (faculty or staff) speak to or treat you or a co-worker unfairly, or in a different or biased way? These can be implicit/explicit or subtle/overt. For example, a co-worker may have made insensitive or disparaging comments about someone because of their gender, disability status, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity?

If they had not witnessed this type of behavior, they were routed to demographics and the option to enter the lottery. If they replied that they had witnessed such behavior, they were asked whether they or a co-worker had intervened to come to the aid of the victim or target of bias. If they replied that someone had intervened, they were asked the following:

Thinking about any or all incidents when someone intervened, please write short phrases or sentences on the following lines describing all actions or behaviors displayed by you or your colleague[s] when intervening. List as many behaviors as you can remember.

Results of phase I: act nomination

As Table 1 reports, while this survey strived to include participants with diverse demographic characteristics, our resulting sample was limited by the lack of diversity in academe more broadly [1]. While we did recruit faculty from diverse backgrounds to participate in our study, the majority of the sample population still consisted mostly of members of traditionally dominant racial (white) and sexual orientation (heterosexual) groups.

Three researchers coded participants’ open-ended responses to remove repetitive items. The goal was to generate a comprehensive list of intervention behaviors while avoiding redundancy. All three coders independently agreed that there were 32 unique bystander intervention behaviors nominated. When comparing the results of the coding, the three researchers identified five nominated items that they deemed not to be intervention behaviors (e.g. “fist fight between two professors”, and “always with forgiveness”). These five items appeared only one time each, and the three coders agreed to exclude them on the basis of face

Table 1.
Demographic
characteristics of
survey participants

Variable		Phase I (N = 65)%	Phase II (N = 57)%	Phase III (N = 258)%
Race and ethnicity	Asian	6	2	8
	Black	6	7	3
	Hispanic/Latino	6	5	7
	Native American	5	2	1
	White	77	79	77
Sexual orientation	Gay or Lesbian	5	11	2
	Bisexual	2	4	4
	Heterosexual	91	79	79
	Other	2	5	5
Gender	Women	68	49	58
	Men	29	49	40
	Other	2	2	2
Faculty position	Full professors	26	42	39
	Associate professors	29	26	25
	Assistant professors	36	28	26
	Non-tenure track	5	2	10

validity. To help ensure that we captured the entire domain of intervention behaviors, we provided the list of remaining 27 behaviors to a subject matter expert (SME) with extensive professional expertise in third-party interventions for their review. It bears noting that SMEs included in any phase of this effort had accumulated some combination of the following experience: publishing peer-reviewed research in this domain for over a decade, facilitating third-party intervention training programs across the United States and/or serving as external reviewer or consultant for the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE program. The SME for this phase of the project agreed with the list and identified six additional behaviors that had not been provided by survey respondents. The final list of 33 potential intervention behaviors advanced to phase II. [Table 2](#) lists these behaviors and identifies those added by the SMEs.

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Phase II: act prototypicality

Phase II of the AFM involves identifying which of these 33 behaviors are most prototypical of the construct "bystander intervention behavior." We partnered with the same universities and followed the same protocol for participant recruitment, asking each institution to forward the survey link to approximately 100 faculty members selected at random and who had not participated in phase I. In total, 480 faculties received invitations to participate in phase II of this study. Again, the hurdle for being able to respond was quite high as a survey recipient needed to acknowledge having witnessed both (a) bias in the academic workplace and (b) a colleague intervening. After passing this hurdle, the respondents were asked to rate the *prototypicality* of each of the 33 intervention behaviors generated in phase I on a five-point scale. *Prototypicality* was described as the extent to which each behavior was representative of bystander intervention behavior. Of the 480 faculties recruited to participate in the survey, fifty-seven useable responses were received.

Results of phase II: act prototypicality

[Table 2](#) lists the average prototypicality score for each of the 33 behaviors, which ranged from 4.54 (highly representative of intervention behavior) to 1.46 (not very representative). Sample items among those receiving the highest prototypicality scores include "Reminding the offender that a behavior is not consistent with our shared values" ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.66$), "Speaking to the offender in private about his or her behavior" ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.80$) and "Offering the target support" ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.09$). The number of intervention behaviors ranked highly by respondents provides some support for [Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly's \(2005\)](#) implication that bystander intervention is a non-binary phenomenon. Among the items that had been nominated as bystander intervention behaviors in phase I, but were not rated highly by respondents in phase II, were such behaviors as "Laughing to indicate it must have been a joke" ($M = 1.46$, $SD = 0.74$), "Turning your back on the offender" ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.17$), and "Walking away" ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.12$).

