

## **Concepts of De-escalation & Safety**

### **Personal Safety is a Priority**

- You can't help anyone else if you are injured by an escalated customer!
- It is not against the law to defend yourself!

### **Safety Program Objectives**

- Formulate and work within an established safety plan.
- Create safety defaults (automatic responses).
- Identify potential danger and pre-attack indicators.
- If all else fails, employ effective and reasonable physical defense options.

### **Develop your Assessment Skills**

- An accurate assessment of each individual is your safety net.
- What are they all about?
- Putting people in a "box"!
- Is it fair to assess someone on how they look?
- Does their communication make sense?
- If they are saying one thing but you are feeling something else what do you do?
- Trust your intuition absolutely!
- Ask more pointed questions!
- This is a skill that can be developed.

### **What is the Safety Ladder!**

- If someone escalates up to the top of the ladder what do you get?
  - A punch in the nose!
- If you are not a good communicator or don't have de-escalation techniques in your pocket you may drag a person up the ladder!

### **Acknowledging the Importance**

- Many people are uncooperative because they want to emphasize that their issue is important to them. To effectively respond to individuals exhibiting symptoms of stress, anger or other emotions, develop patented responses like;
  - I understand that this is very important to you, let me write it down...
  - Please explain to me what you are asking....
  - I think that I understand, let me repeat it to you....
  - Speak slower (or softer) so I can understand you then I can help you...

### Reasoning Scale

- Rational behavior and emotions have to be balanced for normal reasoning to occur.

### Slowing Techniques

- The passing of time helps balance emotions and rational behavior.
- Empathy is a critical factor.
- Never take away a person's dignity!
- Techniques;
  - Grounding – Ask the person to sit while talking. Why?
  - Allow the person to speak without cutting them off.
  - Repeat the issue in a slower and softer tone.
  - Never “fight fire with fire”!
  - Document the issue.

### Self-Critiquing & Post Incident Debriefing

- Examine what was done well and what could improve.
- This puts all on the same page!
- Makes us the Monday morning quarterback.

### Safety Strategies for Employees

- Recognize the signals associated with impending violence.
  - Verbally expressed anger and frustration.
  - Body language.
  - Signs of drugs and alcohol.
  - Emotional instability.
  - Increasing anger in a particular situation.
  - Possible weapon.
  - Past history.
- Maintain behavior that helps diffuse anger or violence.
  - Calm & caring attitude.
  - Keep composure and professionalism.
  - Acknowledge the person's feelings.
  - Avoid aggressive behavior.
  - Bring the volume down.
  - Pace your words and phrases.

### Safety Defaults & Triggers

- Do you have a bag of tricks???
- Play the “What If Game” as an effective training tool.
- Have pre-planned escape phrases in your pocket.
- Flag system or other triggers to safety.
- Don’t isolate yourself with a potentially violent person. When appropriate summons assistance and use tactical statements.
- Use barriers between you and the escalated individual.
- What is your exit plan???!
  - **Form 9!!????!!**
  - Other.
- Always keep an open path for exiting.
- Flee!
- Safe Havens. Where are they and are there more than one where you work.
- Documentation.

### Saying NO!!!

- Without saying NO.
- Are Little White Lies allowed?

### What are your Protection Tactics?

- Distance.
- Watch the hands.
- Ergonomics – what is the physical layout of the environment?
- Covert Protective Stance.
- Power Zones.
- Never turn your back – “Two-Step Turn” technique.
- Barriers & obstacles.
- Prepare escape phrases.
- Escape routes.
- Safe Havens – Know where you would flee to for safety and to call for assistance.
- Always have a cell phone.

### Next Step

- What is the process to contact Public Safety?
- Become familiar with the Officers and their protocols.
- Notify Public Safety at the first sign of potential danger (earlier than later).
- Update Public Safety with changing information.
- Always conduct an after-action meeting/debriefing (to prevent future incidents or to heighten mitigation techniques).

### Basic Self Defense Techniques

- This is only activated to protect (not to punish) and then to escape.
- Is this in your bag-of-tricks?

