

THE C.A.F. MODEL: TIPS FOR DE-ESCALATION

MODULE TWELVE

There are a number of evidence-based tactics for de-escalating a crisis (Klugiewicz, 2011; Richmond et al., 2012). Here we present tips for de-escalation within the context of the C.A.F. Model.

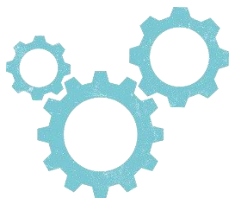


- Only one person verbally interacts with the individual at a time—more people may create confusion or may escalate the issue; if possible, you might clear the area of other incarcerated persons and non-essential staff.
- Respect the individual's personal space and use a non-confrontational posture—don't clench your fists or hide your hands, as this may create a threat.
- Keep your movements slow and your voice at a lower level than the individual's—avoid sudden movements and try not to raise your voice.
- Introduce yourself and your purpose—you are there to keep everyone safe, including the individual and others in the environment.



- Ask the individual what he/she is seeing and feeling—try to figure out the individual's perception of reality and orientation to time/place (e.g., "Can you help me understand..."); whether harm to self/others is imminent (e.g., "Are you thinking of hurting yourself..."); and whether there may be an issue with physical health, medications, or substance use.

- Use active listening to identify needs--acknowledge with body language and brief encouragements (e.g., "Okay," "I see") that you are paying attention; check that you understand by summarizing or paraphrasing what they are saying back to them (e.g., "Tell me if I have this right...").
- Validate the individual's perceptions when you can, or agree to disagree. Be simple and truthful. If the individual is experiencing delusions or hallucinations, instead of arguing, focus on what the person is feeling and acknowledge your willingness to help them (e.g., "I don't hear any voices, but I am willing to help you"). If you can find common ground to validate some of the individual's perceptions, then do so (e.g., "Yes, everyone ought to be treated with respect," "Other people would probably feel upset too...").



Facilitate

- Invite the inmate to help resolve the issue--this can help "save face" for the individual and provide him/her with a sense of regaining personal control.
- Keep your message short and simple, repeat as needed--this will give the individual ability and time to process what you are saying.
- Offer encouragement and hope about the future--focus on strengths, build hope that a resolution is possible and that things will get better.