We examined respondent demographics to determine whether the behaviors – especially those listed as core to the concept of bystander intervention – were shaped by respondents' faculty rank, gender, ethnicity/racial or sexual orientation bias. This might indicate that some intervention behaviors were considered more representative of bystander intervention behavior for some than for others. We detected significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in only two items' mean scores, and these two items were tied for the highest score ($M = 4.54$): "Reminding the offender that a behavior is not consistent with our shared values" ($SD = 0.66$) and "Verbally supporting the target" ($SD = 0.78$).

In the case of the first item, ethnicity and racial identity group membership had a significant impact ($F(6,57) = 4.77$, $p < 0.001$); four respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latino rated "Reminding the offender that a behavior is not consistent with our shared values" as even more

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Phase II survey rank Items retained for Phase III	SME rank	Behaviors nominated in Phase 1	Prototypicality Mean (1–5 scale)	Figure 1 reference
1	7	Reminding the offender that a behavior is not consistent with our shared values	4.54	DI3
4	6	Speaking to the offender in private about his or her behavior	4.28	DI4
5	4	Informing the offender about why an attitude or behavior was inappropriate	4.26	DI5
6	29	Structuring the discussion to give everyone equal voice	4.25	II6
7	1	Pointing out the biased behavior	4.20	DI7
8	8	Telling the offender that the behavior was inappropriate	4.12	DI1
9	9	Discussing with colleagues what to do if it happens again	3.98	II2
10	10	Stating how a behavior has made you feel	3.96	II8
11	16	Offering the target of incivility support	3.86	II9
13	5	Speaking to a trusted senior colleague after the fact	3.77	II3
14	26	Sharing your own experience as a target of incivility	3.71	II10
15	2	Providing contradicting evidence	3.61	DI6
18	14	Stating that a behavior is not consistent with the offender's values	3.46	DI2
21	12	Asking the offender to apologize	3.04	DI8
27	27	Redirecting attention to a less biased interpretation	2.64	II4
n/a	n/a	Interrupting the incident to stop the problematic behavior**	n/a	II7
n/a	n/a	Bringing attention to previously ignored points of view**	n/a	II1
n/a	n/a	Suggesting a change to the process to make it more objective**	n/a	II5
Items discarded for Phase III			Reason	
2	3	Verbally supporting the target on the spot	4.54	Duplicate
3	31	Ensuring that the physical environment is inclusive	4.29	Too specific
12	30	Removing gendered or otherwise biased artifacts from the physical environment*	3.79	Too specific
16	21	Turning towards the target to show support	3.55	Low score
17	18	Pointing out that the offender interrupted someone	3.49	Too specific
19	32	Displaying items that remind people of our shared values with respect to diversity*	3.26	Too specific
20	11	Disagreeing with the statement by stating the opposite	3.16	Duplicate
22	15	Reprimanding the offender	3.02	Low score
23	17	Pointing to one's own behavior as biased	2.86	Low score
24	20	Apologizing for one's own biased behavior	2.85	Low score
25	13	Asking the offender to leave	2.75	Low score
26	28	Stating that someone else had already made the suggestion	2.71	Low score
28	19	Clarifying what the offender was trying to say	2.41	Low score
29	24	Making a face to express disapproval*	2.36	Low score
30	25	Raising your eyebrows to express disbelief*	2.20	Low score
31	22	Walking away*	2.20	Low score
32	23	Turning your back on the offender*	2.16	Low score
33	33	Laughing to indicate it must have been a joke	1.46	Low score

Table 2. Items and prototypicality scores

Note(s): *Added by Phase I SME
 **Added by Phase II SMEs
 n/a = not applicable

core to the concept of bystander intervention behavior compared to other respondents, giving the item a perfect score of 5. In the case of the second item, gender and ethnicity and racial identity had a significant effect ($F(2,57) = 6.64$ and $F(6,57) = 3.70$, respectively, $p < 0.01$). Respondents who identified as women ($n = 28$) or Hispanic/Latino ($n = 4$) rated “Verbally supporting the target on the spot” as even more core to the concept of bystander intervention behavior compared to men and respondents who did not identify as Hispanic/Latino. Conversely, respondents who identified as Asian or Asian American rated “Verbally supporting the target on the spot” as less core to the concept of bystander intervention behavior as respondents of other ethnicities and races (i.e. $M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.53$). Even with these differences these items were highly ranked, however, so we retained all these items.

