

Bystander anti-prejudice: Obstacles and enablers

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Honours Thesis in Psychology

Bystander anti-prejudice: Obstacles and enablers to intention to act

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Karee Stewart, 31014589
Supervisor: Anne Pedersen

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Bystander anti-prejudice: Obstacles and enablers

Bystander anti-prejudice: Exploring the obstacles and enablers to intention to act.

Karee Stewart

Bachelor of Psychology, Hons.

Bachelor of English and Creative Writing.

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Bystander anti-prejudice: Obstacles and enablers

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

Karee Stewart

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Abstract

Bystander anti-prejudice (action taken in response to incidences of prejudice) has been identified as an important strategy in combating prejudice and discrimination against minority groups, including Australian refugees (Nelson et al., 2010). Several factors that have been identified as contributors and obstacles to the likelihood of bystander anti-prejudice are *Prejudice*, *Collective Identity*, *Risk/Fear of Reprisal*, *Incident Not Serious Enough*, *Desire to Preserve Interpersonal Relationships/Impression Management*, *Intervention Ineffective*, *Not My Role/Place* and *Entitled To Own Opinion*. A total of 153 community participants completed a questionnaire addressing how each of these eight factors influenced a participant's intention to act when they were faced with two scenarios, one of which involved a confrontation on a train and the other of which involved the hearing of a prejudiced joke at a party. *Risk/Fear of Reprisal* was the major obstacle to intervention in the high risk/train scenario and *Incident Not Serious Enough* was most influential in the low-risk/joke scenario. Other variables that were significant obstacles of bystander intention to act were *Prejudice*, *Impression Management/Interpersonal Relationships*, *Intervention Ineffective* and *Not My Role/Place*. As expected, results found that participants were more likely to act in the low-risk scenario. A number of themes were identified by the qualitative data, including comments regarding false beliefs, freedom of speech and importance of action. Practical implications of bystander anti-prejudice, such as reducing and combating incidences of prejudice in the community, make it an important area of study. More research is required on the topic in order to effectively implement it as an anti-prejudice strategy.

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