

## De-Escalation Tips & Response

### Situational and Self Awareness

Awareness is the underlying state needed for safety.

#### Reflection is the first part to consider:

- What is going on around me?
- What could be used as a weapon?
- Is there anything unusual happening or suspicious behavior?
- Where is the nearest exit to get out of an adverse situation?
- What are my triggers and how can I manage them?

#### Basics:

- Get your ego in check. This is about keeping everyone safe, not winning.
- Trust your instincts
- Take all threats seriously
- Know how to get help before a situation arises
  - Use badge buddies for important phone numbers
  - Set speed dial on phones
  - Use of code words (e.g. "Dr. Strong")
- Arrange for help in advance for individuals with known behaviors
  - Buddy system
  - Security

### Communication

At a high level, communication is a process of exchanging information verbally and nonverbally.

#### Different types of communication to demonstrate:

- Verbal
  - Oral
    - Maintain a neutral and soft tone
  - Written
    - State facts
    - Use empathy
- Nonverbal
  - Body language
    - Maintain an open posture
    - Keep a minimum of an arm's length away from an escalated individual
    - Angle your body rather than facing individual directly
  - Face expressions
    - Relaxed expression
  - Eye contact
    - Soft, intermittent eye contact

### During an Escalation:

- Position yourself near the door when possible
- Establish rapport
  - Introduce yourself and your role
  - Ask their name
  - Ask questions
    - How is the individual feeling?
    - What does the individual want?
  - Actively listen
    - Validate feelings
  - Explain how you can help
    - Set limits and boundaries that are enforceable, clear, simple
      - Give options
      - Be flexible
      - State consequences
    - Answer reasonable questions
    - Redirect other questions back to the issue at hand
    - Don't make threats
- Allow time for the individual to reflect and to make decisions

### Additional Considerations for the Phone

- Tone of voice - smile
- Greeting
- Be professional
- Explain what you are going to do
  - Place on hold
  - Warm transfer to another department (Do not transfer an escalated individual)
- Try to de-escalate two to three times before disconnecting the call.

### Scripting for De-escalating Phone Calls

- "It sounds like you are \_\_emotion\_\_, and I ask that you treat me with respect."
- "I'd really like to help you with \_\_; to do so please refrain from \_\_cursing/yelling/discriminatory comments/etc.\_\_"
- Use "if, then" statements to set limits or boundaries and offer choices.
  - "If you stop making sexual comments to me, then I can focus on helping you with your needs."
- "Please don't use that type of language towards me. If it continues, I will need to: *disconnect the call/call security/ask you to leave or I will notify local police.*"
- Before disconnecting the call state, "If you are having a medical or psychiatric emergency, please call 911".

## Documentation

This information should be documented in the medical record. It can provide needed background information in case there are future workplace violence events.

## References

Public Domain: [PDF\\_DTHC.pdf \(crisisprevention.com\)](https://www.crisisprevention.com/PDF_DTHC.pdf)