Finally, we verified the results of phase II by asking four SMEs with extensive professional expertise in bystander intervention to complete the same phase II questionnaire and rate the extent to which they considered each of the behaviors generated in phase I as representative of intervention behavior. A comparison of the prototypicality scores from the SMEs reveals that they tended to score the behavioral items as even more representative of intervention than the survey respondents. This supports the resulting scale’s content validity, ensuring that the behaviors generated in phase I capture the concept of intervention behavior.

The first columns in Table 2 report how survey respondents and SMEs ranked each item. Comparing these rankings reveals that the SMEs agreed with 8 out of 11 of the items ranked highly (i.e. in the top third) by the survey respondents. SMEs ranked three items lower than the survey respondents: “ensuring that the physical environment is inclusive” (respondents rank = 3, SME rank = 31), “structuring the discussion to give everyone equal voice” (respondents rank = 6, SME rank = 29) and “offering the target support” (respondents rank = 11, SME rank = 16). The first item is aimed at *preventing* bias incidents before the fact rather than *intervening* after a bias incident has occurred. Therefore, this item was removed from the scale based on face validity as it was not representative of intervention behavior. The other two items were ranked highly by the SMEs but not by the general sample, including “speaking to a trusted senior colleague or person of authority after the fact” (respondents rank = 13, SME rank = 5) and “providing contradicting evidence” (respondents rank = 15, SME rank = 2). As respondent rankings still placed these items in the top half of behaviors, however, both of these items advanced to phase III.

SMEs agreed with 6 of the 11 items receiving a medium ranking from survey respondents (i.e. ranked in the second third). Two of the items have already been retained. The other three items, ranked in the lower third, were “removing gendered or otherwise biased artifacts from the physical environment” (respondents rank = 12, SME rank = 30), “sharing your own experience as a target of bias” (respondents rank = 14, SME rank = 26) and “displaying items (e.g. buttons, banners) that remind people of our shared values with respect to diversity” (respondents rank = 19, SME rank = 32). “Sharing your own experience as a target of bias” was retained; however, the other two were excluded as they are *preventative* behaviors as opposed to *interventions*.

SMEs agreed with the ranking of 6 of the 11 items in the bottom third, so these items were discarded. The five items which SMEs ranked higher than the general sample included “pointing to one’s behavior as biased”, “apologizing for one’s own biased behavior”, “asking the offender to leave”, “clarifying what the offender was trying to say” and “walking away”. These items were retained. Finally, during phase II, the SMEs contributed three new items, as indicated in Table 2. The final scale that advanced to Phase III included 18 items listed as “retained for Phase III” in Table 2.

Phase III: scale validation

Sample: The purpose of phase III was to validate the scale developed in the first two phases. Adapting our prior recruitment protocols, we administered surveys to faculty at the same five partner institutions who had not participated in the phase I and phase II of the study. This

time, we asked our partners to send the survey to 200 randomly selected faculty each, for a total of 1,000 participants. We also posted a link to our survey on the Academy of Management Gender and Diversity group discussion list, a specialized community within a professional academic group with 1802 members. Of 748 recipients from all sources who opened the survey, 258 submitted completed responses.

Measures: In this survey, we measured the frequency of bias incidents using Cortina *et al.*'s (2001) five-item Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) with the introductory question amended to reflect bias as follows: "Sometimes colleagues are treated differently because of their gender, ability status, sexual identity, race, or ethnicity. Within the last 12 months in your department, how often have you seen colleagues intentionally or unintentionally do the following". The items included the five WIS items (e.g. "put someone down or be condescending to someone", "ignore or exclude someone from professional camaraderie") plus one additional item (i.e. "imply that underrepresented minorities are not as strong in their discipline"). These items loaded on a single factor ($\alpha = 0.91$). We then asked them to rate how likely one of their colleagues would be to engage in each of the retained 18 bystander behavior items. Finally, for the purpose of validating the bystander behavior scale, we included questions about other individual behaviors and personality characteristics, demographics, attitudes towards the organization as a whole, workplace climate and turnover intentions. We used Lee and Allen's (2002) measures of OCB-I ($\alpha = 0.94$) and OCB-O ($\alpha = 0.90$) and asked respondents to indicate how likely members of their department would be to engage in the eight items related to individual and organizational OCB, respectively. We combined these items into an additive index, calculating average responses across these items provided respondents had answered at least five of the eight questions. We used Ashforth and Mael's (1989) measure of organizational identity ($\alpha = 0.86$) asking respondents to think about how they see themselves as a member of their organization and the extent to which they agree or disagree with several statements on a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. We used Edmondson's (1999) measure of psychological safety ($\alpha = 0.90$) and asked respondents the extent to which they disagreed (1) or agreed (5) with the seven statements. To measure workplace climate, we followed Schneider *et al.*'s (2013) recommendation to focus on the specific organizational level and aspects of climate that most closely relate to the research context and outcomes of interest. Thus, we focused on the level of the department as this is the context in which decisions are made that is most important to faculty (e.g. faculty workload, working conditions and program offerings). We asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement, on a scale from 1 to 5, with nine statements about their department. The items loaded on a single factor ($\alpha = 0.93$). Finally, we measured turnover intentions using two items, asking respondents to what extent they would agree with the following statements about how they currently feel about their job ($\alpha = 0.71$): (1) I have thought about quitting my job frequently in the past 12 months and (2) I am planning to search for a new job during the next 12 months. Table 3 reports the means, standard deviations and correlations of these variables.

