



MONTANA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

Basic De-escalation

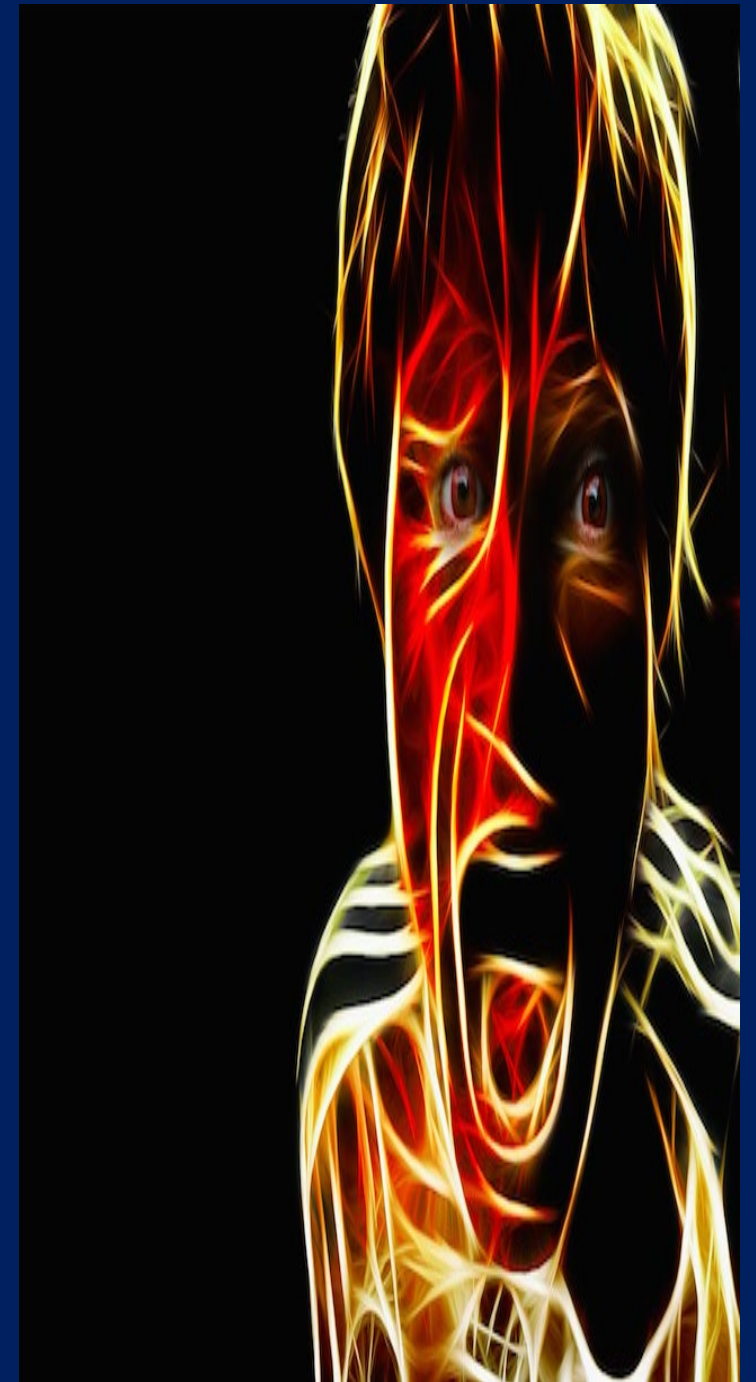
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Goals Of The Training

- Learn ways to keep situations from becoming dangerous
- Recognize your own triggers
- Know when and how to de-escalate highly charged situations
- Learn safe options when managing agitated people

Common Triggers

- Rejection
- Betrayal
- Unjust Treatment
- Challenged Beliefs
- Helplessness/ Loss of Control
- Being Excluded/ Ignored
- Disapproval/Criticism
- Feeling unwanted/ Unneeded
- Feeling Smothered
- Insecurity
- Loss of Independence



Recognizing Your Own Triggers

- Take a deep breath
- Try to remain calm and self-assured
- Use a low and slow communication style
- Give plenty of space

Keeping Situations From Escalating

- Do not turn your back
- Do not maintain constant eye contact
- Do not point your finger
- Do not touch
- Keep your hands out of your pockets

Keeping Situations From Escalating

- Move the conversation to a quieter environment
- Utilize Active Listening- LEAPS
 - L- Listen
 - E- Empathize
 - A- Ask
 - P- Paraphrase
 - S- Summarize

Active Listening

- **L- Listen:** Listening to the meaning of the words
- **E- Empathy:** Show an understanding to the person and try to put yourself into their situation
- **A- Ask:** Ask questions that will help you better understand
- **P- Paraphrase:** State the facts back to the person in your own words
- **S- Summarize:** Take the main points of the message and reiterate them in a clear and logical way.

Things To Remember

- Do not try to be the hero.
- Do not try to de-escalate when a person is brandishing a weapon or making threats of violence. In these cases, simply cooperate.

Five Universal Truths

1. All people want to be treated with dignity and respect.
2. All people want to be asked rather than being told to do something.
3. All people want to be told why they are being asked to do something.
4. All people want to be to be given options rather than threats.
5. All people want a second chance.

- Dr. George Thompson- creator of Verbal Judo

De-Escalation Techniques

- Identify yourself.
- Try to learn the person's name and use it often.
- Do not try to yell over the person. Wait until they take a breath.
- Explain limits and rules in an authoritative, firm, and respectful way.
- Do not argue.

De-Escalation Techniques

- Be aware of gender preferences- if possible.
- Avoid asking someone how they feel.
- Suggest alternative behaviors.
- Explain consequences of inappropriate behavior.
- Keep it professional- not personal.

Phrases To Avoid

- Calm Down.
- What's Your Problem?
- Come Over Here!
- I'm not going to tell you again.
- Because these are the rules.

Phrases To Consider Using

- Excuse Me, may I ask your name?
- What can I do to Help?
- I can see that you look very upset right now. May I ask what's going on?
- You Look Like A Reasonable Person.
- I am going to help you. I would just ask that you lower your tone of voice please.
- Would You Assist Me?
- Can You Work With Me?
- Let's find a solution together.

When All Else Fails

- Trust your instincts. If you feel the de-escalation attempt is not working... STOP!
- Tell the person to leave and explain the ramifications if they do not.
- There is nothing magical about talking someone in a crisis down. You are transferring your sense of calm, respectfulness, and clear limit setting to the agitated person in hopes they will respond positively.

Situational Awareness

- **Scan:** Most people automatically scan new situations or environments, but don't always focus on the most useful information
- **Exits:** Always be aware of your exits and have an exit strategy.
- **Personal Space:** If someone is crowding you, seems suspicious, or is displaying threatening body language, scan them for subtle signs of violent intent or a hidden weapon. Increase the distance between yourself and this person
- **Visualize:** Play out scenarios in your head beforehand. If you spot a situation in your immediate vicinity that could pose a threat, such as a blind corner on a sidewalk, ask yourself, "If there was a threat behind that corner, how would I react? Where could I escape?" Premeditating such responses can help them to become second-nature in the event of an actual emergency, making your response more effective.

Situational Awareness

- **Intuition:** Trust your gut. If you get the sense that something is wrong or doesn't add up, do not ignore it. *Your instincts exist to protect you* – it is always better to be overcautious than to ignore warning signs that turned out to be legitimate.
- **Speak Up:** Report all the following situations immediately to your supervisor report any suspicious persons, activity, or behavior. Even if there is not currently a dangerous situation or nobody has been injured.

Questions?

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