

De-escalating Challenging Behavior

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Biographies

- ▶ **Steve Hill** was born in the UK. While in London, he worked at a homeless shelter for men with AODA issues, at a group home for people with mental illness, and was manager of a drop-in center for people experiencing homelessness and other needs.
 - ▶ He has worked at The Guest House of Milwaukee since 2005, becoming manager of the award-winning Resident Manager Program, training homeless individuals to staff Safe Havens for people with severe and persistent mental illness.
 - ▶ He currently works as a SOAR Specialist, helping people with mental and physical health issues apply for disability benefits.
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Biographies

- ▶ **Ryan Hurse** has a background in educating and supervising Milwaukee's most vulnerable client groups, including the mentally ill, homeless adults and children.
- ▶ Ryan graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Education at Lakeland College in 2003. He worked with children at the St. Charles Youth and Family Services from 1997 to 2001, and as a Recovery Support Coordinator from 2005–2007 at the Women's Center.
- ▶ Ryan has been the Manager of the City of Milwaukee Community Resource Navigator and Groups Homes from 2006 to Present. He is a servant to the most challenging individuals in the city of Milwaukee.

Aims and Objectives

- ▶ Keeping yourself and others safe;
- ▶ Body language & awareness of your surroundings;
- ▶ Empathy & Rapport;
- ▶ Active Listening;
- ▶ Mental Health Crises;
- ▶ Do's & Don'ts.



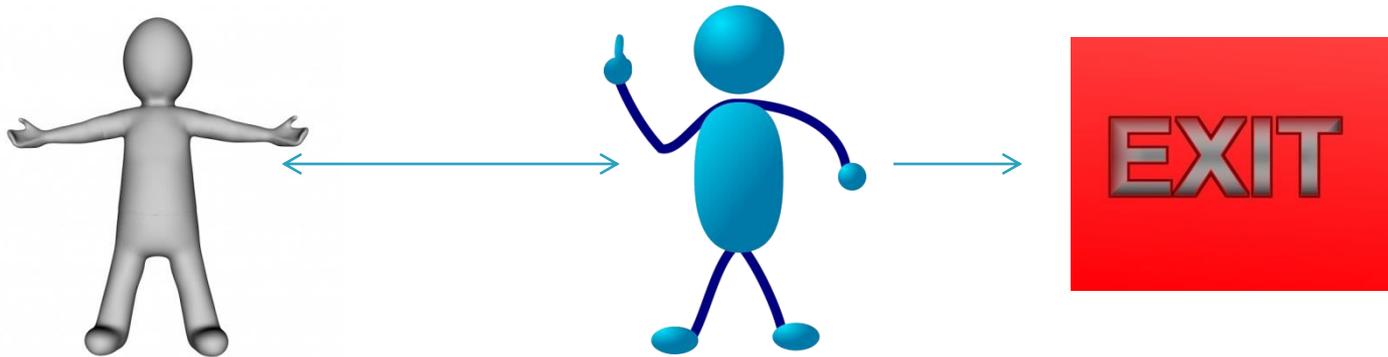
De-escalating Challenging Behavior is one link in an important chain:

- ▶ Boundaries
- ▶ Professional Language
- ▶ Understanding Mental Illness
- ▶ Anger Management
- ▶ Teamwork



Initial contact

- Does someone know you are with this client?
- Who is the best person to de-escalate this client?
- What techniques might work best with this client?
- Know your exit.
- Keep your distance.
- Be aware of your body language.
- Are alcohol/drugs a factor?
- Is there anything that can be used as a weapon within reach?



Initial contact

- ▶ Do not crowd the client.
- ▶ Avoid an audience.
- ▶ Ask other people to leave, or take client somewhere more private and safer.
- ▶ Have a back-up close by, if possible.
- ▶ When in doubt, leave.



Body Language

- ▶ Move slowly and deliberately.
 - ▶ Keep your hands visible.
 - ▶ Do not 'Square Up' to client; stand at an angle.
 - ▶ Do not stare at client.
 - ▶ Do not stand over client.
 - ▶ If you are sitting and client is standing, move chair backwards slowly to stand up.
 - ▶ Edge towards an exit if necessary.
 - ▶ Encourage client to go outside with you if possible.
 - ▶ If you feel unsafe, leave.
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De-escalation skills

- ▶ Mirror calm.
- ▶ Slow down & assess.
- ▶ Be quieter than the client.
- ▶ If necessary, state your name and organization.
- ▶ Ask for the person in crisis' name.
- ▶ What is your role? Be clear.



Introduce yourself

- ▶ My name is _____
 - ▶ I work for _____
 - ▶ I would like to help.
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De-escalation response

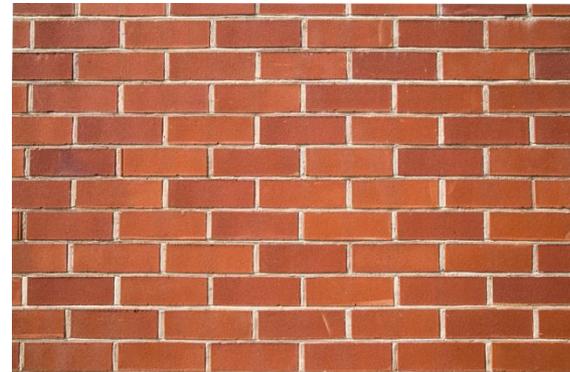
- ▶ Do not be judgmental about inappropriate language, dress or actions.
 - ▶ Do not take suggestive or offensive talk personally.
 - ▶ Understand that the person does not usually act this way and is in a medical crisis (ie. is not in control of their actions, is very vulnerable and could end up getting hurt.)
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Empathy

- ▶ Empathy is not sympathy.
- ▶ Empathy implies identification with an understanding of another's feelings.
 - It is not necessary to have experienced their situation to “feel exactly what they feel” to provide empathy.
- ▶ Empathy builds trust and rapport.
- ▶ Your tone indicates your attitude.
 - A calm, controlled demeanor may be more effective than a brilliant argument.

