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

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.

### "I" Statements

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

### 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.

### Get to "We"

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.

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