**Concepts of**  
**De-escalation & Safety**

**By**

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## **"Concepts of De-Escalation and Self Defense"**

The goals of this program are to improve danger recognition and to develop responses that will allow the actor to get to safety. These goals will be accomplished by lecture, demonstrations, physical techniques, and simulations. Class participants will learn how to be more aware of their personal safety and potentially dangerous situations that occur in hospital environments. Participants will also have the opportunity to improve their skills in communicating and avoiding and de-escalating dangerous situations. Lastly, participants will be exposed to basic self defense as a reasonable option in the event verbal de-escalation and avoidance techniques are unsuccessful.

In addition to applicable laws, hospital employees must follow the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of their employer. Any conflict with the training presented in this program must be addressed with your employer immediately. Specific patient controlling techniques are not being presented in this course. The Tenable Group / Tenable Defensive Tactics believes that instruction in specific patient controlling techniques should be placed within the medical training arena.

There are no fighting styles or techniques that are guaranteed undefeatable. But, by having a heightened sense of awareness and using sound defensive strategies, you will greatly increase overall safety and reduce your odds of being a victim. This program emphasizes recognition and avoidance techniques. The option to employ physical options should be based on a candid assessment of the situation and your skills. Any and all physical defense options must be reasonable in light of all the circumstances known in a particular situation.

Participation in the physical training portion of the program is strictly voluntary. All participants must work within their known capabilities and limitations.

### **Program Objectives:**

- Formulate and Work Within an Established Safety Plan / Safety Defaults (Automatic Responses)
- Establish Proper Assessment Techniques and Apply Effective De-Escalation Tools
- Identify Potential Danger and Pre-Attack Indicators
- Employ Effective and Reasonable Physical Defense Options

## **“Concepts of De-Escalation and Self Defense”**

### **The Communication Process:**

1. Sender (knows what he/she wants to say)
2. Encoding (the way he/she sends what he/she wants to say, ie; the words used)
3. Message Channel (how he/she sends it)
4. Interference (noise, environment, or other distracters)
5. Receiver (person intended to receive the sender's information)
6. Decoding (what he/she believes is the sender's message)
7. Filtering (the Receiver's belief in what the Sender means)
8. Feedback (any action or response by the Receiver)

### **Communication Obstacles** (to the sender, receiver, or both):

1. Status Difference / Egotism
2. Age Differences (speaking in terms/slang utilized by that age group)
3. Language Differences
4. Technical Differences (ie; specialist to layman)
5. Dislike Between Communicating Parties
6. Bored, Tired, Hurt, Intoxicated, Excited, or Physical Disability
7. Preconceived Opinions / Beliefs
8. Assuming a Level of Understanding Already Exists
9. Environment Factors

Recognizing and overcoming these obstacles will greatly enhance communication.

**Clues to Good Communication Techniques:**

1. Know What You Want to Say (job knowledge)
2. Be Truthful (if you don't know, say so)
3. Look at People You Are Talking To
4. Use Simple Language (never use a word you are not sure of)
5. Smile
6. Speak Calmly and Softly
7. Be Respectful (this can make all the difference)
8. If You Don't Know The Answer, If Possible, Attempt To Find Out The Answer
9. Summarize If Need Be
10. Ask For Questions

**Clues to Good Listening Techniques:**

1. Keep an Open Mind (don't assume you know what they're going to say)
2. Stay Focused on the Issue at Hand
3. Identify Main Issues
4. Don't Interrupt Unless Necessary
5. Acknowledge When Appropriate
6. Ask Questions
7. Look at the Person Speaking
8. Take Notes When Appropriate

### **Biased Thoughts and Opinions**

As a "People-Professional" we must **always** maintain proper decorum and regard towards others. Personal biases and opinions must not be present, in **any** form, while at work or representing your facility.

