

Safety Tips

The following are strategies for safety, all of which are dependent on your situation. Take what you think will work for your safety

If you're being attacked:

- Do not get into physical altercation over property
- Use words goal is to alert bystanders and to frighten (not anger) assailant. So avoid cursing or direct insults (this won't signal to others that you are in danger and it won't de-escalate). Instead shout your boundaries – “No!” “Step Back.” “Back off!” “Leave me alone.” If attack commences, okay to shout for help. Better if you can pinpoint a person – “you in the blue shirt.
- Use your body to self-defend if attacked. There is a myth that fighting back increases your risk of injury. Research thus far has discounted this theory. Goal of physical self defense is getting away from attacker
- Move towards a ‘safer place’, i.e. avoid being trapped in a corner

As a bystander:

- Use your body language to de-escalate a situation do not take an attack posture but rather a confident and noticing posture goal is to get person who is being attacked to safety.
- No matter what, never blame the victim and never minimize the incident
- Help the survivor get to a safer location. If their injuries need an ambulance contact one of the nearest emergency rooms. Do not leave the survivor alone and be prepared to observe if police refuse medical treatment, escalate the situation, or attack the survivor.
- Reduce direct eye contact (as it may be taken as a confrontation), make eye contact
- Stay calm speak slowly, gently and clearly and use a firm voice level
- Keep both hands visible, use open arms, and minimal body contact with the attacker this could also escalate the situation
- If you feel safe and it is necessary or calming down the person you know best
- Things like "It'll be ok let's just take a walk" You don't want to say anything nasty about the other person like "He's not worth it" when they or their friends can hear you
- Avoid sudden movements that may startle or be perceived as an attack
- Allow the person adequate personal space, Create some space

- Show that you are listening, avoid arguing, and confrontation before trying to solve the problem.
- Shout or scream to alert the attacker that someone is watching. Yell to let the attacker know someone will be there to support the survivor. Outside people sometimes respond or bring their attention to the word "Fire!" (outside)
- If you are not able to intervene, use your camera, cell phone, or digital camera's movie mode to capture the incident. This will help the survivor in legal proceedings.
- Get a good look at the attacker. Note what they were wearing, how tall they were, or anything that distinguishes them.
- Give clear, brief, assertive instructions, negotiate options and avoid threats.
- Explain your purpose or intention to de-escalate
- Show concern through non-verbal and verbal responses.

Police Violence (as a Bystander):

- Form a circle at a safe distance around the police. This lets the police know that people are watching. It is not a crime to assemble and observe.
- At a safe distance take video of the police. Taking pictures will also help document the incident.
- Look for each cop's badge number and name. Share this with the survivor and near eye witnesses at a later time.
- If you've called the police introduce yourself to them saying their badge number and name. This lets them know that you are aware of how to report bad conduct.