Keeping Everyone Safe:
Coping With and De-escalating Physical Crisis Situations

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For Each Child

• CRISIS IS CONFLICT THAT ESCALATES INTO AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION....

For Each Adult

...THAT CRISIS PRESENTS A TIME OF BOTH DANGER AND OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

“I'M READY TO TALK”

• At the time of crisis, not several days later people want to talk.
  The nature of crisis causes this conversation to be emotionally charged.
  The person is distressed, and their communication is often irrational.
  It can be hard to listen to someone who seems unreasonable, argumentative, and willful. They say or do things that challenge our basic values.
  The natural instinct is to correct their irrationality.

5 Reasons For Acting Aggressively/Offensively

1) Personal state of mind; angry & upset with “life”
2) They’ve had a past bad experience with students/teachers/school
3) They don’t know any other way to act when they are emotionally upset.
4) They are expecting the worst.
5) They only have part of the story.

Levels of Crisis Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Level</th>
<th>Staff Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANYTHING</td>
<td>SUPPORTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFENSIVE (resistant or threatening)</td>
<td>DIRECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYSICALLY</td>
<td>PHYSICAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTING OUT</td>
<td>PHYSICAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tension Reduction</td>
<td>Therapeutic Rapport</td>
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2/26/2019
**VERBAL ESCALATION**

- Questioning
  - Question the directive
  - Question anything & everything but the directive

- Recall: Total non-compliance

- Release: Total verbal expenditure of energy

- Tension Reduction: Requiring rationality after expenditure of energy

- Listen. Avoid "fuzzy" attention.

- Remain calm, avoid emotion

- Remove obstacles

- Be prepared to enforce any limits imposed

- Be aware of student's nonverbal cues (e.g., body language)

- Avoid the use of jargon; it tends to confuse and frustrate the listener

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**What to Do Instead**

- Validate the person's possible positive intentions

- Point out the impact of their negative actions

- Provide positive alternatives

- Help make positive choices by providing cues, reminders, and encouragement

- Support new and good choices with positive feedback [Strength Focus vs All Focus]

- Explain normal setbacks

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**Understand the Dynamics of the Conflict Cycle**

![Conflict Cycle Diagram]

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**"You feel the way you think"**

*It is the way we think about an event not the event itself that sets off the feeling.*

*You can be "speechless" about something but never "thoughtless".*

*thinking and feeling are not separate from one another.*

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**THE CONFLICT CYCLE**

STUDENT'S SELF-CONCEPT

STUDENT'S IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

STRESS

REACTION

REFLEX

BEHAVIOR

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**Levels of Insults**

Thou fawning rump-fed bugbear!
Two Types of Anger

**Spontaneous Anger:**
- Happens when you experience sudden/unexpected frustrations, disappointments, or shocks.
- Automatic, involuntary response.
- Generated in your Primitive Brain.
- Primarily a reflexive or instinctual response.
- When you experience spontaneous anger, you act first and think later.
- Most importantly, this physiological reaction occurs without your cognitive awareness.

**Cognitive Anger**

All personal anger that involves some level of thinking before it becomes counter-aggressive.

Counter-aggressive behavior is a learned behavior. It is not an automatic response.

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**Personal**

- This understanding allows us to use our thinking to make better choices, see more options and be a better model of problem-solving.

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**Drain Off and Timeline Skills:**
- Lead to better trust between the adult & child.
- Give the adult new understanding and insight about the child’s psychological world.
- Provide the opportunity for a child to learn to put words to overwhelming feelings.
- Open the door to discussions about the child’s choices during a conflict.

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**Proximity:**
- Subtlety decreasing the physical distance between you and the student.
- Safety Stance

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**Questions to Ask to Obtain a Good Timeline**

- **THOUGHTS:**
  - "What went through your mind?"
  - "You must have had some thoughts about that."
  - "Tell me what was going on in your head while you were doing this.

- **FACTS:**
  - "Tell me what you did."
  - "Tell me what happened."

- **REASONS:**
  - "Why did you do this?"
  - "Tell me why you did this.

- **HYPOTHESES:**
  - "What might have been true?"
  - "What do you think might have been true?"

- **OPTIONS:**
  - "What are some different ways you could have handled this?"
  - "Tell me if you have any other ideas about how you could have handled this.

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**HOW YOU SAY IT:**
- Volume
- Tone
- Distance
- Facial expressions
- Verbal vs. nonverbal

**WHAT YOU SAY:**
- Communicate respect no matter what the child has said or done.
- Avoid fearful, angry expressions.
- Keep instructions concise and clear.
- Be careful with humor.
- Use validating responses.

**Skills for Becoming an Even Better Listener:**
1. Give your full focus.
2. Avoid judgment.
3. Make eye contact.
4. Ask clarifying questions.
5. Listen to understand.
6. Respond well.

**"The best time to stop a problem is before it begins"**
- Consent: 1. Stop and confirm area a normal and inevitable part of life.
- Consent: 2. I cannot expect others to act the way I want them to act or to be aware of my needs.
- Consent: 3. Aggressive behavior is an automatic response.
- Consent: 4. My anger is determined by how I think about it.
- Consent: 5. My aggressive behavior is only one way to respond to frustration and disappointment.
- Consent: 6. I cannot control the weather, historical events, or my age.

**Calm the Lower Brain (Regulate):**
- Make sure you are calm (no adrenaline).
- Importance of mirror neurons.
- Limit words.
- Breathe deeply and slowly.
- Acknowledge feelings and attempts at self-regulation.
- Rhythmic movements.

**CORRECTION**
1. Acknowledge Positive Intentions.
2. Behavioral Observation: say what you saw, noticed or heard.
3. Impact: What happens when you do that? What’s the problem with that?
4. What’s a better Way?
5. Follow Up: People grow and change when they are also told what they did right.

**SODAS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATION</th>
<th>OPTION 1</th>
<th>ADVANTAGE</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPTION 2</td>
<td>ADVANTAGE</td>
<td>DISADVANTAGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPTION 3</td>
<td>ADVANTAGE</td>
<td>DISADVANTAGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPTION 4</td>
<td>ADVANTAGE</td>
<td>DISADVANTAGE</td>
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<td>SOLUTION</td>
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KEY POINTS

- Involve students in decisions that affect them.
- Model dignity and respect by giving it to the student even without the guarantee you will get it back.
- If you realize you did or said something wrong, be honest about it.
- Give freedom of choice to the student coupled with responsibility.