### **Cultural Diversity - Some Tips**

Please keep in mind the following tips are only generalities designed to help your efforts to provide services to our multi-cultural community:

1. The existence of an accent says little (if anything) about a person's education, status, or knowledge of the English vocabulary and grammar.
2. Many immigrants can understand more English than they can speak.
3. For many immigrants, written English is easier to understand than spoken word. Using written memos and documents may assist in communications.
4. Use the following guidelines when conversing with someone who does not speak English well; speak slowly and distinctly, avoid using slang, avoid the temptation to shout, avoid complex phrases, do not use jokes or sarcasm, pause frequently, and check for understanding often. Know that in order to avoid embarrassment some people will pretend to understand.
5. Know that the phonics of some languages makes the speaker inadvertently sound rude and harsh when speaking English.
6. Know what to do regarding language barriers.
7. Most of all be patient.



## Non-Verbal Communication

*"The tone makes the music." "I can tell you really don't mean it." "I could tell before he opened his mouth it was a lie."* Most experts' say that despite the words used; over 85 percent of what is received during communication comes from non-verbal indicators. Non-verbal communication will greatly enhance your message when attempting to overcome communication obstacles (ie; Age and Language Differences, Excited, etc.). Your non-verbal communication should show empathy.

Non-verbal Communication includes:

1. **Eye Contact** – Looking (although not constantly staring at, or "rolling your eyes") at people infers honesty, interest, compassion, and sincerity.
2. **Addressing All People Present** – Although you probably will be focused on one person, by occasionally looking/talking to all present everyone will feel important and part of the conversation.
3. **Stances and Posture** – Folded arms, making no eye contact, disgruntled expressions, back turned, while talking all indicate un-caring, rude, and a "bothered" attitude. If you're busy, politely ask the person to wait a moment and always apologize for these delays.
4. **Distracting Habits** – are simply not polite and detract from you and your organization as being professional (chewing gum and blowing bubbles, clicking or tapping a pen).
5. **Appearance** – "First impressions" are lasting ones. Your words and actions are more potent when you appear professional. Wear appropriate, clean, wrinkle-free clothing. Be mindful of personal hygiene and grooming.
6. **Physical Contact** – For some cultures touching indicated sincerity and honesty, for others it is an insult. As a rule maintain an appropriate professional-distance from clients.
7. **Matching** – Your non-verbal expressions should match the words you use.
8. **Overall Style** – At times look at yourself and review situations you have handled. Could you have done that better? Ask another person (trusted co-worker) how you performed during the conversation with the customer. Be extremely careful about using humor or "joking" with customers, especially distraught or excited customers. They could take your humor as non-caring or inappropriate. Be cautious not to sound sarcastic ... especially after repeat scenarios.

### The '8 Steps to Gain Compliance'

The following is a general template when dealing with Maybe and No People to gain compliance:

1. **Identify Yourself and Give a Greeting** - Personalizing communication can aid with de-escalating.
2. **Clarify the Situation & Ask Appropriate Questions** - repeat the situation if needed. Do not take the situation personally.
3. **Decide on a Plan of Action** - Consider the 'Next Step' options.
4. **Tactfully Instruct** - the Maybe or No person to listen and comply with you. Remember to always keep a professional attitude. Never belittle the person you're speaking to or take away their dignity.
5. **Set a Context** - Tell them why you have given them the directions or the instructions. Make sure it's a professional and legitimate request. 7 out of 10 Maybe people or No people will comply at this point.
6. **Present Options** - People under the influence of stress, anger, pride, fear or alcohol/chemicals will have tunnel vision and be inflexible. You must calmly provide options and use slowing techniques to create time for these individuals to respond in a rational manner.
7. **Confirmation Stage** - Many people say one thing and mean another. Ask if the words they used are what they really mean. Advising the customer of the existing guidelines and procedures applicable to the issues at hand. Say "No" without saying "No"; tell the customer that a satisfactory answer or resolution of the problem may not be possible immediately. Act positive and professional. Remember that the "winning" fight is the one avoided.
8. **Appropriate Closing**

### **'Acknowledging the Importance'**

Many people create disturbances or are uncooperative because they want to emphasize the fact that their issue is important to them. Sometimes this has no direct relationship to the actual size or relevancy of the issue itself. Remember *"One man's trash is another man's treasure."*

To effectively respond to individuals exhibiting symptoms of stress, anger, or other emotions, develop patented responses like:

1. I understand that this is very important to you, let me write it down ...
2. Please explain to me what you're asking ...
3. I think I understand, let me repeat it to you ...
4. Start from the beginning ...
5. Speak slower (or softer) so I can understand you then I can help you ...
6. Express that you want to find a solution that is 'good' for both of you. This will lessen the natural 'I must win' syndrome.