Results of phase III: scale validation

A preliminary maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) factor analysis was conducted on the 18 BIB scale items (see Table 4). This revealed two factors that we characterize as *indirect* ($\alpha = 0.93$) and *direct* ($\alpha = 0.94$) intervention. In order to further investigate the bi-dimensionality of the scale and to select items with high reliability and validity estimates for the final version of the BIB scale, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS in conjunction with SPSS (see Table 5). We assessed goodness of fit using multiple criteria as suggested by Schreiber *et al.* (2006). First, we evaluated model fit with chi-square. As indicated by our results (i.e. $X^2(99,258) = 301.00$), the X^2 -to-df ratio of 3.0 met the target of less than or equal to 3, indicating acceptable fit. To assess comparative fit, we used the comparative fit index (CFI). The model's CFI was 0.95, meeting the hurdle of a CFI greater than or equal to 0.95, also indicating acceptable fit. Finally, we report a root mean square error

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	BIB	Indirect BIB	Direct BIB	Bias	OCB-I	OCB-O	Org. identity	Psych. safety	Org. climate	Burnout	Turnover intentions
Bystander intervention behavior (BIB)	2.517	0.945	1										
Indirect BIB	2.730	0.972	0.964***	1									
Direct BIB	2.307	0.991	0.965***	0.857***	1								
Frequency of bias incidents	2.141	0.896	-0.089	-0.079	-0.111	1							
Individual level organizational citizenship (OCB-I)	3.905	1.001	0.287***	0.288***	0.279***	-0.550***	1						
Organizational level citizenship (OCB-O)	3.857	0.778	0.186**	0.167**	0.191**	-0.430***	0.552***	1					
Organizational identity	3.752	0.792	0.167**	0.169**	0.163**	-0.414***	0.504***	0.372***	1				
Psychological safety	3.346	0.930	0.242***	0.221***	0.261***	-0.703***	0.709***	0.524***	0.554***	1			
Organizational climate	3.518	0.961	0.262***	0.248***	0.267***	-0.665***	0.715***	0.513***	0.632***	0.863***	1		
Burnout	2.918	0.952	-0.190**	-0.179**	-0.192**	0.467***	-0.392***	-0.363***	-0.322***	-0.559***	-0.561***	1	
Turnover intentions	2.444	1.234	-0.071	-0.070	-0.064	0.514***	-0.334***	-0.389***	-0.273***	-0.521***	-0.500***	-0.577***	1
Note(s): ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$													

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Table 3.
Means, standard
deviations and
Pearson's correlation
coefficients

Table 4.
Bystander intervention
behavior items –
maximum likelihood
factor analysis

Item	Factor	
	1	2
Bringing attention to previously ignored points of view	0.730	0.387
Suggesting a change to the process to make it more objective	0.724	0.375
Redirecting attention to a less biased interpretation	0.688	0.315
Structuring the discussion to give everyone equal voice	0.679	0.303
Offering the target of incivility support	0.623	0.451
Interrupting the incident to stop the problematic behavior	0.609	0.433
Sharing your own experience as a target of incivility	0.607	0.365
Discussing with colleagues what to do if it happens again	0.565	0.442
Speaking to a trusted senior colleague after the fact	0.543	0.453
Stating how a behavior has made you feel	0.539	0.506
Informing the offender about why an attitude or behavior was inappropriate	0.382	0.856
Speaking to the offender in private about his or her behavior	0.324	0.813
Reminding the offender that a behavior is not consistent with our shared values	0.492	0.681
Stating that a behavior is not consistent with the offender's values	0.350	0.617
Telling the offender that the behavior was inappropriate	0.508	0.580
Providing contradicting evidence	493	0.539
Pointing out the biased behavior	0.509	0.658
Asking the offender to apologize	0.385	0.565
Note(s): The extraction was based on a Maximum Likelihood Analysis using the Varimax rotation method with Kaiser normalization. The rotation converged in 3 iterations		

of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.08, which also meets the hurdle of RMSEA less than or equal to 0.08, supporting model fit. Standard regression weights are reported in [Table 5](#) and shown in [Figure 1](#). In short, our results indicated an acceptable fit between the model and the observed data.

