

Quick Guide to Verbal De-escalation Tactics

Verbal De-escalation tactics that are non-physical skills used to prevent a potentially dangerous situation from escalating into a physical confrontation or injury.

Verbal De-escalation Tactics:

- Simply listening
- Distracting the other person
- Re-focusing the other person on something positive
- Changing the subject •Use humor (sparingly) to lighten the mood (be very careful with this!)
- Motivating the other person
- Empathizing with the other person
- Giving choices
- Setting limits De-escalating Effectively

To verbally de-escalate another person, you must open as many clear lines of communication as possible.

Both you and the other person must listen to each other and have no barriers.

Barriers to Communication are the things that keep the meaning of what is being said from being heard.

Communication Barriers:

Pre-judging

Not Listening

Criticizing

Name-Calling

Engaging in Power Struggles

Ordering Threatening
Minimizing
Arguing

De-escalating Positively

Use positive and helpful statements such as:

“I want to help you!”

“Please tell me more so I better understand how to help you.”

“Let’s call Mr. Smith ... I know he would be able to help with this...”

“Ms. Jones handles this for our district, let’s ask her what she thinks about this situation ... She is always willing to help!”

Put yourself on his/her side of finding a solution to the problem.

Be an empathic listener

Do NOT be judgmental.

Do NOT ignore the person or pretend to be paying attention.

Listen to what the person is really saying.

Re-state the message.

Clarify the message.

Repeat the message.

Be empathetic!

Validate -- “I understand why...” (Not in agreement with...)

Try to establish rapport with the other person

Notification and Follow-up

Always report minor situations.

Minor situations can be a “cry for help” and/or “warning signs” of bigger things to come!

Minor situations can lead to major situations.

After any confrontation, advise or direct the person to counseling, if possible.
Always document every threatening event.
Documentation will help all parties when evaluating re-occurring events.