

UWRF 2010, 2013, and 2016 Step Up Survey Results



- Encouraging results in the 2016 survey: Large majorities were extremely bothered by these problem behaviors and feel an obligation to respond. The frequency students encounter some of these behaviors have declined over time.
 - Drunkenness
 - Hazing
 - Someone being taken advantage of sexually
 - Verbal mistreatment/non-inclusive language
 - Emotional distress/suicidal thoughts
- **The frequency of witnessing drunkenness and verbal mistreatment/non-inclusive language have declined significantly over time.** The frequency of witnessing hazing, is also declining (not statistically significant). On the other hand, **students reporting witnessing someone being taken advantage of sexually and emotional distress/suicidal thoughts are more common in 2016.**
- Although it is still by far the most common problem behavior students witness, the frequency of witnessing drunkenness that endangered the health and safety of a fellow student has declined significantly.
- **Since 2010, students have grown significantly more bothered by witnessing drunkenness, someone being taken advantage of sexually, and verbal mistreatment/non-inclusive language.** The trend for hazing, is also trending toward being more bothered (but not significant).
- However, despite recognizing the importance and the effectiveness of intervention and their sense of responsibility to intervene when they encounter these behaviors, somewhat smaller proportions of students felt that they would personally intervene. The primary reason given was not knowing how to intervene. **Survey responses indicate a willingness to learn more about how to intervene in these situations.**

- The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences and attitudes of University of Wisconsin-River Falls students with regard to bystander intervention practices in four situations where the personal safety of another person is at risk:
 - (1) Someone has had too much to drink
 - (2) Hazing
 - (3) Someone being taken advantage of sexually
 - (4) Verbal mistreatment/harassment based on gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.
 - (5) Someone experiencing significant emotional distress or thoughts of suicide (added in 2013).
- The questionnaire was adapted from the Step Up survey instrument developed by the University of Arizona and was used with permission.
- On November 29, 2010, the Survey Research Center (SRC) sent email invitations to three groups of UWRF students asking them to participate in an Internet survey: intercollegiate athletes (N=408), Greek society members (N=231), and a random sample of enrolled students (N=1,456).
- On October 29, 2013, the Survey Research Center (SRC) sent email invitations to three groups of UWRF students asking them to participate in an Internet survey: intercollegiate athletes (N=387), Greek society members (N=206), and a random sample of enrolled students (N=1,807).
- On November 9, 2016, the Survey Research Center (SRC) sent email invitations to three groups of UWRF students asking them to participate in an Internet survey: intercollegiate athletes (N=318), Greek society members (N=225), and a random sample of enrolled students (N=2,321).

- In 2010, the SRC sent three email reminders to non-respondents before closing the survey on December 9. Overall, the SRC received 605 useable responses, which is a 29 percent response rate. Within the total number of responses, the SRC received 201 from athletes (49% response rate), 90 from Greeks (39% response rate), and 314 from general students (22% response rate). The calculated confidence intervals (“margin of error”) for the three groups are as follows: Athletes, $\pm 4.9\%$, Greeks $\pm 8.1\%$, and general students $\pm 5.4\%$.
- In 2013, the SRC sent three email reminders to non-respondents before closing the survey on November 14. Overall, the SRC received 490 useable responses, which is a 20 percent response rate. Within the total number of responses, the SRC received 62 from athletes (16% response rate), 46 from Greeks (22% response rate), and 382 from general students (21% response rate). The calculated confidence intervals (“margin of error”) for the three groups are as follows: Athletes, $\pm 11.4\%$, Greeks $\pm 12.8\%$, and general students $\pm 4.9\%$.
- In 2016, the SRC sent three email reminders to non-respondents before closing the survey on November 21. Overall, the SRC received 640 useable responses, which is a 22 percent response rate. Within the total number of responses, the SRC received 56 from athletes (18% response rate), 57 from Greeks (25% response rate), and 527 from general students (23% response rate). The calculated confidence intervals (“margin of error”) for the three groups are as follows: Athletes, $\pm 12\%$, Greeks $\pm 11\%$, and general students $\pm 4\%$.

