



August 27, 2015

We at Hollaback Vancouver open our arms in solidarity with Chantal Coschizza who, this week, was yet another victim of harassment in our community. We are saddened by the news and applaud the efforts being taken to launch investigations. So often harassment is silenced, swept under the rug or forgotten. It is people like Coschizza who fearlessly show its realities that will have the ability to influence change.

This instance is yet another example of how prominent and normalized sexual violence has become in our public spaces. The intervention of only one bystander for what was a rattling experience for Coschizza reinforces our need, as a community, to educate ourselves and move to a place of solidarity against gendered and sexualized violence in every sphere.

Next time you find yourself witnessing an act of harassment, we encourage you to be an active bystander. The four tactics we suggest include being direct, distracting the attention away from the situation, delegating to higher authorities (such as using the direct text line 87-77-77) and delaying your exit to make sure the person whom received the harassment is okay.

In an effort to end instances like that of Chantal Coschizza, Hollaback Vancouver would like to facilitate community workshops around the issues of gendered violence, street harassment and the opportunity for healing. If you or your group would like to participate, please get in touch.

Hollaback Vancouver will also continue to work alongside people like Chantal and with partnerships like Metro Vancouver Transit Police to move towards a community that says no to harassment. We recognize that street and public harassment are symptoms of a larger culture of sexual exploitation. We also envision a community in which every gender can enjoy public space freely, openly and safely.

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