

# 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.