Empathy and Building Rapport

- ▶ Set boundaries and give clear directions.
- ▶ Examples:
 - “I won’t be able to help you if you use language like that.”
 - “I need you to stand back while we’re talking.”



Empathy and Building Rapport

- ▶ Be careful of what you say and how you say it so it is not misinterpreted.
 - ▶ Examples:
 - “I understand how you feel.”
 - “I can help you get what you want right now.”
 - “You can call me anytime.”
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Phrases that can help build rapport

- ▶ “I can see this really upsets you.”
- ▶ “I can tell you are disappointed.”
- ▶ “I’m sorry that happened to you.”
- ▶ “I’m trying to understand, but I need your help.”
- ▶ “Let me listen to you first.”



Active Listening



- ▶ Being able to restate the other person's position and emotions in a way that the other person hears as non-judgmental and accurate.
- ▶ It is an opportunity to display understanding.

Active Listening

- ▶ Separate the person from the problem.
- ▶ The emotions they display may be more important than what they are saying:
 - Frustration
 - Anger
 - Fear
 - Paranoia
 - Confusion
 - Depression
 - Feeling disrespected
 - Not being listened to



Active Listening

- ▶ Ask open-ended questions: “Tell me more about what happened before I arrived.”
 - ▶ Don’t allow the client to steer the conversation back to inappropriate or irrelevant topics, eg. previous issues they have had with their case manager, etc.
 - ▶ Keep them focused on helping you understand and how you can help them.
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What do we actively listen for?

- ▶ The information the person possesses.
- ▶ The emotions behind the current challenging behavior.
- ▶ Opportunities for us to display understanding.



Active Listening – Process

- ▶ Listen to the person.
 - ▶ Acknowledge their point (this does not mean you have to agree with it).
 - ▶ Find a common ground.
 - ▶ Agree when you can.
 - ▶ Create a positive atmosphere for problem solving.
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Active Listening – Approach

- ▶ Let them vent.
- ▶ Let them see you hearing them as they speak.
- ▶ People want to be understood.
 - Active Listening is the most effective concession you can make.



Demonstrating understanding

- ▶ Encourage them to go on.
 - ▶ Make the person feel listened to and respected.
 - ▶ Active Listening can help to diffuse negative feelings and reinforce positive feelings.
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Active Listening techniques

▶ Emotional Labeling

- Respond to the emotions heard, not the content.
- Example: “You sound really angry about that.”

▶ Paraphrasing

- Give the story back to them in your words. (Do not ‘parrot’ them.)
- Example: “Are you telling me..? ... Are you saying..?”

▶ Mirroring

- Repeating back the last word or phrase they just said.
- Example: “She said she was going to leave with your grandson?”

Remember:

- ▶ Your tone, demeanor and projected sincerity are more important than any single phrase, whether good or bad.

- Be genuine.
- Be non-threatening.
- Demonstrate understanding.



Phrases that damage rapport



- ▶ “Calm down.”
- ▶ “You should” or “You shouldn’t..”
 - These are examples of advice–giving statements that can create feelings of being ‘put down’.
- ▶ “I understand.”
 - This is a phrase used to silence people. You may not completely understand their experience.

What not to do

- ▶ Lie or deceive.
- ▶ Promise something you cannot do.
- ▶ Get drawn into an argument.
- ▶ Violate their personal space.
- ▶ Raise your voice.



Mental Health Crises: What to do

- ▶ Be calm, patient and treat the person with respect, empathy and understanding.
 - Individuals with mental illness are not necessarily more likely to be dangerous, but may be a greater danger to themselves.
 - ▶ Minimize stimulation.
 - ▶ Ask short, concrete questions.
 - ▶ Use simple explanations and instructions.
 - ▶ Point out options available to them.
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Mental Health Crises: What not to do

- ▶ Laugh at a person's delusions or hallucinations.
 - ▶ Agree with a person's delusions or hallucinations.
 - ▶ Disagree with a person's delusions or hallucinations.

 - ▶ Instead, remind them they are safe and use deflection, eg. "Have you eaten today? Do you want to go outside to smoke?" etc.
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Remember:

- ▶ You will make mistakes. You will say the wrong thing at some point. It's OK.
- ▶ Let someone else take over if necessary.
- ▶ If their behavior is not de-escalating, leave.



Notifying the Police

- ▶ If the situation is unsafe, the client threatens you, someone else or themselves, leave and call 911.
 - ▶ Utilize your organization's policy – call your supervisor, write incident log, etc.
 - ▶ When calling the Police, request a Crisis Intervention Team officer if possible.
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Other training opportunities

- ▶ Boundaries
- ▶ Professional Language
- ▶ Understanding Mental Illness
- ▶ Suicide Prevention
- ▶ Anger Management
- ▶ Teamwork
- ▶ Sexual Harassment
- ▶ CPR & AED overview



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