By using one or especially a combination of these or similar patented phrases, you will show the customer that you acknowledge his problem is important and that you are there to help.

### **Reasoning Scale**

In connection with "Acknowledging the Importance" it is essential to note that rational reasoning can not be present when heightened emotions are also present.

Rational behavior and emotions have to be balanced for normal reasoning to occur. The higher the emotions, the lower rational behavior becomes.

The passing of time helps balance emotions and rational behavior. Acknowledging importance and patented responses are examples of Slowing Techniques.

Other Slowing Techniques are:

1. Ask the person to sit while talking.
2. Allow the person to speak without cutting them off.
3. Repeat what the problem is in a slower and softer tone.
4. Ask questions in a slow and professional manner, speaking in soft tones. Don't fight fire with fire. Don't yell back or try to out-shout them or order them to calm down.
5. Take time to document the problem but do not drag this out.

Many emotionally charged incidents are due to people failing to interact effectively. These people are worried, under pressure, under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. When these conditions occur they suddenly lose their ability to communicate and cooperate. You must learn to calm these individuals with your verbal skills, displaying empathy and a true belief that you can assist them.

Even with best intentions, joking or trying to make light of a situation during an emotional time could often be seen as belittling or an insulting. Sarcasm is also sure to upset an emotional individual.

Never take away a person's dignity. Do not belittle them or force them to bend to your will; by doing so you may force them to higher levels of disobedience, or in extreme cases into violent behavior.

### **Reality Based Attitude**

Studies of confrontations against employees revealed:

- Most People experience warning signs of an imminent attack or were aware of existing motivation that could result in an attack.
- Even when sudden violence does occur, the employee's fate is not hopeless if the employee has realistic training.
- In an overwhelming number of cases of violence against hospital employees, serious injury could have been avoided if:
  1. They had understood the dynamics of human confrontation.
  2. They had made an accurate risk assessment of the subject.
  3. They had made tactical plans for verbal/physical confrontation.
  4. They had known and practiced appropriate de-escalation skills.

### **Policies and Procedures**

Be sure you thoroughly know your duties and responsibilities. Under stress creative thought diminishes. Knowing your office's policies and procedures, and your specific job responsibilities, will assist you in setting context, instructing, and providing options to difficult individuals. Thorough policy knowledge will also help you maintain composure and sound thinking during high stress incidents.

Consider having copies of written directives with you so you can refresh your memory. They may even be beneficial to show doubting customers in certain situations.

Knowing and following policies and procedures will also assist with establishing uniformity. It is difficult to try to enforce a certain rule if others in your similar position enforce the same rule differently. Uniformity lessens the opportunity for conflict, and conflict can lead to violence. Uniformity also helps with satisfying the expectations of those you frequently interact with.

### **Self-Critiquing & Post Incident Debriefing**

Self-Critiquing is a powerful tool for improving your communication skills. After a particularly positive or emotional encounter with a customer or colleague, ask yourself what techniques you used to make the conversation flow well or conversely how you could have handled the situation better. Much of our jobs are basically repeat actions. By self-critiquing we can continue to improve our ability to interact with others.

The lessons learned from a serious or unique situation should be shared with colleagues. This will better enable all members of the office to safely handle similar situations should they occur in the future. Often policies and procedures are changed or modified after a serious incident thus necessitating the need for training. A Post Incident Debriefing can be an ideal time for both sharing information about the incident and educating employees about any new or modified policies. Post Incident Debriefing can be done in groups, one-on-one with a supervisor, and even through bulletins (if appropriate).

