

The Protective Stance

In general, when staff approach an upset young person who is potentially violent, it is important for the adult to approach the young person from the side, with the adult's hands held out in front of the body in an open and protective manner, respecting the young person's personal space and positioning the adult in a balanced protective stance. The adult can follow the young person's movements, staying off-side and at a safe distance (at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres). It is important to avoid cornering or boxing in the young person. The protective stance position may be used while trying to de-escalate the young person or while waiting for assistance. If the young person swings, the adult can deflect the swing and step back into the protective stance or leave the situation. Minimal verbal interaction may be appropriate to help calm the young person.

1. **Assume a protective stance:** The adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out (Figure 1). The adult should stand at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 1).

GENERAL NOTE ABOUT THE SAFETY INTERVENTIONS SECTION

In all of the photographs that show safety interventions, the actor playing the child or young person is always wearing a white shirt; staff wear dark shirts.

Gender pronouns are used to reflect the gender of the actors performing the safety interventions in each photo sequence.



Figure 1

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Deflecting a Swing

1. **Raise arm and deflect swing:** If the young person threatens the staff by making a fist and taking a swing at the staff, the adult can raise their arm toward the ceiling and deflect the swing away using their forearm with their hand open (Figures 1, 2). Minimal verbal interaction may be appropriate to help calm the young person.
2. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5–6 feet/1.5–2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 3).



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

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Release Techniques

Grab Release—One Arm

1. **Make a fist:** The first thing the staff does when the young person grabs their arm (Figure 4) is to assume a balanced stance and make a fist (Figure 5).



Figure 4

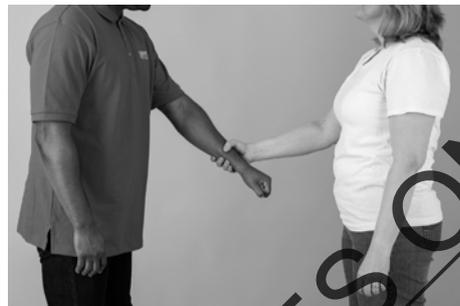


Figure 5

2. **Pull arm toward body:** Next, the adult turns their fist so that it is facing their body and pulls sharply out of the hold by bending their elbow and pulling their arm towards their body while stepping back (Figures 6, 7, 8).



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out (Figure 9). The adult should stand at least 5–6 feet/1.5–2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 9).



Figure 9

GENERAL NOTE: In all release techniques the immediate objective is to move quickly and make a clean break from the hold, step back and reassess the situation. Most likely, the adult will want to maintain a safe distance, use crisis co-regulation skills, and send for assistance.

Release Techniques, cont.

Grab Release—Two Arms

1. **Make a fist:** When the young person grabs the staff's arms with both hands (Figure 10), the adult assumes a balanced stance and makes a fist with both hands (Figure 11).



Figure 10



Figure 11

2. **Pull arm toward body:** Next, the adult turns their fists toward their body and pulls sharply out of the hold by bending their elbow and pulling their arm towards their body while stepping back (Figures 12, 13).



Figure 12



Figure 13

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The staff should stand at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 14).



Figure 14

Release Techniques, cont.

Grab Release—One Arm with Two Hands

1. **Grab fist:** When a young person has grabbed the staff's arm with both hands (Figure 15), the adult can break free by assuming a balanced stance and making a fist (avoiding the adult's palm facing downward). Then, with their other hand, the adult reaches between the young person's arms, grabbing their own fist. (Figure 16)



Figure 15



Figure 16

2. **Pull out:** The adult breaks the hold by dropping their elbow, pointing their fist toward the ceiling, and pulling out while stepping backward (Figures 17, 18).



Figure 17

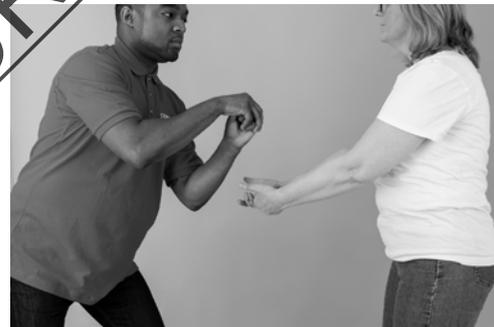


Figure 18

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 19).



Figure 19

Release Techniques, cont.

Release from Chokes (Front)

The important principles in releasing a young person's choke hold are: moving quickly, making a clean break from the hold, and taking advantage of the weakness in the young person's grasp.

1. **Raise arms:** The staff assumes a balanced stance, stands firm and does not struggle or pull away (Figure 20). To begin the release, the adult quickly raises both arms above their head on the outside of the young person's grasp (Figure 21).



Figure 20



Figure 21

2. **Turn away:** The adult turns into the young person's grasp while twisting their body and moving away (Figure 22). The force of the adult's twisting their body into the grasp will break the hold.



Figure 22



Figure 23

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 23).

Release Techniques, cont.

Release from Chokes (Rear)

1. **Raise arms:** The principles for releasing a rear choke are the same as those for the frontal choke. The staff assumes a balanced stance and raises their arms above their head, outside of the young person's grasp (Figures 24, 25).



Figure 24

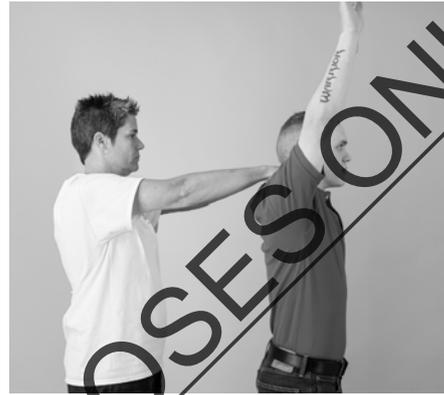


Figure 25

2. **Turn toward the young person:** The adult quickly turns around into the young person's grasp (Figure 26).



