De-Escalation of People Experiencing a Psychiatric Crisis

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Why are patients violent?

“Violence is the language of the unheard.”

Violence Talks:

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

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Mental Disorder</th>
<th>% Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety disorder</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major depressive disorder</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance use disorder</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar disorder</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating disorders</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any mental disorder</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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”, “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
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
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
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.”
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?”

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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

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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?”

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Office Safety

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

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