**Tips to Help the Individual You Support Defend Themselves**

This tip sheet of how to defend yourself can be provided to direct support professionals (DSPs) to review with the individuals they support.

**Danger Signs that You Might Be Harmed or Hurt**

- Someone grabs, holds, pushes, slaps or hits you.
- Someone touches or kisses you without you saying it’s okay.
- Someone yells, puts you down, or says hurtful things to you.

**Things that Help**

- **Make eye contact** — Look the attacker directly in the eye to say you are not afraid!
- **Breathe** — Take a deep breath and calm yourself.
- **Focus** — Focus on what to do to get to safety.
- **Get help** — Call 911, report it to the police, talk to your supporters, and/or get help from an abuse prevention center. Keep seeking help until you are safe.

**Defend Yourself**

Protect yourself when someone tries to hurt you. Here are some ways to defend yourself:

- **Surprise your attacker** — Don’t be quiet and let them hurt you. Surprise your attacker by making noise, saying “NO,” and/or walking or running away.
  - Remember, it’s NOT OK for someone to hurt you.
- **Give 100% effort** — When you defend yourself, do one thing at a time and do it with 100% of everything you have whether you yell or run away.
- **If all else fails, wait** — Let the situation progress, plan, and wait for a chance to get to safety.
- **As a last resort, defend yourself by physically fighting back** — Use your body “defenders” — your elbow, your heel, your fist, your voice, and your head. A wheelchair or a cane can also be used as a defender.
To get away quickly...

1. Aim for a place on the attacker’s body that will hurt a lot.
2. Look for a place on the body you can reach.
3. Distract the attacker so you can get to safety.

Here are Some Ways You Can Use Your Body to Defend Yourself:

- Hit the attacker in the ribs (between their chest and belly) **with your elbow**.
- **Use your heel** to stomp on the attacker’s foot.
- **Use your fist** to hit the attacker in the nose.
- **Use your knee** to hit the attacker in the groin.
- Use your heel to kick the attacker in the shin.
- If you have a wheelchair, **use your wheelchair** to run into the attacker’s legs.

References:

- [https://www.purdue.edu/timely-warnings/safety-tips/aggravated-assault.html](https://www.purdue.edu/timely-warnings/safety-tips/aggravated-assault.html)
- [https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/domestic-violence-disabilities-2/](https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/domestic-violence-disabilities-2/)