Figure 26



Figure 27

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 27).

Release Techniques, cont.

Release from Bar Arm Choke

Exploiting the weakness in the young person's grip, moving quickly, and making a clean break from the hold are still useful for releasing from a more secure choke hold, the bar arm choke (Figure 28). The weakness in this hold is at the young person's elbow or toward the young person's hands.

1. **Breathe and tuck:** The staff immediately assumes a balanced stance, takes a deep breath, and tucks their chin protecting their airway. The adult then turns their head and tucks their chin into the young person's elbow or toward the hands (Figures 28, 29).



Figure 28



Figure 29

2. **Push and pull:** The staff simultaneously pushes up on the bottom of the young person's elbow, and pulls down on the young person's hands (Figure 30). The adult then ducks down and pulls their head out from under the young person's arm and lets go (Figure 31). The adult should step out from under the young person's elbow hip first, and in a way that the inside of the young person's arm slides over the back of the adult's head.



Figure 30



Figure 31

CAUTION: When the adult ducks down and out of the grasp they should not overextend the young person's shoulder by pushing up too far on the elbow (Figure 31).

Release Techniques, cont.

- 3. Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 32).



Figure 32

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Release Techniques, cont.

Release from Bites

Being bitten by a young person is a frightening and painful experience. It is important to remember, however, that the greater the struggle, the more painful and damaging the bite is to the body. The first thing to do is to resist the impulse to pull out of the bite.

1. **Push into bite:** When the young person bites, the staff assumes a balanced stance while gently pushing their arm toward the young person, into the bite (Figure 33).



Figure 33

2. **Pull out:** When the young person releases the bite (i.e., the pressure of the bite is reduced as the adult pushes into the bite) the adult quickly pulls out of the bite (Figure 34).



Figure 34



Figure 35

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5–6 feet/1.5–2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 35).

NOTE: This is a difficult and potentially dangerous release. Do not execute it with excessive force.

Release Techniques, cont.

Release from Hair Pulls

Release from a hair pull whether the young person is pulling from the front (Figure 36) or back, takes advantage of the weakness in the young person's grasp. The weakness of this hold is at the young person's knuckles. It is important not to struggle or try to pull away.

1. **Raise arms and place hands:** The staff assumes a balanced stance, raises both arms above their head, and places one hand on top of the other (Figures 36, 37).



Figure 36



Figure 37

2. **Press down and rake away:** The staff presses down firmly on the young person's knuckles while bending forward (Figure 38). The adult then rakes the young person's hand away (Figure 39).



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5-6 feet (1.5-2 metres) away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 40).

NOTE: Obviously, this release will not work if the staff has long hair and the young person grabs the hair near the end. It is only when the young person's grasp is close to the head that this release will work. If the young person grabs long hair near the end, the adult can pull the young person's hand toward their head and try to execute the release. It is not as effective but it may prevent the young person from pulling painfully on the hair or dragging the adult around by the hair. Staff who have long hair, might want to wear their hair close to their heads, or tied up in order to be able to use this release more effectively.

Release Techniques, cont.

Breaking Up a Fight Technique

When two young people are fighting, two staff can intervene and separate them to stop the fight.

1. **Approach and obtain a hold:** The staff simultaneously approach each young person from behind, assuming a balanced stance and grasping hold of the young person's waist or hip area (Figures 41, 42).



Figure 41



Figure 42

2. **Turn:** Upon obtaining a hold of the young person, the staff turns the young person around, away from the other young person (Figures 43, 44).

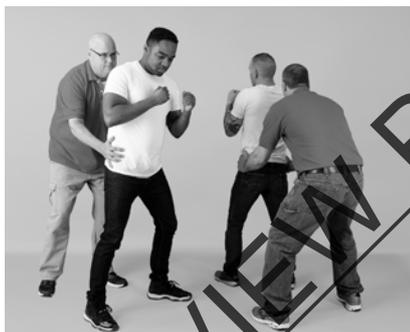


Figure 43



Figure 44

3. **Assume a protective stance:** The staff should always assume the protective stance once released. To do so the adult places their feet shoulder distance apart in a balanced stance and puts their hands up in front of their body with the palms facing out. The adult should stand at least 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres away at an angle from the young person, communicating a non-threatening message (Figure 45). **NOTE:** In Figure 45 the staff are shown too close to the young people. This is for photo purposes. It is important that each staff try to attain 5-6 feet/1.5-2 metres of space and remain facing the young person they moved. They should be using crisis co-regulation and giving a firm but caring statement for the young person to move away and talk with them.

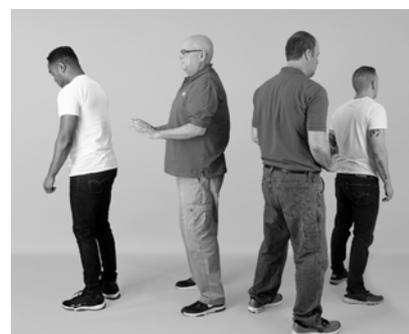


Figure 45

CAUTION: Do not fling the young person into a wall or furniture. Turning the person around is a controlled movement with a release once they are facing the opposite direction and their momentum is fully stopped.