Construct validity. To establish the validity of the 18-item BIB scale, we examined how well it correlated with other existing measures that should relate to bystander intervention behavior. For example, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) should be positively correlated with the BIB scale as it involves discretionary behavior benefiting either another individual (OCB-I) or the organization as a whole (OCB-O). We would expect people who engage in OCBs to also engage in bystander intervention behavior. As shown in [Table 3](#), the BIB scale is significantly positively correlated with both OCB-I (i.e. $r = 0.29, p < 0.001$) and OCB-O (i.e. $r = 0.19, p < 0.01$).

Similarly, we proposed that organizational identity, or the extent to which an individual identifies with, and is invested in, the organization, would be significantly and positively correlated with bystander intervention behavior. Individuals with a stronger sense of organizational identification are more likely to speak up when they believe they have personal control over the circumstance ([Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008](#)). Indeed, organizational identity was significantly positively correlated with the BIB scale ($r = 0.17, p < 0.01$) (see [Table 3](#)).

Finally, we expected psychological safety to be positively correlated with bystander intervention behavior as individuals' perceptions of how safe it is to speak up in challenging circumstances would affect their tendency to intervene in bias incidents, as has been demonstrated, for instance, in whistleblowing contexts ([Liu et al., 2015](#)). Our findings indicate that, as expected, psychological safety is significantly positively correlated with the BIB scale ($r = 0.24, p < 0.001$) (see [Table 3](#)).

Criterion validity. To assess the criterion validity of our scale, we rely on prior research that points to the role of bystander intervention in mitigating the negative impact of bias incidents on workplace climate, as well as the resulting impact on burnout and turnover intentions. As

						From bystander to ally among faculty colleagues
Construct	Indicator	Standardized loadings	<i>p</i> level	Cronbach's alpha	% Variance explained	
Indirect bystander intervention behavior	Bringing attention to previously ignored points of view	0.84	0.000	0.93	30.82	
	Suggesting a change to the process to make it more objective	0.75	0.000			
	Redirecting attention to a less biased interpretation	0.73	0.000			
	Structuring the discussion to give everyone equal voice	0.68	0.000			
	Offering the target of incivility support	0.80	0.000			
	Interrupting the incident to stop the problematic behavior	0.75	0.000			
	Sharing your own experience as a target of incivility	0.71	0.000			
	Discussing with colleagues what to do if it happens again	0.76	0.000			
	Speaking to a trusted senior colleague after the fact	0.73	0.000			
	Stating how a behavior has made you feel	0.78	0.000			
	Informing the offender about why an attitude or behavior was inappropriate	0.83	0.000			
	Speaking to the offender in private about his or her behavior	0.81	0.000			
	Reminding the offender that a behavior is not consistent with our shared values	0.86	0.000			
Direct bystander intervention behavior	Stating that a behavior is not consistent with the offender's values	0.73	0.000	0.94	29.3	
	Telling the offender that the behavior was inappropriate	0.88	0.000			
	Providing contradicting evidence	0.76	0.000			
	Pointing out the biased behavior	0.87	0.000			
	Asking the offender to apologize	0.69				

Table 5.
Bystander intervention
behavior items –
confirmatory factor
analysis

we noted earlier, the 18 BIB scale items loaded on two factors, indirect and direct intervention, which were closely correlated at $r = 0.94$ (see Figure 2). For the purpose of this analysis, we combined the items into one 18-item scale ($\alpha = 0.97$).

