



HOW TO DE-ESCALATE SOMEONE IN A CRISIS



How to De-escalate someone in a crisis

- ✓ Look for behavioral signs, both physical and verbal, that indicate agitation
- ✓ This will be an EMOTIONAL EVENT, try to keep your emotions in check
- ✓ Be calm and speak calmly, and maintain a calm tone
- ✓ Use short sentences and simple language
- ✓ Give the patient time to process and respond before providing additional information
- ✓ Repeat directions and choices
- ✓ Provide reassurance that you want to help them regain control
- ✓ Do not challenge, provoke, or insult
- ✓ Listen to the person & be supportive
- ✓ Avoid continuous eye contact & avoid staring- Make eye contact, but not excessively
- ✓ Identify wants and feelings by listening to verbal and nonverbal cues
- ✓ What do you want & ask what is going on?
- ✓ Keep stimulation to a level low, try not to add chaos
- ✓ Move slowly, no sudden jerky movements, gently announce actions before taking them
- ✓ Give the person space if safe, don't corner the person
- ✓ Ask the person for some possible options or solutions.
- ✓ Avoid touching the person without permission.
- ✓ Be patient, don't argue, & don't judge the person.
- ✓ The goal is to mitigate the risk of harm to oneself and others while providing symptomatic relief that allows the patient to participate in their care.
- ✓ If you cannot deescalate the situation, leave the scene to protect yourself and others.
- ✓ If the situation feels unsafe, call the police (read the What to say to the police)
- ✓ Use non-threatening body language (visible, unclenched hands and slightly bent knees)
- ✓ Maintain at least 2 arm's lengths of distance
- ✓ Stand at an angle instead of facing directly
- ✓ Do not fold arms or turn away
- ✓ Don't whisper, joke or laugh – This may increase agitation and/or trigger paranoia.

Things that are not true!!

- ✗ Crisis comes out of nowhere; people just "snap." There is no history of unusual behavior.
- ✗ The key factor to crisis prevention is maintaining a position of power and authority so the escalating individual knows who is the "boss." That will calm them down.
- ✗ A good tactic in crisis prevention is explaining to the escalating individual that their situation is "not that bad". It will help them calm down.
- ✗ Telling them that their delusions or hallucinations are imaginary is helpful.

Techniques to De-escalate a crisis

- If you can't de-escalate the crisis yourself, call for help with the crisis line or police (inform them that a CIT trained officer is requested)
- If you don't believe there is an immediate danger, call a psychiatrist, clinic nurse, therapist, case manager, or others that are familiar with person's history.
- If the situation is life-threatening or if serious property damage is occurring, don't hesitate to call 911 and ask for immediate assistance.
- When you call 911, tell them someone is experiencing a mental health crisis and explain the nature of the emergency, your relationship to the person in crisis and whether there are weapons involved.
- Ask the 911 operator to send someone trained to work with people with mental illnesses such as a Crisis Intervention Training officer, CIT for short.



Psychiatric urgent care centers:

- Connections AZ Urgent Psychiatric Care Center (UPC)
1201 S. 7th Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-416-7600
- RI International Recovery Response Center (RRC)
11361 N. 99th Ave. Peoria, AZ 85345
602-650-1212, press 2
- Community Bridges Community Psychiatric Emergency Center (CPEC)
358 E. Javelina Ave. Mesa, AZ 85210
1-877-931-9142
- Observation Services for Children and Adolescents (OSCA)
St. Luke's Behavioral Health Center
1800 E. Van Buren St. Phoenix, AZ 85006
602-251-8535

RHBA- Mercy Care Grievance and Appeals
If you prefer to file your grievance in writing,
please send your complaint to:

Mercy Care Grievance System Department
4500 E. Cotton Center Blvd.
Phoenix, AZ 85040
602-586-1719 or 1-866-386-5794
Fax: 602-351-2300