- **A substantial majority of students responding to the 2016 survey (81%) see themselves as leaders compared to 80% in 2013; this is somewhat lower than in 2010 (87%).** In 2016 women, compared to men, were significantly more likely to agree that they see themselves as leaders which is the reverse of findings in 2013.
- **In 2016, 90% of students agreed that they need to intervene when they notice a problematic situation compared to 88% in 2013 and 84% in 2016.**
- Compared to 2010 (94%) and 2013 (90%), **the frequency with which students report witnessing someone who has had too much to drink in 2016 (82%) has declined significantly over time.**
- **The trend over time appears to be that higher proportions of students feel that intervention should occur for all behaviors.** This increase is significant for drunkenness and verbal abuse.
- **The most common reason for not intervening** when students have witnessed hazing, someone being taken advantage of sexually, verbal abuse, and emotional distress **is that they didn't know how to intervene.** Percentages for not knowing how to intervene have declined over time.
- **Students have increasing confidence that an interventions would avoid a negative outcome when facing the problem behaviors.** 10% more students in 2016 than 2010 believe that interventions almost always would result in avoidance of a negative outcome with someone being taken advantage of sexually being the highest with 56% of students in 2016 saying this compared to 53% in 2013 and 47% in 2010.

I see myself as a leader.

	Strongly Agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
2010	88%	12%
2013	80%	20%
2016	79%	21%

- There has been a significant decline from 2010 in the proportion of students who said they view themselves as leaders. This decline was most pronounced in the general student population.
- In 2016, only 5% of Greeks and Athletes disagree or strongly disagree that they see themselves as leaders compared to 24% of general students.
- In 2016, male students were significantly less likely to see themselves as leaders (23%) compared to 18% of female students. This is the reverse of 2013 when men were more likely to see themselves as leaders.

I think others see me as a leader in the following ways (% that agree):

	2010	2013	2016
As a role model for youth	92%	88%	88%
As a role model to peers	87%	80%	81%
As a leader in social settings	72%	67%	65%
As a campus opinion leader	52%	47%	48%

- There has been a decline across all areas between 2010 and 2016 in the proportion of respondents saying that others see themselves as a leader.
- Athletes and Greeks are significantly more likely to believe others view them as opinion leaders on campus and in social settings.

Students were asked if they believe that (% that agree):

	2010	2013	2016
Need to set an example	98%	96%	98%
My responsibility to intervene	84%	88%	90%
No involvement needed	23%	17%	21%

- There has been an increasing proportion of students who agree that they need to intervene when they see problematic situations.
- Women (82%) disagreed somewhat more strongly than men (78%) that they needn't get involved in problematic situations. .

Students were asked how much they are bothered when they witness these problematic behaviors (very much and extreme amount):

	2010	2013	2016
Drunkenness	22%	25%	26%
Hazing	67%	71%	74%
At risk for Sexual Assault	95%	96%	97%
Verbal Abuse	83%	88%	90%
Emotional Distress	n/a	89%	92%

- Since 2010 students have grown significantly more bothered by witnessing drunkenness, sexual abuse, and verbal abuse.

Students were asked how much they think something should be done when witnessing these problematic behaviors (very much and extreme amount):

	2010	2013	2016
Drunkenness	50%	57%	62%
Hazing	77%	79%	82%
At risk for Sexual Assault	97%	95%	96%
Verbal Abuse	88%	90%	91%
Emotional Distress	n/a	92%	94%

- The trend over time appears to be that higher proportions of students feel that intervention should occur for all these behaviors.

% of students who would try to stop these problematic behaviors if they confronted them (very much and extreme amount):

	2010	2013	2016
Drunkenness	35%	40%	39%
Hazing	35%	36%	40%
At risk for Sexual Assault	64%	68%	71%
Verbal Abuse	49%	56%	58%
Emotional Distress	n/a	50%	48%

- Generally, we see declining proportions of students who say they are likely to join in or do nothing and increasing proportions who say they would likely intervene to stop the behavior.

Reasons for Not Intervening When Witnessing Behavior, 2016					
	Drunkenness	Hazing	Being taken advantage of sexually	Verbal Abuse	Emotional Distress
Assumed Not Problem	57%	25%	6%	15%	9%
Didn't Know How to Intervene	35%	38%	46%	37%	58%
None of My Business	46%	21%	16%	19%	20%
Didn't Know When to Intervene	26%	30%	36%	30%	39%
Assumed Others Would Intervene	37%	27%	31%	32%	24%
Concerned for My Safety	23%	30%	42%	27%	14%
Lacked Confidence	24%	32%	31%	33%	28%
Believed Others Weren't Bothered	29%	18%	6%	18%	6%
Fear of Retaliation	15%	20%	26%	23%	9%
Afraid of Embarrassment	14%	14%	14%	22%	7%
Afraid of Disapproval	17%	23%	13%	20%	8%

- Perhaps because students confront drunkenness much more frequently than the other behaviors, students were more apt to not intervene when confronted with this problem.
- A common thread for failing to act is a lack of understanding of how to intervene. This suggests a need for on-going training for students focused on how to intervene effectively when faced with drunkenness, hazing, sexual or verbal abuse, and emotional distress.