## **Safety Strategies for Employees**

### **Watch for signals that may be associated with impending violence:**

1. Verbally expressed anger and frustration.
2. Body language such as threatening gestures.
3. Signs of drug or alcohol use / intoxication.
4. Signs of emotional instability or bizarre behavior.
5. Increasing anger in a particular situation.
6. Presence or the possibility of a weapon.
7. History of violence in the past.

### **Maintain behavior that helps diffuse anger or violence:**

1. Present a calm and caring attitude.
2. Don't match their threats. Keep your composure and professionalism.
3. Acknowledge the person's feelings (for example, "I know you are frustrated").
4. Avoid any behavior that may be interpreted as aggressive (for example, moving rapidly, getting too close, touching, or speaking loudly).
5. Evaluate each situation for potential violence when you enter a room or begin to interact with a patient or visitor.
6. Be vigilant throughout the encounter. Keep your guard up at all times.
7. Don't isolate yourself with a potentially violent person. When appropriate summons assistance (tactical statements).
8. Attempt to keep a barrier between you and the individual, but don't become 'trapped'.
8. Always keep an open path for exiting – don't let the potentially violent person stand between you and the door. Move throughout the encounter if needed.

### Color Codes of Awareness

- **White** - Completely relaxed (extremely safe environment).
- **Yellow** - Increased alertness, aware of surroundings, attention to the task at hand.
- **Orange** - Recognizing possible or obvious danger, avoidance techniques starting, planning for escape from the encounter, "verbalizing" (calling attention to yourself).
- **Red** - Executing the "Orange" plan, actively escaping or defending.
- **Black** - Crippling fear and blind panic - usually due to no training and/or disbelief in the situation (This can't be happening to me!).

### Early Warning Signs of Potential Attack

1. Intuition - If it doesn't feel right it probably isn't.
2. Stalking / Following - Especially after you've tried to avoid the subject.
3. Annoying / Inappropriate Comments.
4. Unwanted solicitation of assistance.
5. A person does not obey your commands to "stop" or "stay away".
6. Stranger who is constantly looking around while talking to you
7. Ignoring You / the "No Look" Syndrome
8. Repeating Questions
9. Feigning Injury
10. Physical crowding
11. Violent / Bizarre Behavior - Exaggerated Movements and/or Shouting
12. Physical Damage / Hitting or Kicking Objects (objects can be dangerous)
13. Target Glances
14. Obvious fighting mannerisms - Clenched Fists / Actual Threats



### **Protection Tactics**

1. Distance – try to keep a 4 – 6' minimum distance from the individual.
2. Watch the hands
3. Consider the physical layout of the environment and the furniture
4. Covert Protective Stance – hands up and brace-foot back
5. Power Zones – do not stand directly in front of the individual
6. Be careful of turning your back to an upset individual. Consider the '2-step Turn' technique.
7. Barriers and Obstacles – Physical objects can be dangerous
8. Prepare Escape Phrases
9. Escape Routes – you can move around to better your position
10. Safe Area – Know where you would flee to for safety and to call for assistance. Have one or two back up locations pre-identified
11. Communication – Have a cell phone on you and preprogram emergency contacts
12. Documentation

### **The 'Next Step'**

*Know what to do before you need to know it.* Know what to do when a specific situation occurs. Have emergency numbers pre-programmed in your phone. Know who your supervisor is and how to contact him or her. Know who to call and in what order. Think about foreseeable incidents and ask questions about what you should do. Playing the 'What If' game is an effective training tool. Discuss these plans with co-workers (include new & 'floating' employees)

**Develop safety defaults before they are needed and establish what the triggers are that must make you act. Use the flag system which is three things that seem wrong or inappropriate are a trigger to take personal action towards safety!**

### **6-Step Safety Plan**

1. STOP – Listen for a few seconds
2. LOOK – Look at the area you are about to enter, or through the window
3. OPEN/KNOCK – See the / listen for the response
4. LOOK – ‘Eyes and hands’
5. INTRODUCE – Evaluate the response
6. DECIDE – Your next step / physically where are you going

