

Verbal Self-Defense

Author/Instructor: Jade de la Cruz (Revised 2017)

1) Trust your intuition (your "gut feeling") and take action immediately

When you sense danger, tune in to your surroundings, run or walk away immediately if possible. If you cannot immediately run or walk away, then:

2) Use Strong and Confident Body Language:

- A) Stand up straight and face the person
- B) Put your hands up in a "stop sign," chest level, palms facing out
- C) Defensive stance: feet shoulder-width apart, one front, one back, knees bent
- D) Eye contact: Look the person directly in the eye
- E) Look serious. Look like you mean it. Look angry. Look fierce.

3) Move away from the person as soon as possible. Remember:

- A) At first, while still close, back away carefully while watching the person
- B) Maintain the "stop sign" with your hands up in front of you, palms out
- C) Keep your balance with wide steps and knees bent
- D) Be ready to run or use physical self-defense if the person comes at you
- E) DO NOT turn away unless you are at a safe distance from the potential danger

4) Yell! When you are scared for your safety and believe you are in danger:

- A) While in defensive stance, with strong body language, deep breath B4 each yell
- B) Yell simple, direct, strong commands. Look and sound angry and fierce!
- C) Examples: "Get away from me!" "Let go of me!" "Got out! leave!"
"No!" "Someone call 911! I'm being attacked!" "Don't touch me!"
To draw attention you can also yell "FIRE!"

5) Use a firm voice and use "I" Statements

- A) For daily assertiveness when yelling & commands may not be the best option.
- B) When you feel uncomfortable but do NOT feel in immediate danger.
"I need to leave now" or "I need **you** to leave now"
"I feel uncomfortable when you (yell, touch me) I need you to stop."
"I don't want to talk to you" or "I am not going to talk to you."

6) Repeat the commands firmly and loudly, over & over, until the person responds & leaves or stops the inappropriate or threatening behavior & you can get to safety.

7) Aftercare/Follow Up: Go to a safe place. Talk about what happened with a trusted friend, parent, counselor or contact a rape crisis center (like Verity in Santa Rosa). Report what happened to the police. And take more self-defense classes!