2010, 2013, and 2016 Barriers To Intervening

Drunkenness			
	2010	2013	2016
Never Witnessed	26	28	95
Any Barrier	456	327	412
Assumed not a problem	60%	59%	57%
Not my business	43%	46%	46%
Assumed someone else would	36%	35%	37%
Didn't know how to intervene	32%	33%	35%
Thought others not bothered	31%	22%	29%
Didn't know when to intervene	32%	23%	26%
Lacked confidence to intervene	18%	17%	24%
Worried about my safety	20%	21%	23%
Afraid peers wouldn't approve	11%	16%	17%
Feared retaliation	16%	14%	15%
Embarrassment	11%	13%	14%

The two biggest barriers for intervening for drunkenness (assumed it wasn't a problem and felt it was none of their business) have been the same in all three years.

	Hazing		
	2010	2013	2016
Never Witnessed	293	247	357
Any Barrier	172	119	168
Didn't know how to intervene	35%	45%	38%
Lacked confidence to intervene	22%	27%	32%
Worried about my safety	21%	23%	30%
Didn't know when to intervene	26%	26%	30%
Assumed someone else would	24%	25%	27%
Assumed not a problem	30%	23%	25%
Afraid peers wouldn't approve	17%	21%	23%
Not my business	27%	34%	21%
Feared retaliation	24%	23%	20%
Thought others not bothered	21%	17%	18%
Embarrassment	23%	18%	14%

In regard to intervening for hazing, there has been a marked increase since 2010 in the proportion of students who said they lacked confidence to intervene and who were worried about their safety.

2010, 2013, and 2016 Barriers To Intervening

Someone being taken advantage of sexually			
	2010	2013	2016
Never Witnessed	315	240	340
Any Barrier	142	94	147
Didn't know how to intervene	53%	53%	46%
Worried about my safety	42%	44%	42%
Didn't know when to intervene	35%	36%	36%
Assumed someone else would	26%	27%	31%
Lacked confidence to intervene	29%	28%	31%
Feared retaliation	23%	22%	26%
Not my business	31%	28%	16%
Embarrassment	13%	20%	14%
Afraid peers wouldn't approve	7%	14%	13%
Assumed not a problem	8%	6%	6%
Thought others not bothered	8%	11%	6%

It is encouraging that the proportion of students who said that someone being taken advantage of sexually was not their business has fallen by nearly half since 2010.

	Verbal Abuse		
	2010	2013	2016
Never Witnessed	122	111	203
Any Barrier	309	198	266
Didn't know how to intervene	43%	47%	37%
Lacked confidence to intervene	36%	29%	33%
Assumed someone else would	31%	23%	32%
Didn't know when to intervene	35%	29%	30%
Worried about my safety	25%	23%	27%
Feared retaliation	21%	23%	23%
Embarrassment	23%	23%	22%
Afraid peers wouldn't approve	11%	19%	20%
Not my business	24%	27%	19%
Thought others not bothered	20%	22%	18%
Assumed not a problem	23%	18%	15%

The only fairly clear trend is a decline in the proportion of UWRF students who assume verbal abuse is not a problem.

Emotional Distress		
	2013	2016
Never Witnessed	155	218
Any Barrier	156	214
Didn't know how to intervene	69%	58%
Didn't know when to intervene	41%	39%
Lacked confidence to intervene	24%	28%
Assumed someone else would	18%	24%
Not my business	29%	20%
Worried about my safety	8%	14%
Assumed not a problem	12%	9%
Feared retaliation	8%	9%
Afraid peers wouldn't approve	9%	8%
Embarrassment	6%	7%
Thought others not bothered	8%	6%

The proportion saying they didn't know how to intervene regarding emotional distress declined sharply between 2013 and 2016.

Motive for Intervening to Stop Problem Behavior, UWRF, 2016

	Drunkenness	Hazing	Sexual Abuse	Verbal Abuse	Emotional Distress
Total Who Acted to Stop:	375	215	248	301	313
Motive for Acting					
Right Thing	73%	60%	71%	77%	73%
Would Want Help If It Was Me	64%	47%	59%	55%	62%
Peers Should Look Out	64%	60%	60%	59%	61%
Some Needed Help	60%	45%	54%	50%	65%
Keep from Escalating	58%	40%	45%	45%	49%
Make Me Feel Good	43%	30%	33%	38%	43%
Easy to Help	39%	14%	14%	21%	17%
Preserve Peer's Reputation	32%	24%	22%	22%	14%
Keep Peer Out of Trouble	27%	14%	10%	6%	4%
Related to Person's Experience	25%	9%	19%	20%	33%
Others Expected Me To	16%	8%	9%	11%	9%
Impress Others	3%	4%	1%	1%	1%

- Men compared to women, were more likely to say they intervened to help someone who was drunk because it was the right thing to do.
- One-third who intervened to address emotional distress did so because they related to the person's experience.

