

# De-Escalation of People Experiencing a Psychiatric Crisis

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# Why are patients violent?

“Violence is the language of the unheard.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.



Violence Talks:

- To protect myself
- Gives me a voice
- Helps me control and dominate others
- Relieves my tension
- Makes me feel better

# Predictors of Violence

- Sex: Male
- Substance Abuse: Alcohol and Stimulants
- Socioeconomic: lower income
- Intelligence: <90
- Past history of violence
- Significant change in behavior
- Increase in Gross Motor Activity (i.e. large muscle groups)

# Predictors of Violence

- Past history of violence
  - Types, frequency
- Significant change in behavior
- Increase in Gross Motor Activity  
(i.e. large muscle groups)

# U.S. Adults with a Mental Disorder in Any One Year

Type of Mental Disorder	% Adults
Anxiety disorder	18.1
Major depressive disorder	6.7
Substance use disorder	3.8
Bipolar disorder	2.6
Eating disorders	2.1
Schizophrenia	1.1
<b>Any mental disorder</b>	<b>26.2</b>

# What's the first step?



# Effective Communication: making people feel **safe, feel heard**

# Communication Techniques

“Listen” vs. “Talk”

80% Listen -- 20% Talk

Let the person have the  
opening words while you

LISTEN

# Use a Non-Judgment Attitude

- Be accepting.
- Do NOT inject your values into the situation.
- Focus on the person's feelings, values, life styles and opinions.
- Validate feelings, not behaviors.

# STRESS



Stress: Difficulty that causes worry or emotional tension

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# Use Active Listening Skills

## Emotional Labeling

- The intent of emotional labeling is to respond to the emotion heard in the person's VOICE rather than the content
- For example use phrases like: "You seem" or "You sound..", "You look to me..." or "I hear that you are ..."

# Active Listening Cont'd

## Paraphrasing

- A summary in your words as to what they have told you
- Creates empathy, it shows you're listening and you understand
- For example: "Are you telling me...?" or "Are you saying...?"
- Use the same terminology as the subject

# Active Listening Cont'd

## Reflecting/Mirroring

- Simply repeat the last word or phrase the person said and say it in the form of a question
- Provides the person with exact feedback that you are listening
- Guides the person to further explain

# Active Listening Cont'd

## Use Silence

- An effective pause is silence
- Most people are uncomfortable with silence and will fill it with talk (12 seconds!)
- Remember, if they talk we get more information, with information comes the ability to resolve a conflict

# Effective Communication

## Use open-ended questions

- These questions cannot be answered with a yes or no response
- Usually begins with words like “How” “When” “What” or “Where” (avoid “Why”)
- It helps to get the person talking
- It focuses the discussion on the person’s feelings

# Communication Cont'd

## Use "I" messages

- Shows the person how you feel and why you feel that way and how they can change to remedy the situation
- You want the behavior to change not them

# Communication Cont'd

- Use the formula: “I feel (emotion) when you (behavior) because (your reason) and I would like you to (behavior).”
- For example: “I feel (frustrated) when you (yell) because (its hard for me to talk with you) and I would like you to talk with me so we can resolve this.”

# Communication Cont'd

## Creating an Alliance

- People do not assault their allies
- People do not get assaultive if they feel they are being treated respectfully
- Use “we” as much as possible
- “I hear that you’re frustrated. What can we do to make you more comfortable?”

# Communication Cont'd

- What you want has to be
  - Clear
  - Observable
  - Reasonable
- Paralinguistics – volume, tone, cadence etc.
- Forced choice – do you want a Valium or an Ativan?

# Non-Verbal Communication

- Nonverbal communication represents two-thirds of all communication (Hogan & Stubbs 2003)
  - **First impression**
  - **Posture**
  - **Clothing**
  - **Gesture**
  - **Eye contact**
  - **Movement and body position**

# What to Avoid

- Closed-ended questions make you work harder, make the person feel interrogated and makes establishing rapport difficult
- Name calling or being judgmental
- Yelling or Demanding (power struggle)
- Talking too much
- Giving Advice (Double Edged Sword)

# De-Escalation Techniques

- Validate the feeling

“ I understand how this is frustrating to you” \*\*\*\*\*(careful!)

- Match the intensity of volume

Use similar tone to match and bring it down...

think crowded restaurant

# De-Escalation Techniques

- De-Railments

- Fake Misunderstanding
- Purposeful Misinterpretation
- Soft Shock

- Reflective Statements

“Mr. X, I noticed you are pacing more than usual today?”

# Office Safety

- Where is your chair/desk?
- Where is the exit?
- Potential weapons...
- Emergency Procedure
- Code Words

# Questions

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