From a mediation analysis conducted using ordinary least squares path analysis, bias incidents influenced turnover intentions both directly ($\beta = 0.39$, $t = 4.15$, $p < 0.000$) and indirectly through its effect on workplace climate ($\beta = -1.08$, $t = -8.46$, $p < 0.000$) (see

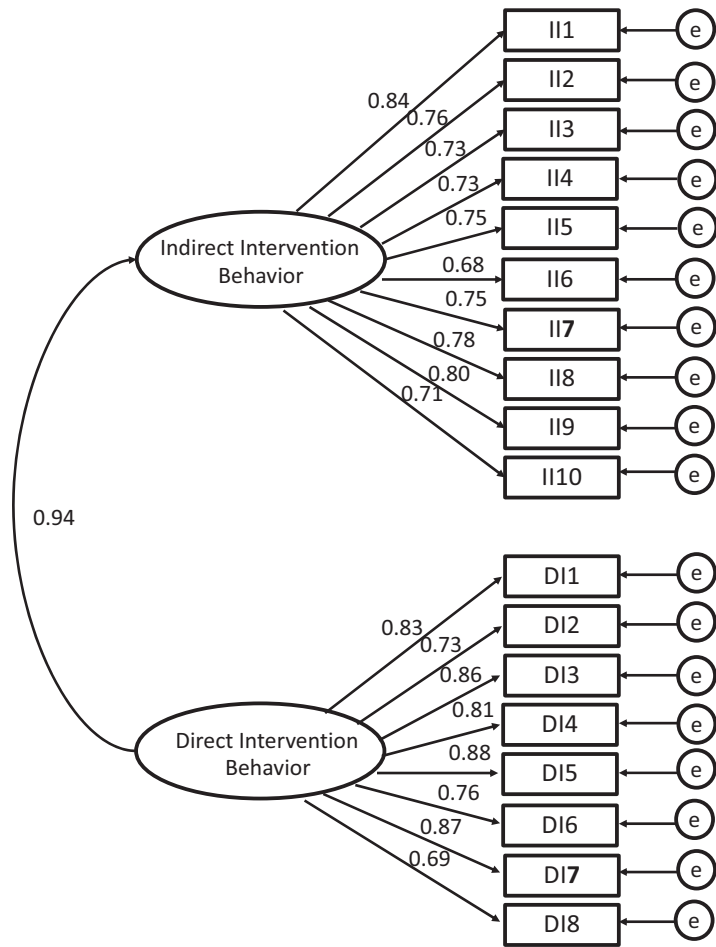


Figure 1.
Confirmatory factor
analysis results

Table 6 and Figure 2). Dividing the indirect effect of bias incidents on turnover intentions (i.e. 0.08) by its total effect (i.e. 0.39), we see that 21 % of the effect of bias incidents on turnover intentions operates through its effect on workplace climate. As expected, bystander intervention significantly moderated the effect of bias incidents on workplace climate ($\beta = 0.16, t = 3.18, p < 0.002$), such that the higher the expectation that a colleague bystander would intervene when bias incidents occurred, the lower the negative impact of bias incidents on workplace climate. This mitigating impact of bystander intervention is illustrated in Figure 3. When bias incidents are high and bystander intervention expectations are low (i.e. one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively), workplace climate is at its lowest level (i.e. 2.53). When bias incidents are still high, but bystanders are expected to intervene (i.e. one standard deviation above the mean), workplace climate is higher at 3.32. The highest level of workplace climate of 4.23 occurs when bias incidents are low and bystander intervention expectations are high (i.e. one standard deviation below and above the mean, respectively). From this analysis, we can conclude that the BIB scale behaves as a moderator of the effect of bias incidents on workplace climate as expected, supporting its criterion validity.

Discussion

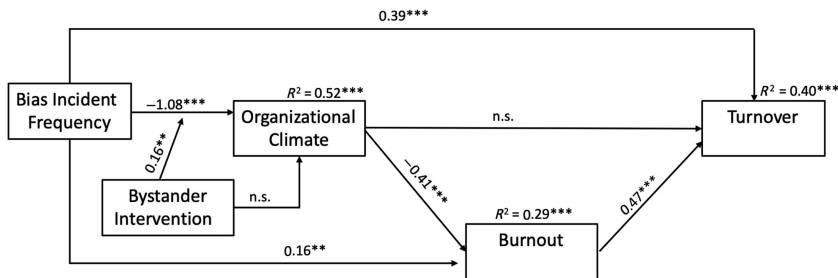
The three-phased AFM yielded a new measure of bystander intervention behavior specific to the academic workplace. The final 18-item, two-factor BIB scale has demonstrated a high degree of reliability and validity. We provided support for content validity by involving faculty respondents and content experts in generating scale items that reflect the multi-dimensional nature of bystander intervention behavior. We also tested for construct and criterion validity, assessing whether our measure correlated with variables that the literature suggests should be related to bystander intervention behavior.

While our study supports the two dimensions along the degree of involvement continuum of Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly's (2005) theoretical model, our data do not support the additional two dimensions along the immediacy continuum of bystander intervention behavior. We believe that this could be because, with few exceptions, most of the items in our BIB scale could take place either immediately after a bias incident has taken place or be delayed until later.

