De-escalation “Crisis in the Workplace”

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A crisis occurs when a conflict or cluster of conflicts reaches a boiling point or critical phase that requires intervention to de-escalate



In most cases one type of conflict is nestled within another type of conflict and something has caused the conflict to reach critical /crisis point.



The goal should always be to resolve the interaction in the safest possible manner.



Always keeping in mind risk assessment the threat to yourself and others. (This is constantly evolving during your interaction)

- It is important to recognize that persons in crisis may be suffering from mental or emotional issues. The two are closely tied together and are more likely to occur in high-stress, crisis situations.
  (Job loss, homelessness, relationship trauma)

- Unhealthy thought patterns trigger emotional responses.

- As professionals, we are supposed to be able to regulate our emotions be it in the words we speak or the non-verbal cues we project to others.

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Approach to dealing with a person in crisis:

CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH	**DESTRUCTIVE APPROACH**
Less authoritative, Confrontational and controlling.	Give person no time to decide or opportunity to cooperate.
De-escalate the situation to where it can be managed.	Win or lose situation
Encourage respectful, reciprocal	Create a struggle for power

- The De-escalation process hinges on **effective communication**
- Gain/acquire/ generate voluntary compliance
- Increase public perception of professionalism
- Optics (Creates Witnesses)
- Reduce possibility of complaints
- Safety
- Reducing risk of physical altercations

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Social Influence Theory

People are more likely to comply with someone they believe to be:

- Willing to listen
- Worthy of respect
- Understanding
- Non-threatening



- To be able to use verbal techniques effectively, a person must first be able to listen effectively. Effective listening is best achieved through active listening.

- The ability to listen actively can improve personal relationships through reducing conflicts, strengthening cooperation, and fostering understanding.

- People in crisis want to feel that they are understood. Listening demonstrates empathy. It also helps you assess the crisis at hand and provides valuable information of the direction things may go or how to steer them in a positive direction.

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PAY ATTENTION



Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the message. Recognize that your physical cues also "speak loudly"



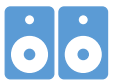
Look at the speaker directly.



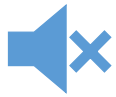
Put aside distracting thoughts.



Eliminate unnecessary environmental factors.



"Listen" to the speakers physical cues.



Refrain from side conversations with other staff unless necessary.



Ensure your own physical cues show you are fully engaged.

SHOW YOU ARE LISTENING

Use your body language and gestures to convey your attention.

- Use minimal encouragement (e.g. nod occasionally)
- Smile occasionally if appropriate and use other facial expressions.
- Note your posture and ensure it is open and as reassuring as possible.
- Give the person time to speak. -The pregnant pause-

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Minimal Encouragers

- Short word encouragers showing you are listening like **“YES” or “NO”**

Paraphrasing:

- “You are struggling right now.”
- “You’re finding it hard to make ends meet.”
- “You’re going to lose it if someone doesn’t help you.”

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Summary of Statements

An overall review to recap main ideas and facts.

- “Let me make sure I got this right. You are going through a break-up and you have no money.”

- “You owe a lot of people money and are feeling helpless.”

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Reflect the emotion when appropriate

Reflecting feeling and meaning allows individuals to attach a tentative label to the feeling expressed or implied by the subject words and actions.

This requires 3 steps:

- Identifying the emotion.
- Identifying the emotion back to the person in crisis.
- Validating the accuracy of the emotion with the person in crisis

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Open ended questions

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- Ask the **“who what where when** and **why”** questions

- Encourage dialogue and build a relationship

This will provide you with the facts and information you will need to move forward.

EMPATHY

Essential in de-escalation……..

- **Listening-** for emotion and facts to ascertain and affirm experience/situation

- **Validation –** even if you do not believe it to be true, the individual in crisis does.

What do I do when communication breaks down?

- Communication can break down, so it is important to re-establish open lines by going back and re-building to the positive point you had reached together.
- Important to use words like **WE** and **TOGETHER.**
- This makes the individual feel like they are not alone in this.
- Never make promises you can’t keep but you can say “**TRY"**

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Judgement

- It is imperative to leave our judgements at the door when dealing with a person in crisis.

- This can impact our interactions in a very negative way. We all carry some type of biases, it is important to recognize them and not bring them to work with us.

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Emotional IQ

Important for De-escalation

- The demonstration of competencies that constitute **self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills** at appropriate times and in ways of sufficient frequency to be effective in the situation.

KNOW YOURSELF!

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Why is it important to possess the skills and training for de-escalation?

- Across North America, several changes have led to the frequency in which people in all professions are being confronted by situations that require the de-escalation of a person in crisis.
- A shift from institutionalized care to community–based care has resulted in more persons with mental illness in the community.
- The reality is community supports are not able to keep up with the increased need.
- Many Canadians do not have access to the support services needed.

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Safety in your workplace

- Some offices have staff that are specifically trained to deal with persons who are in crisis. CMHA offers courses at different times that help individuals deal with people in crisis and may benefit your organization.

- If you know individuals coming to your office that may be unpredictable, contact the police and advise them so they are aware in advance. This can result in quicker response times and increased safety.

- If there is familiarity with the individual and there is a positive relationship with another employee utilize this to your advantage.

- Office setup can play a role also, ensure your access to an exit can't be blocked.

- At the point in which a situation escalates beyond your control, contact the police.

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QUESTIONS/CONCERNS?

Corporal Tim Keizer

Charlottetown Police Services

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