



Dealing with Aggression

No one can say with any certainty what they would do if faced with difficult or stressful situations.

Many factors can affect the way you behave; from your own confidence and experience to how you are feeling on the day. There are no right or wrong answers but it will help if you think through the options ahead of time.

Be aware of changes in the behaviour in the person you are with, especially if you are discussing something that could result in an angry or irritated response. It is very rare for aggression or violence to come from nowhere.

Try to use your own communication skills to defuse a difficult situation early on, thinking how about how tone, volume and body language can help to create a calming atmosphere.

If the person you are with is getting angry, try to remain calm. It is best not to meet aggression with aggression.

Avoid entering the aggressor's personal space or touching them, as could make the aggressor feel threatened and can escalate the situation.

Beware of your own body language, adopting a neutral and non-threatening position to help create a calming atmosphere.

Remember:

- Trust your instincts
- Never underestimate a threat
- If you feel uneasy or alarm bells start ringing — act right away

If you cannot de-escalate the situation:

Get away from the aggressor.

Be assertive but avoid meeting aggression with aggression.

Use exit strategies — have a pre-planned way to excuse yourself from a difficult situation. *For example, you can't help them so you are going to get someone who can sort the problem out for them.*

Apply diversion techniques to distract them whilst you make your exit.

Use your voice — shout a specific instruction such as "Call the police!"

Use a Personal Safety alarm.

Remember, the earlier you spot a potential problem arising the more choices you have to avoid it.



Reporting and recording

There is no guarantee that you will be able to completely avoid violence and aggression in your working life. So it is important to know where you can go for help should you experience an incident.

Find out in advance what the reporting procedures are in your organisation and who to go to after an incident.

If something happens to you, tell your employer. By law they are expected to provide you with support and need to re-assess the risks so that they can put in extra control measures.

It is important to report near misses as well as actual incidents.

Self Defence

Physical self-defence should only ever be used as a last resort with the only purpose being to get away from your attacker.

Remember also that if you use excessive force, you could be legally liable for assault.

With thanks to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Visit <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/> for further information.