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## De-escalation Skills

### **“Acknowledging the Importance”**

Many people create disturbances or are uncooperative because they want to emphasize the fact that their issue is important to them. Sometimes this has no direct relationship to the actual size or relevancy of the issue itself.

To effectively respond to individuals exhibiting symptoms of stress, anger, or other emotions, and develop patented responses like:

- I understand that this is very important to you, let me write it down ...
- Please explain to me what you're asking ...
- I think I understand, let me repeat it to you ...
- Start from the beginning ...
- Speak slower (or softer) so I can understand you then I can help you ...

By using one or especially a combination of these or similar patented phrases, you will show the person that you acknowledge their problem is important and that you are there to help.

## Reasoning Scale

In connection with “Acknowledging the Importance” it is essential to note that rational reasoning cannot present when heightened emotions are also present. Rational behavior and emotions have to be balanced for normal reasoning to occur. The higher the emotions, the lower rational behavior becomes.

The passing of time helps balance emotions and rational behavior. Acknowledging importance and patented responses are examples of slowing techniques.

Other slowing techniques are:

- Ask the person to sit while talking.
- Allow the person to speak without cutting them off.

- Repeat what the problem is in a slower and softer tone.
- Ask questions in a slow and professional manner, speaking in soft tones. Don't fight fire with fire. Don't yell back or try to out-shout them or order them to calm down.
- Take time to document the problem but do not drag this out.

Many emotionally charged incidents are due to people failing to interact effectively. These people are worried, under pressure, under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. When these conditions occur they suddenly lose their ability to communicate and cooperate. You must learn to calm these individuals down with your verbal skills, displaying empathy and a true belief you can assist them.

Even with best intentions, joking or trying to make light of a situation during an emotional time could often be seen as belittling or insulting. Sarcasm is also sure to upset an emotional individual.

Never take away a person's dignity. Do not belittle them or force them to bend to your will; by doing so you may force them to higher levels of disobedience, or in extreme cases into violent behavior.

## **The 8 Steps to Gain Compliance**

The following is a general template when dealing with Maybe or No People to gain compliance:

1. Identify yourself and give a greeting
2. Clarify the situation & ask appropriate questions
  - A. Repeat the situation if needed.
  - B. Do not take the situation personally.
3. Decide on a plan of action
  - A. Consider the next step options
4. Tactfully instruct
  - A. Never belittle the person you're speaking to or take away their dignity.
5. Set a context
  - A. Tell them why you have given them the directions or the instructions.
  - B. Make sure it's a professional or legitimate request.
  - C. 7 out of 10 Maybe or No people will comply at this point.

6. Present options
  - A. People under the influence of stress, anger, pride, fear or alcohol/chemicals will have tunnel vision or be inflexible.
  - B. You must calmly provide options and use slowing techniques to create time for these individuals to respond in a rational manner.
7. Confirmation stage
  - A. Many people say one thing and mean another.
  - B. Ask if the words they used are what they really mean.
  - C. Act positive and professional.
8. Appropriate closing

## **Violence Prevention Strategies**

**Watch for signals that may be associated with impending violence:**

1. Verbally expressed anger and frustration.
2. Body language such as threatening gestures.
3. Signs of alcohol and/or drug use.
4. Signs of emotional instability or bizarre behavior.
5. Increasing anger in a particular situation.
6. Presence or the possibility of a weapon.
7. History of violence.