



## WRJ says STOP Glossary

The language in the sensitive arenas of harassment and assault is continually evolving. Many of these words take on context-based nuances unique to a population, environment, situation, or even educational goal. There are even varied definitions within the WRJ says STOP materials and resources.

If you have a suggestion, please let us know and we can learn and grow together. Email us with [advocacy@wrj.org](mailto:advocacy@wrj.org).

**Abuse** – when someone causes us harm or distress. It can take many forms, ranging from disrespect to causing someone physical or mental pain. It can occur anywhere, public or private. Often the people who commit abuse are taking advantage of a special relationship.

**Ally and Allyship<sup>k</sup>** – the process of being in relationship with people who hold a marginalized identity that you do not share, and using your own platform, privilege, or power to work with them to increase safety, dignity, and belonging for members of that group. Allyship is action-oriented, accountable, and ongoing, and may look different from situation to situation. Being an ally does not mean that you will get everything right, it means that you will listen, learn, and grow when you do not. Ally is an adjective earned through action.

**Bullying** – abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone stronger, or more powerful. Bullying typically involves a real or perceived power imbalance such as using popularity, position, physical strength, or access to embarrassing information to control or harm others. Bullying includes unwanted and hostile behavior, either as a single act or repeated over time, committed with the intent to degrade, humiliate, or oppress another person. It may include verbal, social, or physical behavior, as well as cyberbullying such as persistent, unwanted texts, phone calls, social media messages or doxing.

[See WRJ says STOP one-pager on Power Dynamics and Bullying](#)

**Bystander** – an observer who is not a participant. **See the upstander definition below.**

**Consent** – permission for something to happen or agreement to do something. Consent occurs when one person voluntarily agrees to the proposal or desires of another. It is a term of common speech, with specific definitions as used in such fields as the law, medicine, research,

and sexual relationships. Consent must be affirmative, freely given, conversational, can be withdrawn at any time and does not apply to all activities or all future activities.<sup>R</sup> Consent as understood in specific contexts may differ from its everyday meaning.

**Continuum (Sexual Violence)** – The “Re-visioning the Sexual Violence Continuum” is a graphic developed by Linda Guy in 2006. The graphic includes other “isms” and hatreds to represent Guy’s “belief that it is impossible to end a single oppression; to work to end one oppression requires us to work to end them all ... [with the hope] that by providing a visual conception of the continuum that is more inclusive, of class, race, disability status, sexual orientation and anti-Semitism in addition to gender that it will remind and inspire us to develop a vision of comprehensive sexual violence prevention work which routinely encompasses all forms of oppression. It is important to note that the graphic does not include all forms of oppression and it reflects a continuum, and that it does not intend to convey one harm as “worse” than one next to it on the continuum. The continuum and Linda Guy’s discussion of it can be found [here](#).

**DARVO** – stands for “Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender.” Denying the event, attacking the accuser, and trying to blame the victim are all classic ways to undermine the survivor and reporter.

**Domestic Violence<sup>R</sup>** – A pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner or family member.

**Doxing** - posting private, personal information of others online.

**D’s - The 5Ds** – As described and developed by [Right to Be](#), the 5Ds of bystander intervention are Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, and Direct, as laid out in [The 5Ds of Bystander Intervention](#).

**Harassment** – to create an unpleasant or hostile situation, especially by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of an intimidating, antagonistic, or offensive in nature, or aggressive pressure or intimidation. Harassment can happen in many ways, such as verbal, visual, physical, or cyber.

**Implicit Bias** – attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understandings, actions, and decisions in a subconscious manner. These are influenced by experience and are based on learned associations between various qualities and social categories, including, for example, gender, race, sexuality, and gender presentation.

**Intervention<sup>k</sup>** – An action intended to prevent, interrupt, or mitigate harm of a marginalized person or group. Interventions may take place on an institutional or an interpersonal level, and a person of any identity may intervene to interrupt harm.

**Microaggression, microinvalidation, microinsult, and microaffirmations** – “Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten, and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.” (definition by [Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D.](#)). Microaffirmations can both prevent and counter the impact of microaggressions/ microinvalidations/ microinsults.

**Power Dynamics** – describes how power affects a relationship between two or more people. Power affects all aspects of social life, from the workplace to the home. The ways in which power works in a setting, for instance at work or in communities, can either sink a meeting and negatively impact relationships for years or produce more shared power and capacity to get things done.