### **Security Department**

1. Become familiar with Officers and their protocols (‘frequent checks’)
2. Notify Security at the first sign of potential danger (Earlier than Later)
3. Update Security with changing information
4. If possible, conduct an after-action meeting (to prevent future incidents or to heighten mitigation techniques)

## **Basic Self Defense**

1. **Overview**
2. **Safety Rules**
3. **Participation in any and all parts of the program is strictly voluntary**
4. **Decision to Fight / Decision Not to Fight**
  - "Next Step" Procedures – Agency Policies
  - "The best fight is the one not fought" – Avoidance Techniques!
  - Candid assessment of your skills
  - Candid assessment of the situation
  - Options – Alternatives
  - "Why?!" (could I/am I being hurt) - "What Else Can I Do?!" - "How Can I Get Immediate Help?!"
  - No Guarantees – Complete and Fully Dedicated Effort
5. **Legal Issues**

A person is allowed to use reasonable force in self-defense when it is necessary to protect against physical harm. Look at the totality of the situation.

  - Attack Occurring
  - Reasonable Belief Attack was Imminent
  - Personal Safety is Actually in Danger
  - Reasonable Attempt to Avoid Physical Combat
  - No More Force Than Necessary to Stop Attack
  - Proportionate
  - Contact Authorities Immediately
6. **Stances / Balance**
  - Tug-O-War – Taking Over Space
  - Lowering Center of Gravity
  - Base Needed for Power and to Stay Standing
  - Power-Side Back 'Cocked for Power'
7. **Verbalization**
  - Breathing
  - Power
  - Attention
  - 'Verbal Stun'
  - Showing/Feeling Empowerment
  - Alarm for Assistance
  - Defeats the 'Stall'

