

STRENGTHENING AND CENTERING FOR REFUGEE WOMEN

The Strengthening and Centering Workshop for refugee women is designed to focus on enhancing strength of spirit as well as core body strength to help refugee women handle aggression on the street, in the workplace, at home. The program helps women identify where they are already effective in defending themselves and keeping their families safe, while honoring their cultural backgrounds and gender hierarchies. The program was created to help refugee women feel confident and positive and integrating into a new community, and to gain a level of independence from their families to make it easy to navigate life as they find their place in their new home country.

The workshop is divided into four parts, based on the four principles of Islam:

Love **حُب**

Simple fun exercises the group does individually and in pairs, to illustrate where and how the body automatically defends itself in daily life (from crossing the street to not cutting themselves while cooking). This section introduces the idea that each participant is already an expert at being strong, defending herself, and surviving, affirming the power each woman already has but often doesn't see.

Peace **سَلَام**

This section introduces body movement as the foundations of self defense techniques. The movements are conducted slowly and deliberately, almost as if learning a dance. The slow movement is closer to yoga, and removes the stigma of women being aggressive or violent and simply focuses on balance and flow.

Life **الْحَيَاة**

This section includes simple exercises to connect to "center" -- which is the center of balance, as well as the center of power and the center of life. A brief meditation follows the exercise.

Wisdom **حِكْمَة**

The final section brings together all three previous elements and combines them into simple, but effective self defense techniques against common aggressions:

- The "hijab grab"
- Clothing pull or grab
- Wrist / arm pull or grab
- Hair pull
- Verbal aggressions

The techniques are tested out in a round, random attack scenario, to affirm the effectiveness of the techniques and the exercises that helped unlock them.

Designed by self defense experts, real-life witnesses, and medical professionals from inside refugee camps in Jordan and Berlin. For more information or to schedule a workshop, please contact team@prettydeadly.org.

Pretty Deadly Self Defense
<http://prettydeadly.org>

