

De-escalating violence: 8 basic responses

↓	1. Don't act frightened Don't behave like a victim; demonstrate respect for yourself. Be gentle but firm. Pleading can induce more cruelty.
↓	2. Don't act frightening Speak to an assailant as a person of dignity. Become a person to the assailant. Humanise yourself and them (say 'I'). Ask questions. If you are aggressive or violent, the assailant feels justified.
↓	3. Remain calm Breathe deeply. Keep your voice low. Silence can disarm.
↓	4. Watch body language – yours and assailant's Avoid sudden moves. Use slow, gentle hand movements. Use non-threatening eye contact.
↓	5. Use the unexpected to create wonder and surprise Use humour, distraction. Introduce yourself, shake hands. Interrupt the process somehow, eg by trying to sit down, ordering coffee etc.
↓	6. Empathise Remember the assailant may have all the fear you have.
↓	7. Know that the assailant is a human being capable of love Pay attention to the need to be loved. Trust that the person wants to act positively.
↓	8. Allow a way out Both physically, as in a door, and 'saving face'.

Calming a potentially violent person is:

- 56% facial expression and body language
- 37% tone of voice
- 7% what we say