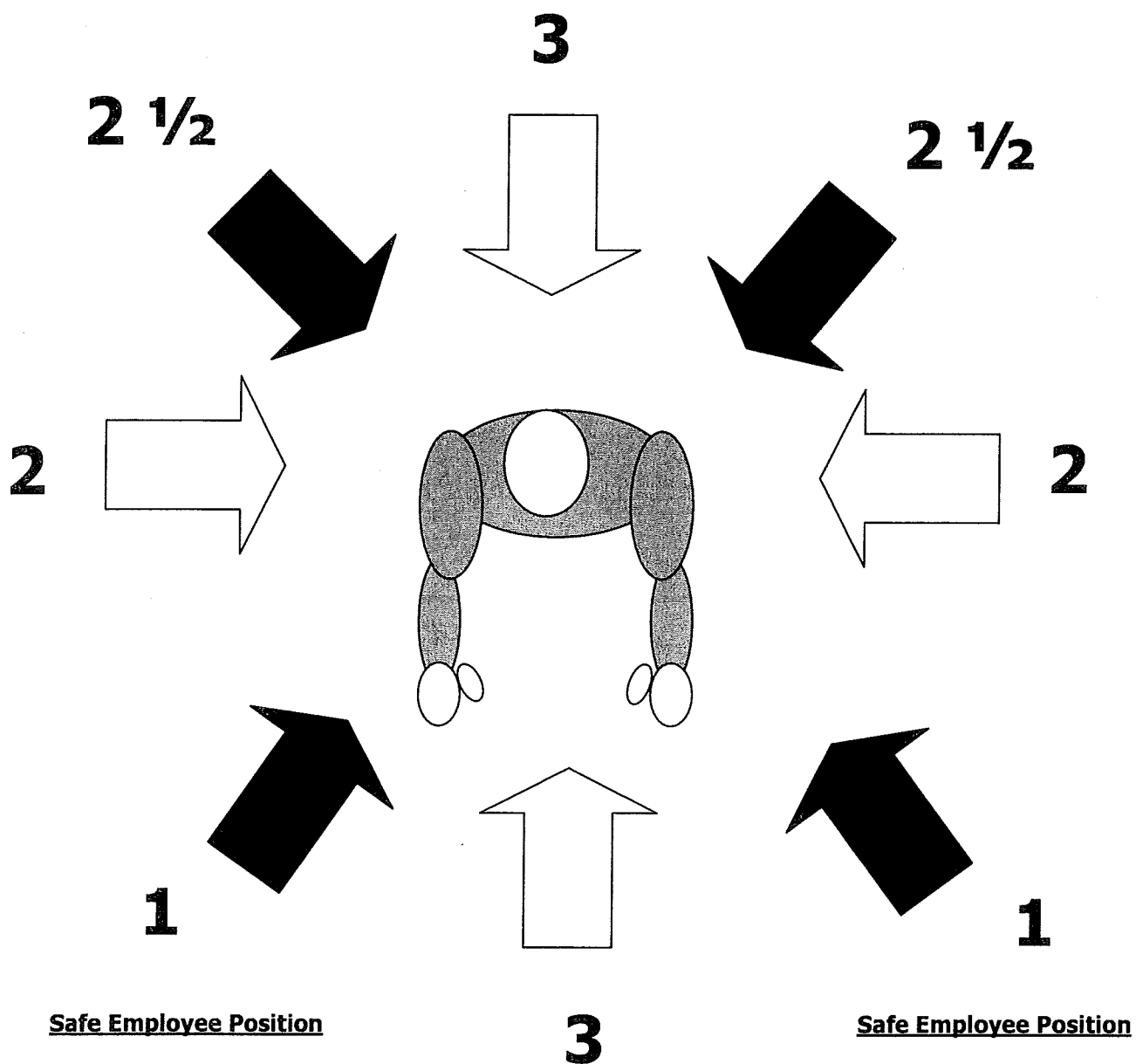
8. **Body Targets** (effective and proportionate target for the threat)
9. **'Fighting Principle'**
  - S** – Stop the Attack
  - H** – Hinder the Attack from Continuing
    - Very Basic "Gross Motor Skill" Moves / Recall Under Stress
  - E** – Escape to Safety
9. **Power Principles**
  - Body Shift
  - Hip Rotation
  - Fighting Distances
  - Striking 'Through Target'
  - Multiple Strikes
10. **'S' – Stop the Attack**
  - Turn to Attack / Balance and Power
  - Immediate 'Barrier-Stance' & 'Verbal Stun'
  - Blocks
11. **'H' – Hinder the Attack**
  - Hand Strikes (Palm-Heel / Close-Fist Punch)
  - Bottom (of foot) Halting Kicks
12. **Close Range 'S' & 'H' Techniques**
  - Elbows
  - Knees
  - 'Running Knees'
13. **'E' – Escape When Safe**
  - Shuffle Back
  - Evaluate
  - Go
  - Don't Stay and Fight
  - "Where Do I Go?"
14. **Combinations**
15. **Annoyance / Low-Threat Defenses**
  - Shuffle
  - Verbalize
  - Wrist Grabs (Body Move, Against Thumb Joint or Palm to Own Face, Slap)
  - Hammer-Fist

16. **Chokes / Grabs**
  - Keep Airway Open
  - Step and Widen
  - Scrape and Stomp
  - Seize
  - Low Hammer-Fist
  - Elbows
  - Rising Heel Kick
17. **Ground Defense**
  - Coiled Snake (protective position)
18. **Practical Application**
19. **Weapons**
  - Pros – Cons
20. **Review**
21. **Practice**
  - Safe Environment
  - Always Warm-up
  - Few Minutes / Techniques
  - Mental Rehearsal
  - Muscle Memory / Learning Curves
  - Candid Evaluation of Skills for Future Training
21. **Wellness Check**

## Safety Positions

### The Employee should:

- stay out of the **Inside Position** when approaching from the front.
- use the angles of **Position 1** when approaching from the front or when standing in front of an agitated individual.



## References

### References

Information contained in this training package has been originally designed and extracted from a number of sources. These extracted sources include:

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