[\*\*See WRJ says STOP one-pager on Power Dynamics and Bullying\*\*](#)

**Pyramid of Hate** – The [ADL Pyramid of Hate](#) shows how when we accept “biased attitudes” at the base of the [pyramid](#), we enable an environment where worse behavior can thrive. “When we challenge those biased attitudes and behaviors in ourselves, others and institutions, we can interrupt the escalation of bias and make it more difficult for discrimination and hate to flourish.” The pyramid builds from Biased Attitudes to Acts of Bias, Discrimination, and Bias Motivated Violence before reaching the ultimate level of genocide. ( ©Anti-Defamation League, [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org).)

**Rape** – unlawful sexual activity and usually sexual intercourse carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against a person's will or with a person who is beneath a certain age or incapable of valid consent or where “consent” is obtained through deception. Use of terms such as “**date rape**” could minimize the impacts of the act.

**Sexual Harassment** – uninvited and unwelcome verbal, social or physical behavior of a sexual nature, most commonly, but by no means exclusively, by a person with perceived power over another, such as an employee or student or a member of a volunteer committee or board. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome advances, propositions or requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome verbal, social, physical, visual, or cyber conduct of a sexual nature. It also includes sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks or jokes, or comments about a person’s sexuality or sexual experience, which create a hostile environment, and sex, gender, or gender identity stereotyping.

[\*\*See WRJ says STOP one-pager on Sexual Harassment\*\*](#)

**Sexual Assault<sup>R</sup>** – any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. Sexual assault usually involves force upon a person without consent or is inflicted upon a person who is incapable of giving consent ... or who places the assailant ... in a position of trust or authority. Falling under the definition of sexual assault are sexual activities such as forced sexual intercourse, child molestation, incest, forcible or unwanted touching or fondling and attempted rape.

### [See WRJ says STOP one-pager on Sexual Assault](#)

**Stalking** – a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. It includes unwanted and/or repeated surveillance by an individual or group toward another person. Stalking behaviors are interrelated to harassment and intimidation and may include following the victim in person or monitoring them.

**Self-Care<sup>R</sup>** – putting yourself first, taking proper care of yourself, engaging in healthy activities that promote well-being.

**Survivor** – someone who has gone through or is going through the recovery process post sexual violence. Preferred by many as a term of empowerment, as opposed to using the term “**victim.**” Another phrase to use is “**person who experienced sexual assault.**” Those who have experienced harassment or assault have varied preferences in language choice. There is a tendency in many circles to eliminate the term “victim” and replace it with “survivor,” unless it is preferred by the person being referred to. In other circles, at other times in the healing cycle, different language choices might be made. All such choices should be honored and respected.

**Upstander** – Individuals who stand up for others and their rights. They fight against injustice and unfairness, using their character strengths to inspire action. Anyone can be an upstander. **See The 5Ds definition above.**

### [See WRJ says STOP one-pager on Upstanding](#)

**Victim** – someone who has gone through or is going through the recovery process post- sexual violence, often used in the early stages of recovery. Many prefer to use “**survivor**” as it connotes a sense of empowerment. This term may be avoided, unless it is preferred by the person being referred to. **See the survivor section in this document.**

**Victim-blaming<sup>R</sup> or Survivor-blaming** – Holding the victim/survivor responsible in some way for the [act] that occurred or implying that the victim/survivor could have prevented it had they acted differently. This shifts blame to the victim/survivor rather than the person who committed the [act].

**Word Choice – Sexual Assault is violence.** There is a tendency to gloss over or sanitize what has occurred when reporting or describing assault. For example:

Language to Avoid	Preferred Language
“alleged” “claimed” (imply disbelief, although the word “alleged” may be used in legal proceedings)	“reports” “said” “according to”
“admits” “confesses” (imply survivor responsibility or shame)	“shares” “says” “tells”
“she was raped” “a rape occurred” (imply the sexual assault belongs to the survivor, as a burden they bear)	[pronoun or name] raped them.
“the survivor was unharmed” “fondle” “caress” (negate the violence of sexual assault)	language that accurately conveys the gravity of sexual assault: “oral rape” “was subjected to sexual assault”
“non-consensual sex” “sexual activity” “oral sex” (downplays the violence and assault)	use language that conveys that sexual assault is NOT sex. It is violence. “rape” “sexual assault”

Definitions marked with a “k” come from Keshet’s resource: <https://www.keshetonline.org/resources/what-is-an-ally/>. These definitions can be extended to anyone in a position of being harassed or abused or subjected to microaggressions or negative power dynamics.

Definitions marked with an “R” come in whole or in part from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC), specifically the [Sexual Assault Awareness Month Action Toolkit](#)