Significantly, our data indicate that direct and indirect intervention behaviors both have very similar correlations with our outcome measures. This is important because it suggests breadth in a bystander's options of how to intervene in a way that reflects their level of comfort in the situation and willingness to take risks. Whether a bystander intervenes directly or indirectly should not affect the outcome. Practically, this should be encouraging for practitioners who advocate for bystander intervention training as well as scholars who hope to expand the theoretical concept of bystander intervention.

As expected, bystander intervention behavior is correlated with other discretionary behaviors, including both individual- and organization-level citizenship behavior. Further, the extent to which colleague bystanders intervene when bias incidents occur in the

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Note(s): ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; n.s. = not significant

Figure 2.
The mitigating impact
of bystander
intervention on the
relationship between
bias incidents and
workplace climate

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficient	<i>t</i>
Workplace climate $R^2 = 0.52^{***}$	Bias incidents	-1.08	-8.46***
	Bystander intervention	-0.08	-0.84
	Bias $\times$ Bystander intervention	0.16	3.18**
Burnout $R^2 = 0.29^{***}$	Bias incidents	0.16	2.11*
	Workplace climate	-0.41	-5.74***
Turnover $R^2 = 0.40^{***}$	Bias incidents	0.39	4.15***
	Workplace climate	-0.13	-1.44
	Burnout	0.47	6.17***

Note(s): * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6.
Effect of bias incidents
and expected
bystander
intervention. On
workplace climate,
burnout and turnover
intentions

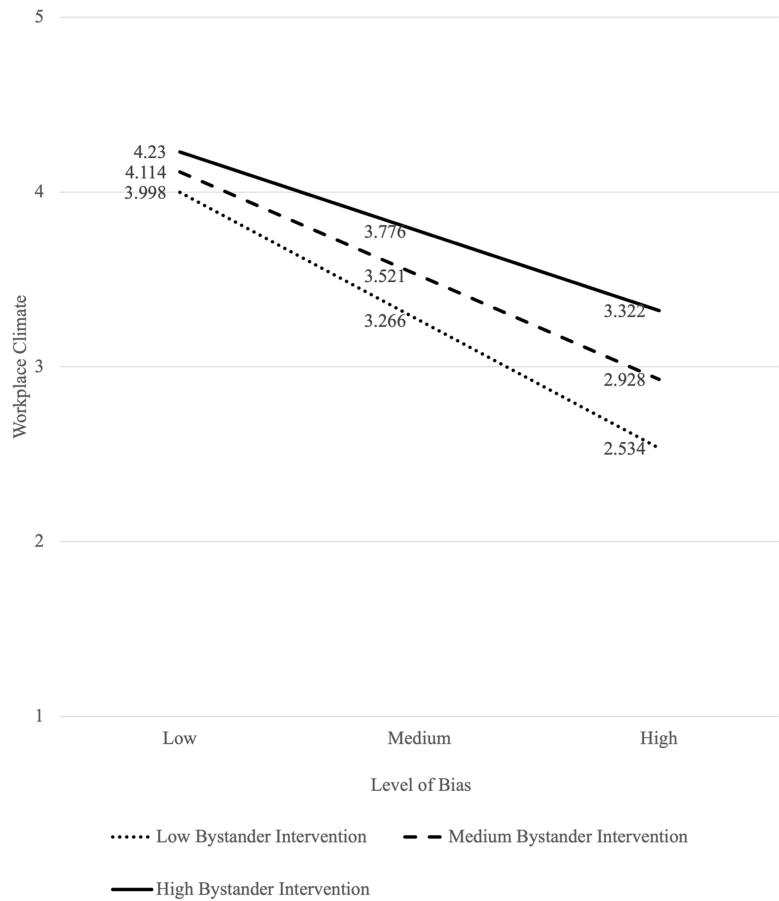


Figure 3.
The impact of bias on workplace climate at three levels of expected bystander intervention

workplace is dependent, to a significant degree, on the extent to which they identify with the organization and feel safe taking risks. This is important because, as we have shown, bystander intervention is effective in mitigating the negative effect of bias incidents on organizational climate, burnout and turnover intentions. Efforts towards ensuring a culture where it is safe to take risks and act on behalf of others are necessary conditions to activate discretionary intervention behaviors for the good of not only the target of bias but also the organization as a whole.

This study contributes to the growing literature on bystander intervention in important ways. By providing a valid and reliable BIB scale, we hope to lay a foundation for future research on bystander intervention. Given the similar manifestations and moderators of bystander interventions across contexts in prior research, we believe the BIB scale is transferable to other work contexts by slightly modifying its items.

