

De-Escalation Skills Part 1

Rural Teleconference for ACRF

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Definitions and info provided at start of Teleconference:

Crisis: A turning point for better or worse, an unstable time in which a decisive change is impending, especially one with the distinct possibility of an undesirable outcome.

Aggression – as per Webster’s Dictionary: a hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior or outlook, especially caused by frustration.

Aggression is said to differ from violence in that aggression reflects conditions (stress, frustration, anger) that if left unresolved may culminate in violence.” (as per Summer and Smith – my MAB binder is packed for Muldoon’s training tomorrow so if you need to know who they are later, ask me. I forget their titles.)

Finally, Aggression is typically a combination of the following:

- Problem solving strategy
- Form of communication
- Result of multiple factors

Trauma – “Trauma occurs when an actual or perceived threat of danger [or loss] overwhelms a person’s usual coping ability.” –Beverly James

Though we also understand that “what is traumatic for one person won’t necessarily traumatize another.”

When individuals w/ trauma histories and backgrounds re-experience trauma, or are triggered by stimuli or situations around them, they may experience what MAB refers to as the “Trauma Response”



Crisis Wave and Our Response

Winding Up: Youth shows first signs of being upset

Signs:

- Increased Activity
- Repetitive Activity, like pacing
- Self-absorption, like muttering to themselves
- Uncharacteristic behaviors

Parent Response:

- Manage yourself
- Clarifying questions: What happened?
- Use Behavior Focus questions
- Listen
- Remove the source of agitation or the youth from the source of agitation
- Engage in simple relaxation
- Divert youth's attention
- Remind youth of safety strategies
- Use problem solving and conflict resolution skills
- Support them in taking a self-directed time out.

Agitation: Youth is losing control

Signs:

- Loud, Angry verbalization, or silence with a more physical agitation
- Questioning those in authority
- Inability to follow directives or requests
- Same behaviors seen in wind up-just more exaggerated and intense

Parent Response:

- Manage yourself
- Use surprise or humor
- Set limits and give choices
- Use the "Behavior Focus" questions
- Do not argue; staff authority is not an issue
- Acknowledge no one wants to make him or her do anything
- Remind youth of past success

Verbal Abuse: Youth has lost control but is not violent

Signs:

- Yelling, Screaming, or Cursing,
- Threatening Others
- Direct challenges to staff or other youth

Parent Response:

- Say little; make remarks to the point
- Do nothing, if appropriate
- Resist raising your voice/ refuse to argue
- Verbally/nonverbally blend; allow venting, if helpful
- Reassure
- Prepare for possible explosion; get help if needed

Explosion: Youth is out of control and physically violent

Signs:

- Hitting someone
- Kicking someone
- Self-harm
- Destruction of property

Parent Response:

- Manage own bodies and emotions
- Back off and get help, if possible
- Using physical blending techniques and the least amount of intervention necessary, intervene physically, if needed, to protect youth, yourself, and others

Let Down: Youth is no longer out of control

Signs:

May de-escalate slowly

Signs of physical and emotional exhaustion

Expresses remorse, fear, or gives excuses for behavior.

Parent Response:

- Support youth's efforts to gain control
- Let youth rest, if needed
- Re-establish contact with youth
- Assist them in re-entering the group
- Document the incident
- Follow up with debriefing steps