

How to Respond to Violence Using the RAIN Model



The **RAIN** Model is four-step process developed by the [Community Safety Institute](#) in the 1990's after reviewing numerous school shootings throughout the decade. **RAIN** has been taught to thousands of people throughout the nation over the past two decades. It has been successfully used in order to minimize injuries and reduce victimization.

The **RAIN** Model for Responding to Violence

The **RAIN Model** has been developed for people to utilize if there is a crisis or conflict. **RAIN** is a great tool and model. **RAIN** is comprised of four primary elements:

- 1.) **RESPOND** refers to the necessity to do something, and not to freeze up.
- 2.) **ASSESS** refers to the teacher's ability to clearly determine the status of the offender, the physical set-up of the location, and the medical condition of victims, or the possibility of additional victims if the conflict escalates or violence continues.
- 3.) **ISOLATE** refers to separating the offender from victims or possible victims, and keeping a safe distance between teacher and offender.
- 4.) **NOTIFY** stresses the need to notify the proper authorities without delay.

Respond

The two most typical responses that we see from people during the role-playing exercise are that they either "freeze" or "freak out" and panic.

The **RESPOND** step emphasizes the importance of doing *something*. In violent situations, people look toward the adults for instruction and guidance. They must take control of the situation, stay calm, and above all else, remain safe so they can continue to lead and guide the process.

Be a leader, in a classroom or office space, people will be looking to you to see how you are reacting and will be following your lead. You must stay calm and assume leadership of the situation because, like it or not, everyone will be turning to you for guidance.

The most critical aspect of the **Respond** step is to remain safe. If you are not safe and if you expose yourself to danger, you have only aggravated the situation and not assisted anyone. On airplanes, flight attendants stress this principle when they announce "If we lose pressure in the cabin, place the drop-down mask over your face first before assisting others." In a nice way they are also saying you must be safe before you can help your children, spouse or anyone else.

In the police academy we stress the importance of officer safety by telling new recruits that if they don't arrive on the scene safely but instead have a wreck, they have not helped anyone and have actually made the situation worse because *they* have become victims themselves.

Before you can help others you must be safe and make good decisions about how to assist during a crisis. These are some key terms in the correct method of response:

Quick Safe Deliberate Calm Controlled Command

Assess

- **Assess the offender** – his actions, weapons, and history. Note his emotional state – is he calm and controlled, or frantic and out of control?

- **Assess the victims** – their medical needs and status, the potential of injury to others, and the need for immediate assistance.

- **Assess the location** – the building design (whether public area or isolated); the access to safety or help (doors and windows); communications systems available (intercom, radios); and available cover or concealment.

Though we have examined three separate aspects of the **Assess** portion of the **RAIN** Model, remember that this assessment should take only seconds. Prior time spent in assessing your surroundings, escape routes, exits, cover, or concealment will expedite this process in the event of a crisis.

Isolate

In the **RAIN** Model, “I” stands for **Isolate**. Once your assessment is completed, or if you are in harm's way as you are sizing up the situation, you will want to **isolate** yourself and/or others from harm. In such an instance, **isolate** refers to separating the offender from victims or potential victims, and keeping a safe distance between yourself and the offender.

Notify

Finally, **Notify** stresses the need to notify the proper authorities without delay. The old Red Cross rule of thumb is best here: make sure you send several different people to get help and notify emergency responders. You might tell one person to “Call 911,” another to “Call the police,” and a third to “Go get help.” This way you are specifically assigning someone to a task. Thus, the **Notify** step means to assign someone to go for help, or to call emergency personnel immediately.

Additionally, people may want to:

- Hit a panic button
- Open the intercom or campus radio system
- Call 911 on their cell phones
- Send a computer or text message

The key to **Notify** is to get the word out in as many ways as possible that you need help, and not to assume that someone else is calling on your behalf or asking for help.