

SESSION 2 COURSE NOTES STEPPING UP SAFELY – THE 5 D’S UPSTANDER FRAMEWORK

Hi there,

Welcome to your easy-to-follow notes for Session 2. These are your friendly companion for today, whether you read them before we start, keep them nearby during the session, or look back afterwards. They’re written in a simple, conversational way, just like we’re chatting over a cup of tea.

In Session 1 we sharpened our ability to see clearly. Today we move to the next practical step: what we can actually do when we notice something concerning; safely, effectively, and without putting ourselves or others at greater risk. We use the word “Upstander” because it is active and empowering. It says: I see something, and I can choose to act in a way that helps, without making the situation worse.

This matters deeply for South African families and workplaces. When we choose wisely, we reduce the chance of escalation that can harm children and the adults who care for them. In the true spirit of ubuntu (“I am because we are”) we look out for one another’s children as our own. You don’t have to be a hero. You simply choose the safest and most effective option for the moment. That is real strength, and it is how we build safer workplaces and families together.

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Explain the five options in the 5 D’s Upstander Framework.
- Choose the safest and most appropriate D for different real-life situations.
- Practise at least two intervention approaches in a safe setting.

These are practical skills you can use immediately, whether you’re a team leader in a factory, a teacher, a colleague in an office, a parent at a school event, or a community member who wants to help without making things worse.

BEFORE WE BEGIN – A QUICK PRIVATE REFLECTION (5 QUESTIONS)

Take two minutes now to answer these in your head or on a scrap of paper. There are no right or wrong answers, this is simply to help you see where your thinking is at and get the most from our time together.

1. When you notice something concerning at work or in your community, do you usually feel you have to act directly or do nothing at all?
2. What does “safety first” mean to you when deciding whether to get involved in a difficult situation?
3. Can you think of a time when bringing in someone else (like a manager, elder, or trusted person) felt like the right thing to do?
4. Is it ever helpful to simply check in with someone later, after a difficult moment has passed?
5. Right now, how confident do you feel that you have real, practical options when you see something worrying? (Rate yourself 1–5, where 1 is “not confident at all” and 5 is “very confident”.)

Hold onto your thoughts. By the end of this session you’ll have five clear, practical choices and the wisdom to pick the safest one.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN OUR SESSION TOGETHER

We keep everything interactive, emotionally safe, and hopeful. Participation is completely voluntary, you can observe rather than practise, listen quietly, or step out at any time. No one is expected to share personal experiences. We focus on practical options and collective strength.

Here's how the session flows:

- We open with a short, powerful 5-minute introduction video that shows why we use the word “Upstander” and demonstrates how these simple choices can protect children and families in real South African settings (workplaces, schools, communities, and family gatherings).
- A brief pair reflection on what stood out.
- Clear input on the 5 D's framework, with real South African examples from workplaces and communities.
- One hopeful story from a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal that shows how one teacher's careful choices protected both a colleague and a child.
- A simple, steadying breath together before we practise.
- Small-group work (groups of three or four) on two realistic South African scenarios; one from a workplace and one from a community or family setting. You'll decide together which D or combination feels safest and most appropriate, then practise what you would actually say or do.
- A structured group debrief where we share what we chose and why it felt right (only what feels comfortable).
- Three quick verbal questions to lock in the learning.
- A warm close and transition to the next session.

Everything is designed to feel safe and practical. We focus on hope, solutions, and the wisdom that you already carry.

THE HEART OF SESSION 2: THE 5 DS UPSTANDER FRAMEWORK – SAFETY FIRST

We use the word Upstander because it is active and empowering. The most important rule is always safety; your safety and the safety of the person you are concerned about. You never have to use every D, and you never have to act alone or in a way that puts you at risk. You choose the D that fits the moment, your position, and what feels safest.

Here are the five practical options:

Distract – Create a safe interruption to break the moment without direct confrontation. Examples: “Sorry to interrupt, but can I borrow you for a quick second?” or starting a casual conversation that changes the energy. Useful in meetings, at family gatherings, or in public spaces.

Delegate – Bring in someone else who is better placed to help. This could be a manager, HR, a security person, a trusted elder, or calling a helpline. You are not abandoning the situation, you are getting the right support.

Document – Record what you saw factually and safely, if it is safe to do so. Keep a private note of times, what was said or done, and witnesses. This can be very helpful later if the person needs support or if formal steps are taken. You do not have to show it to anyone immediately.

Delay – Check in later when it is safer. After the moment has passed, you can ask privately: “I noticed things seemed difficult earlier. Are you okay? I’m here if you want to talk.” This is often very powerful.

Direct – Speak up clearly when it is safe and you have the position or backup to do so. “That’s not okay” or “Please stop.” Direct action works best when you are not alone or when you have authority in the situation.

The beauty of the 5 D’s is that they give us choices. Different situations call for different D’s. You do not have to do everything. You do not have to do it alone. You choose what is safe and what fits.

A HOPEFUL SOUTH AFRICAN STORY

Let me share a story from a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal. Mrs Dlamini, a senior teacher, noticed that one of her colleagues, a younger teacher named Thandi, was receiving constant calls and messages during school hours. Thandi would step outside looking anxious and return looking smaller. Mrs Dlamini also saw Thandi’s young son become very quiet and clingy when his mother was on the phone.

