

Verbal De-Escalation Strategies

Approach from the side: DO NOT approach the person causing harm from behind or get directly in their face

Name the Behavior

You're holding their arm really hard.

Your voice is very loud.

Address the **specific behavior** that is inappropriate, offensive, or violent. Don't use harmful labels or sarcasm.

Say "No"

You always have the right to say, "No," or "Stop," or "That is not okay."

Broken Record

I think you're hurting them.

I think you're hurting them.

I think you're hurting them.

Repeat the same statement until the person causing harm corrects their behavior or exits the situation.

Step It Down

To avoid "shushing" the person causing harm, match their vocal intensity. The goal is to slowly "step it down," or speak in an **increasingly calm tone**. They may follow your lead without even realizing it.

Assertive Ignoring

Sometimes, ignoring can be a proactive decision. By **choosing not to engage**, you can de-escalate a situation. But stay aware. If the situation continues to escalate, be prepared to use another strategy.

"I" Statements

You're being racist!

I feel hurt.

Use "I" statements to voice your feelings and wishes **without expressing judgment** so as not to put the person causing harm on the defensive.

Get to "We"

We all want to be safe here.

Use "we" to foster a **sense of unity**. When you create a "we," the person causing harm is less likely to direct their anger towards you.

Lose to Win

Self-defense is **anything** you do to keep yourself safe. Sometimes, you have to make compromises to protect your or another person's immediate safety.

Interrupting

Interrupt or distract from either the person causing harm or the situation.