

Trauma-informed de-escalation:

How to maximize safety and connection?



Today's Roadmap

- 1) De-escalation and its goals
- 2) Theories and parameters of de-escalation
 - a) Personal Story
- 3) Practice Scenario
- 4) Return to theory - filling the gaps
- 5) Conclusion and putting it all together
- 6) Q&A





What is de-escalation?

The Process of helping someone to stop a progressive pattern of behaviour that could lead to violence.

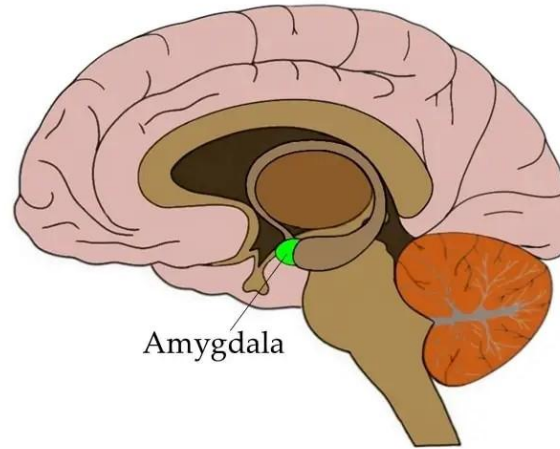
Goal: Prevention of Physical Violence

What are we de-escalating?



Amygdala Hijack

Feeling threatened and unsafe can trigger the fight, flight, freeze response.



People have the desire to connect and feel safe.

Goal



Help them feel connected.

Sara's Story



Sara's Story

Sara's mistakes:

- Lack of pre-emptive work (curiosity towards the behaviour)
- Not communicating boundaries
- Not paying attention to body language
- Not allowing her to just leave
- Arguing with her

Sara's course-correction:

- Realizing her mistake and apologizing for it



Window of Opportunity & Signs of Escalation

***Goal:
Pay attention to
non-verbal communications.***

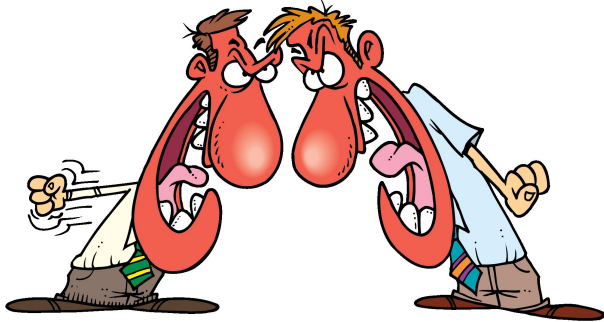
Group Practice

Look for signs of escalation
&
How do those signs make you feel



Who needs de-escalating?

How someone is saying something is more important than *what* they're saying.



Look as well as listen.

- Flushed or pale face
- Sweating
- Pacing, restless, or repetitive movements
- Trembling or shaking
- Clenched jaws or fists
- Exaggerated or violent gestures
- Change in voice (loud/quiet)
- Glaring or avoiding eye contact
- Scowling or use of abusive language
- Violating your personal space

Group Practice



Homework: Know Thyself!

- 1) Where did your emotions take you in the scenario?
- 2) What did this interaction remind you of?
- 3) When was a time when someone behaved that way towards you?
- 4) What did you do & what did you wish you could have done?



“Understanding
doesn’t mean an
agreement, a
conversion, or
forgiveness.”

- Betty Smith



De-escalating dialogue techniques:

1. *Listen without judgement (e.g. don't argue over facts)*
2. *Focus on what you agree on (e.g. "It's hard not to know when you return to class.")*
3. *Validate feelings (e.g. "It sounds like you're both angry and frustrated about this situation.")*
4. *Check-out your understanding (e.g. "Did I get that well?")*
5. *Reinforce boundaries*

NEVER

**IN THE HISTORY OF CALMING DOWN.
HAS ANYONE EVER CALMED DOWN
BY BEING TOLD TO CALM DOWN.**



CALM DOWN

Things NOT to say during de-escalation:

- “You need to calm down.”
- “I need you to calm down.”
- “You’re making a generalized statement.”
- “You’re wrong about X.”
- “Your statements are hurtful to other people.”
- “You’re not helping your case.”
- “Do you think you’re the only one who is affected by X?”
- “I’m sorry you feel this way.”

Goal: Get to an understanding without agreeing.

What if none of these work?

- Safety, Safety, Safety!
- Preparation
- Step-by-step process made by and for each picket line
 - E.g specific procedures around safety, “If x, then y.”

Prep-work for De-escalation:



- a) Know yourself and your history with violence and escalation
- b) Build trust with your colleagues so that you know you will be trusted when you make a tough call - rehearse and plan
 - i) Agree to err on the side of safety!
- c) Know what resources you can draw on to de-escalate
- d) Set the groundwork with individuals/groups about how issues will be responded to

4 Rules to De-escalation:

- 1) Identify someone escalating
- 2) Assess whether it's safe for you to intervene
- 3) **Listen with empathy and communicate your understanding** *(expanded on next page)*
- 4) Communicate and enforce boundaries as needed throughout the entire process



Communicating With Empathy

(step 3 expanded)

- a) Start from a kind place
- b) Listen without judgment
- c) Focus on what you can agree on (their emotions and their needs)
- d) Validate their feelings
- e) Share what you understand
- f) Check if you're on track



Picket Line Safety Tips

- a) Tell folks how long the wait is
- b) Ask them where they are headed
- c) Consider letting some cars go in faster
- d) Offer water or snack
- e) **Consider your social location, the person/s in the car, and the space of the car**
- f) Know your North Star and let that guide you:
 - i) **The Goal of the Strike is a Better Collective Agreement**



Be kind.


Don't argue facts.

Agree on feelings.

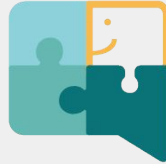
“I have found that people will often forget what you did, and they will forget what you said, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

- Dr. Maya Angelou





**What are your
thoughts
&
questions?**



Thank you

We'd be very happy to hear your thoughts.

Feel free to say hello at
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