

VERBAL DE-ESCALATION

Situations where both parties feel unheard are common, however, skills to limit these situations are not well known. These are some methods to prevent miscommunication from derailing a conversation.

SIGNS OF ESCALATING BEHAVIOR

- Arguing
- Bothering others
- Disruption
- Non-compliance
- Verbal abuse
- Off-task behavior
- Destruction of property
- whiny/crying
- limit testing
- threats and intimidation
- Escape/Avoidance

WHAT TO AVOID DOING IN THESE SITUATIONS

- Engaging in power struggles
- Becoming emotional involved
- Becoming ridged in the process
- Saying "I know how you feel."
- Becoming physical with the person you're speaking with.
- Display aggressive body language
- Attempting to intimidate the other person
- Raising your voice, making threats, cussing, or presenting ultimatums/demands

NON-VERBAL ELEMENTS TO VERBAL DE-ESCALATION

- Personal Space
 - It is important to respect the personal space of the person you're speaking with.
- Body Language
 - Finger pointing, rigid walking, and clenched teeth are all signs of aggressive body language. A smile and an open stance is more inviting.
- Para verbal
 - This includes tone, volume, and inflection. Where you emphasis in a sentence can change the meaning of the sentence.
- Listening
 - Three major listening skills includes attending (give physical attention), following (maintaining eye contact), and reflecting (paraphrase to empathize with the person you're talking to).

TIPS TO DE-ESCALATION

- Remain calm and take time to listen
- Avoid overreactions
- It is possible to show that you understand someone without agreeing with them
- Avoid onlookers. If this is not possible, relocating the conversation is your best option.
- Bring a trained individual when possible. Individuals tend to be less aggressive when talking to two people.