2010, 2013, and 2016 Intervention Rationale

Motives to Stop Behavior, UWRF, 2010-2016			
	Drunkenness		
	2010	2013	2016
Right Thing	75%	75%	73%
Would Want Help	66%	64%	64%
Peers Should Look Out	68%	67%	64%
Some Needed Help	66%	61%	60%
Keep from Escalating	55%	64%	58%
Make Me Feel Good	47%	43%	43%
Easy to Help	42%	34%	39%
Preserve Peer's Reputation	25%	22%	32%
Keep Peer Out of Trouble	48%	43%	27%
Related to Person's Experience	29%	26%	25%
Others Expected Me To	24%	12%	16%
Impress Others	6%	3%	3%

The likelihood of intervening for drunkenness to preserve a peer's reputation has increased significantly since 2010.

	Hazing		
	2010	2013	2016
Right Thing	56%	64%	60%
Peers Should Look Out	55%	62%	60%
Would Want Help	42%	50%	47%
Some Needed Help	32%	46%	45%
Keep from Escalating	37%	47%	40%
Make Me Feel Good	29%	31%	30%
Preserve Peer's Reputation	26%	21%	24%
Keep Peer Out of Trouble	21%	16%	14%
Easy to Help	17%	14%	14%
Related to Person's Experience	11%	10%	9%
Others Expected Me To	9%	7%	8%

With respect to hazing, the primary reasons given for intervening are the same five reasons given for intervening to address drunkenness.

Motives to Stop Behavior, UWRF, 2010-2016			
	Someone being taken advantage of sexually		
	2010	2013	2016
Right Thing	69%	79%	71%
Peers Should Look Out	55%	58%	60%
Would Want Help	59%	64%	59%
Some Needed Help	54%	64%	54%
Keep from Escalating	41%	51%	45%
Make Me Feel Good	35%	38%	33%
Preserve Peer's Reputation	17%	20%	22%
Related to Person's Experience	18%	16%	19%
Easy to Help	16%	10%	14%
Keep Peer Out of Trouble	10%	14%	10%
Others Expected Me To	15%	9%	9%
Impress Others	5%	3%	1%

The proportion who feel peers should look out for each other and who intervened in regard to someone being taken advantage of sexually to preserve a peer's reputation were significantly higher in 2016.

	Verbal Abuse		
	2010	2013	2016
Right Thing	71%	83%	77%
Peers Should Look Out	56%	58%	59%
Would Want Help	50%	57%	55%
Some Needed Help	47%	55%	50%
Keep from Escalating	47%	52%	45%
Make Me Feel Good	39%	45%	38%
Preserve Peer's Reputation	20%	20%	22%
Easy to Help	23%	21%	21%
Related to Person's Experience	26%	26%	20%
Others Expected Me To	16%	10%	11%
Keep Peer Out of Trouble	12%	13%	6%
Impress Others	3%	2%	1%

Compared to 2013, significantly lower proportions of 2016 respondents said they intervened to stop hazing because it was the right thing to do and to keep a peer out of trouble.

Motives to Stop Behavior, UWRF, 2010-2016		
	Emotional Distress	
	2013	2016
Right Thing	79%	71%
Peers Should Look Out	58%	60%
Would Want Help	64%	59%
Some Needed Help	64%	54%
Keep from Escalating	51%	45%
Make Me Feel Good	38%	33%
Preserve Peer's Reputation	20%	22%
Related to Person's Experience	16%	19%
Easy to Help	10%	14%
Keep Peer Out of Trouble	14%	10%
Others Expected Me To	9%	9%
Impress Others	3%	1%

Relative to 2013, most of the key motivations for intervening to address emotional distress have declined.

% of students who believe an intervention would avoid a negative outcome (frequently and almost always):

	2010	2013	2016
Drunkenness	48%	52%	59%
Hazing	62%	64%	70%
Being taken advantage of sexually	77%	73%	82%
Verbal Abuse	67%	73%	75%
Emotional Distress	n/a	78%	76%

- Generally, we see more students believing that an intervention would avoid a negative outcome.
- Belief in the efficacy of intervention to avoid negative outcomes increases with the number of years they have been at UWRF.

