



## **South Norwood and Thornton Heath Free Film Festival**

### **PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDE FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING AT A SNATH FFF EVENT**

October 2014

## PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDE FOR SNATH FFF VOLUNTEERS

### 1.0 **PERSONAL AWARENESS:**

There are lots of things we already do that keep us safe, but becoming more aware of our surroundings puts us in control of our environment. The following steps are recommended to all staff as being helpful.

### 2.0 **WHILST OUT AND ABOUT VOLUNTEERS SHOULD:**

**Trust their intuition and listen to their feelings.** If they sense something is wrong, it probably is and acting on intuition may prevent an aggressive situation.

**2.1 Be prepared.** Should a difficult situation arise contact the event lead or a Committee or Board member or ask another volunteer to assist you.

**2.2 Be observant.** Notice everything around you - exit doors, telephones, windows, sources of help. This will make you more aware of your surroundings and help you escape if you need to.

**2.3 Assess potential risks.** Avoid dangerous short cuts, walk facing the traffic on the street side of pavements, think about where you park your car and remember where you have parked it.

**2.4 Make sure you have all relevant information with you.** The address of the venue and the event lead contact number.

**2.5 Look confident.** "Walking tall" and being aware of your surroundings deters assailants.

**2.6 Never stay in a situation where you think you may be at risk.** Don't feel you have to stay because of your work. You can see the client, arrange the visit or do the interview again. You can ask a colleague to come in or be with you. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

**2.7 Be aware of personal space** - yours and others. Encroaching on other peoples personal space can make them aggressive. If other people are too close to you and making you uncomfortable, ask for more space or move away.

**2.8 Don't get into lifts with people who make you feel uneasy.** If you are in a lift and feel uncomfortable, get out and use the stairs, or wait for another lift. Make sure you know where the emergency button is and stand where you can reach it.

**2.9 Don't accept lifts in vehicles from people you have no reason to trust.**

**2.10 Think about what you are wearing.** Make sure you have comfortable shoes and clothing - in case you need to leave a situation quickly.

### **3.0 IN DEALING WITH AGGRESSION**

If you find yourself in an aggressive situation, you should

- 3.1 Try to stay calm** if someone is starting to get angry. Your body language, voice and response can help to defuse a situation. Take a deep breath, keep your voice on an even keel, and try to help.
- 3.2 Offer an angry person a range of options** from which they can choose the one they prefer. They will find it difficult to stay angry.
- 3.3 Do not be aggressive back** – as this can turn a turn a simple situation into a violence.
- 3.4 Are you the best person to deal with this situation?** Going to get someone else if often helpful particularly if they can solve a problem that you can't.
- 3.5 Get on the same level as the aggressor.** If they are standing so should you. It makes you feel less vulnerable and makes it easier for you to get away or fetch help if necessary.
- 3.6 Keep your balance and keep your distance.**
- 3.7 Do not touch someone who is angry.**
- 3.8 Don't let your escape route be blocked.**
- 3.9 Keep yourself between an escape route and an aggressor** so you can still get away.
- 3.10 If the situation is dangerous, then get away as fast as you can.** Never remain alone with an actively violent person.
- 3.11 If you cannot get away, then scream or use the panic alarm.**

## **4.0 REPORTING AND RECORDING**

- 4.1 All incidents of aggression or violence should be reported to management and recorded in the accident book.
- 4.2 Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe working environment. Volunteers should report any current or potential situation at a SNATH FFF event, which maybe or is a threat to personal safety. Talking about fear and other problems related to aggression or harassment are not marks of failure but good practice. A serious incident, even if it results in no physical harm, may cause feelings of fear, panic or despair which can carry on long afterwards. The management committee of SNATH FFF recognises this and will be disposed to provide whatever support, counselling or time off work seems appropriate.