Mrs Dlamini did not confront anyone directly. She chose to Delegate, she spoke privately to the principal and documented the pattern of calls she had observed. Together they created a safe plan. They also offered Thandi a quiet check-in using Delay. With the school’s support and a referral to a local family organisation, Thandi received help early. Her son’s confidence returned, and Thandi later said that knowing someone had noticed without making things worse gave her the courage to accept support.

One teacher’s careful choice of the right Ds protected both a colleague and a child. Mrs Dlamini did not try to be a hero. She chose the safest and most effective options for her situation. That is the heart of this framework.

THE CENTRING PAUSE

Before we move into practising together, we’ll take one steady breath together; in through the nose, out through the mouth. This simple pause helps us stay clear and calm, just as we might before an important conversation with family or colleagues. It’s a small, practical tool you can use anytime.

YOUR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

You’ll work in small groups of three or four. On the screen you’ll see two short, realistic South African scenarios — one from a workplace and one from a community or family setting. Your task is to:

- Decide together which D or combination of D’s feels safest and most appropriate.
- Practise what you would actually say or do for 3–4 minutes.

Participation is voluntary. If you prefer to observe and listen, that is perfectly fine and very helpful — observers often give the best feedback. We are practising skills in a safe setting, not real situations. No one has to act out anything that feels uncomfortable.

STRUCTURED DEBRIEF & KEY TAKEAWAY

We'll come back together and hear from a few groups (only what you feel comfortable sharing). You can simply tell us which D you chose and why it felt right. We'll notice that there is often more than one good option. The key takeaway we'll emphasise together is this:

The beauty of the 5 D's is that they give us choices. You do not have to do everything. You do not have to do it alone. You choose what is safe and what fits. That is real strength and it is how we build safer workplaces and families together. When we choose wisely, we reduce the chance of escalation that can harm children and families.

AFTER SESSION 2 – WHAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU

You now have five clear, practical options and the wisdom to choose the safest one for each situation. This is how we step up without making things worse and how we protect children and strengthen families in our workplaces and communities.

You have taken another important step today. Thank you for your care, your thoughtfulness, and your courage in practising these skills.

10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SESSION 2

- 1. What if I'm alone when I notice something concerning - which D is usually safest?** When you're alone or unsure, Delegate, Document, or Delay are often the safest starting points. You can bring in someone better placed, keep a private factual note, or check in later when it feels safer. You never have to act directly by yourself.
- 2. Can I use more than one D at the same time?** Yes, absolutely. Many situations call for a combination. For example, you might Document what you see and then Delegate to a manager or trusted elder. The framework gives you flexibility - you choose what fits the moment.
- 3. What's the difference between Distract and Direct?** Distract is a gentle, indirect interruption that changes the energy without confrontation; useful when you want to break the moment safely. Direct is speaking up clearly ("That's not okay") and works best when you have position, backup, or the situation feels safe enough to do so.
- 4. How do I document safely without the other person noticing or it becoming obvious?** Keep it private and factual. A quick note on your phone or a small notebook later - times, what was said or done, who was present. You don't have to show it to anyone immediately. It can support the person later or help professionals respond effectively if needed.
- 5. What if the person involved is my manager or someone senior?** Power differences matter. In these cases, Delegate (to HR or a trusted senior person), Document safely, or Delay (a private check-in later) are often the wisest choices. Your safety and the other person's safety come first. You are never expected to confront someone in authority directly.
- 6. Is Direct always the "bravest" or best option?** Not at all. Direct can be powerful when it's safe and appropriate, but in many situations it can escalate things or put people at greater risk. The framework honours all five options equally. Choosing Delegate or Delay in a tricky situation is often the wisest and most protective choice - for everyone involved, including children nearby.
- 7. How does using the 5 D's actually help protect children?** When we choose the safest and most appropriate response, we reduce the chance of escalation. Escalation can create more fear,

instability, or harm for children who are already affected. Early, wise action helps adults get support sooner and creates calmer, safer environments for the little ones who depend on them.

8. **What if I choose the “wrong” D?** There is rarely one perfect choice. The framework is about having options and choosing what feels safest in the moment. Even if things don’t go exactly as planned, having tried to help in a thoughtful way is valuable. We learn together, and different situations call for different D’s.
9. **Can I use these Ds in family or community settings, not just at work?** Yes - the 5 D’s work in family gatherings, school events, taxi ranks, community meetings, and homes. The same principles apply: safety first, choose what fits your position and the moment, and remember you don’t have to do everything alone. Trusted elders, family members, or neighbours can be part of Delegate or Delay.
10. **What if I freeze in the moment and don’t do anything?** Freezing is completely human and normal. That’s why we have Delay as one of the options - you can still check in later when it feels safer. Noticing clearly is already a powerful first step. The framework gives you permission to choose what is possible and safe, even if it’s not immediate action.

Thank you for the care and openness you’re bringing to this session. You now carry five practical choices and the wisdom to use them well. Every time you choose wisely, you help protect children and strengthen the families and workplaces around you.

See you in the room. You’re already building real skill and confidence.