Research limitations

As with any study, there are theoretical and practical limitations that should be addressed. Although every effort was made to diversify the sample of respondents, there was a lack of

demographic variation at each stage in the development of the BIB scale reflecting the lack of diversity in academia in general. Although specific analyses were conducted to explore potential differences in behavior prototypicality driven by individual differences, it is possible that a more diverse pool of respondents would have nominated different behaviors and generated different prototypicality ratings. It is critical to test the BIB scale and its pattern of relationships in a more diverse sample.

It is also a limitation that all of the variables in phase III of the study were self-reported. Future research could include experimental designs to address concerns about common method bias. Further, the variables were measured at one point in time and turnover intention, rather than actual turnover, was measured. Therefore, causal attributions should be made with caution.

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Practical implications

Bystander intervention can be a valuable tool to address bias incidents in the university workplace and mitigate their impact on campus climate. Our findings identify a potential tool that universities can use to promote inclusive campus climates: practical, specific examples of bystander intervention behaviors. Since faculties who are underrepresented in their discipline are more likely to witness incivility in the form of bias incidents on campus, these incidents are counterproductive to fostering a positive and inclusive climate. Thus, we aimed to identify the myriad ways in which faculty could effectively intervene to address bias incidents. As faculty differ in terms of their tolerance of risk, job security and status, and personality traits, we strived to highlight the full range of possible bystander intervention behaviors and note their potential efficacy. Results suggest that both direct and indirect forms of bystander intervention behaviors can be effective, which has positive implications for more individualized, and perhaps more realistic, recommendations for intervening from different levels of power or status. Even so, our findings also underscore the importance of establishing norms and championing training to encourage and prepare employees to intervene successfully when bias incidents occur. Specifically, workshops and training should go beyond raising awareness of bias in the workplace and provide employees with specific skills for successfully addressing incivility in a variety of ways. Such training should recognize the various different ways in which faculty can intervene successfully and encourage faculty to identify the intervention strategy that best suits their tolerance for risk, personality traits and job status and security. Such training might be best facilitated within departments or workgroups so that peers can witness other peers becoming active and willing bystanders, potentially shifting social norm perceptions. Such an approach has proven effective in the field of sexual assault prevention as it helped individuals see themselves as active bystanders rather than as victims or perpetrators, leading to a paradigm shift and broader engagement with all potential stakeholders (e.g. Banyard *et al.*, 2007).

Given universities' growing commitments to diversity, it is imperative that they invest in initiatives that encourage intervention in bias incidents. Faculties from historically and commonly excluded groups are more likely to report negative experiences, less influence and unfair treatment (Shea *et al.*, 2018). If universities aim to retain faculty from commonly excluded groups, particularly in the STEM disciplines where such underrepresentation is most acute, it is vital to train faculty to intervene in appropriate ways to stop bias incidents from creating a chilly climate.

Universities are increasingly emphasizing a commitment to diversity and inclusion. As such, the campus context was an appropriate starting point for our study. While we aimed to recruit a diverse sample of respondents within universities, still, our survey polled only faculty members and diversity was limited. In future work, it would be worthwhile to explore how

individuals within different occupational roles (e.g. staff, instructors and clinical researchers) experience bias and bystander intervention in their workplaces as culture is established and maintained through various groups within the workforce. This suggestion, of course, extends beyond the walls of academic settings. Bystander interventions can exist in many different types of organizations, and members of these other organizations may have very different levels of job security and autonomy compared to faculty. Furthermore, the organizational culture might not consistently affirm the importance of ethical and/or inclusive values, potentially distorting the incentives for their members to intervene to address bias incidents. In short, future research should replicate this work in different workplace contexts, to see if and how these findings vary in non-academic contexts. In addition, the BIB scale, as written, is quite general with respect to the circumstances in which it applies. We would encourage future research to customize and adapt the scale items to pinpoint which behaviors might be more or less likely when specific types of bias or discrimination occur, such as racism or sex-based harassment [2]. As extant research has found, context can be critical for understanding when, why and how bystander intervention occurs.

Notes

1. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that in fall 2018, 40% of full time faculty were white men, and 35% were white women. Seven percent of full time faculty were Asian and Pacific Islander men, and 5% Asian and Pacific Islander women. Black men and women, and Latinx women and men, each represented only 3% of full time faculty. For a comprehensive table on faculty demographics by rank, see: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_315.20.asp.
2. Our thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

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From bystander
to ally among
faculty
colleagues

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