% of students who believe they have the skills to intervene:

	2010	2013	2016
Drunkenness	79%	80%	77%
Hazing	61%	60%	60%
Being taken advantage of sexually	67%	68%	72%
Verbal Abuse	77%	79%	81%
Emotional Distress	n/a	72%	77%

- Juniors and seniors have more confidence than freshmen or sophomores in their ability to intervene related to drunkenness.
- Males, athletes, and the Greek community have more confidence in their ability to intervene to stop hazing than women and general students.

% of students who want to learn the skills to intervene:

	2010	2013	2016
Drunkenness	67%	72%	74%
Hazing	71%	75%	77%
Being taken advantage of sexually	81%	85%	86%
Verbal Abuse	78%	82%	83%
Emotional Distress	n/a	84%	86%

- Women are more interested in improving their skills.
- Interest in how to intervene when a peer has had too much to drink is higher among athletes and Greeks.
- Interest in gaining skills to cope with emotional distress increases with the number of years the student has been at UWRF.

- **Typical interventions related to excessive alcohol consumption include the following:**
 - *Helping an inebriated classmate get home safely because they were nowhere near able to walk by themselves.*
 - *Whenever someone has had too much to drink I've felt very equipped to step in and stop the situation from escalating by encouraging them to stop drinking or finding a safe and responsible way for them to get home and remove them from that situation.*
 - *Someone having too much to drink and wanted to drive home. I did not allow them to drive.*
 - *A student had drunk too much alcohol to the point of alcohol poisoning. I called the police and made sure she was going to be okay until the paramedics arrived.*
- **Typical interventions related to verbal mistreatment include the following:**
 - *People talk and if you speak up and make sure they know it's socially unacceptable it usually stops.*
 - *If I notice someone talking negatively about another person, I tell them that is not appropriate and they don't ever have the right to speak to someone that way. I will also defend the other person that they are talking badly about.*
 - *Someone was shouting inappropriate slurs at my LGBTQ friend at a pub and I went to the bouncer and told them about the individual and the individual was kicked out of the pub.*


- **Typical interventions related to someone being taken advantage of sexually include the following:**
 - *A friend who had had a lot to drink was getting hit on by a guy and he was trying to get her to leave with him. She wasn't very comfortable but he wasn't letting up. If she would have stayed I don't think it would have been a safe situation or one she would have approved on the next day. I intervened and we left the party together.*
 - *I've had to rescue one of my friends from a dude who was taking it too far on the dance floor and her friends were encouraging it. I just removed her from the situation while my girlfriend at the time distracted him.*
- **Typical interventions related to emotional distress/suicidal thoughts include the following:**
 - *Helping and listening to the victim.*
 - *Someone was in emotional distress with thoughts of suicide. I did what I knew to do in terms of talking to the person about the future and trying to get them to go to counseling and get help. That wasn't working and when I felt like I was no longer capable of handling the situation I called other people who could and also contacted the police.*

- Solid majorities see themselves as role models for their peers and for younger students.
- Large majorities are open to additional training in effective intervention protocols.
- Nearly all feel that they have a responsibility to intervene when they notice problematic behavior by a peer.
- The frequency with which students witness drunkenness and hazing has declined over time.
- Other than drunkenness, large majorities of UWRF students are extremely or very much bothered by these behaviors; the proportion of students who feel this way has grown.
- Other than drunkenness and possibly emotional distress, most students have not personally witnessed these behaviors.
- Almost all UWRF students feel that intervention should occur when someone is being taken advantage of sexually, emotional distress, or verbal abuse is encountered. Solid majorities feel that way about hazing and excessive alcohol consumption, and, over time, higher and higher proportions have come to feel that way.
- Half would intervene to stop emotional distress and fewer than half to stop hazing and drunkenness. For all behaviors other than drunkenness, the biggest impediment to personal action is not knowing how to intervene. For drunkenness, the belief that this wasn't a problem that needed their intervention was the most important barrier to action.

- For more information about the survey or about “Stepping Up” contact Student Health and Counseling Services at 715/425-3293

PUBLICLY STATE YOUR INTENTION TO HELP AND INTERVENE IN THE SAFEST WAY POSSIBLE.

“It was the **right thing** to do.”
(The main reason students intervene)



4. RECRUIT
others if needed.

3. HELP
end the problem.

2. APPROACH
like a friend.

1. SEE
the problem.
Be the change.

STEP UP
Own IT

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
River Falls
STUDENT LIFE Division of
Student Affairs

For more information, contact Student Health and Counseling Services at (715) 425-3293.