Predicting violence and managing escalation in people.

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Establish a professional environment

- If your service organization has structure you will best be able to reduce violence and escalation.
- Have a check in system so that more than one person is evaluating the person reporting for service.
- Escort people through your facility.
Assessment and awareness

- In order to best be able to predict violence and even manage an escalating person it begins with a solid assessment of the person.
- You don’t have to have a complete written assessment about someone in order to assess them.
- Begin with establishing a baseline.
Assessment and awareness

Baseline:
- Look at their demeanor. Are they anxious, on edge, calm, agitated? Are they talkative or quiet?
- Does their demeanor make you feel uneasy, do they make the hair on you stand up?
- Can you identify their triggers?
- What are their cues?
- Is what they are saying match their actions?
Assessment and awareness

- The awareness aspect involves being aware of the environment you are in.
- Awareness of how you are standing and where your hands are at all times.
- Awareness of where the exit(s) maybe.
- Awareness of my breathing and my tone of voice.
- An awareness of their non-verbal communication and mine.
Safe practices

- Establish the habit of “walking with your head on a swivel” so you can best be aware of what or who maybe coming.
- Develop a “defensive stance” as your norm for daily interactions.
- Communicate confidence with your daily interactions. Be organized, knowledgeable, authentic, and intentional.
# Determining levels of escalation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy</th>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Serious</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>You’re calm &amp; happy most of the time</em></td>
<td><em>You are not as happy as you want to be</em></td>
<td><em>You are irritated most of the time</em></td>
<td><em>You’re always angry about something</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>You get frustrated some times, but it doesn't last</em></td>
<td><em>You feel irritated and frustrated often</em></td>
<td><em>You have a lot of battles going on in your mind</em></td>
<td><em>You have a negative view of other people</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You express all of your emotions in an open, healthy manner</em></td>
<td><em>You keep your feelings to yourself</em></td>
<td><em>You feel like a victim to the actions of others</em></td>
<td><em>Your anger escalates out of control</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>You avoid conflict and have issues with anxiety and/or depression</em></td>
<td><em>You lash out at others too often</em></td>
<td><em>You hurt the ones you love</em></td>
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<td><em>Your anger is stealing your joy</em></td>
<td><em>You may be dangerous to yourself or others</em></td>
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Look for signs of escalation

Signs of Escalating Behavior

- Questioning and arguing
- Non-compliance and defiance
- Verbal abuse
- Disruption
- Bothering others
- Destruction of property

- Whining and crying
- Limit testing
- Threats and intimidation
- Avoidance and escape
- Off task behavior
Methods of predicting violence

- **Physical Factors**: Physical factors increase the risk of violence as well. These include lack of sleep, physical exhaustion, use of drugs or alcohol, brain trauma, heat, hunger, cold, physical disability, or chronic pain.

- **Situational Factors**: Situational factors are also predictive of violence. Access to weapons, experiencing childhood abuse or aggression in the home, or feeling a sense of injustice or oppression can lead to violence.
Methods of predicting violence

- **Certain Feelings**: Several internal factors such as fear, humiliation, boredom, grief, and a sense of powerlessness.

- To reduce risk, avoid putting clients in positions that embarrass them. Rather, give them knowledge that empowers them and help them see other, nonviolent options.
What else to look for?

- Observe the person's body:
  - is he/she pacing or fidgeting?
  - Clenching there fists or jaws?
  - Does he/she have a "wild" look in there eyes?
  - Are they speaking in a loud voice or becoming verbally abusive?
- Pay attention when a person or a situation makes the “hair on the back of your neck” rise.
1. Identifying triggers: external and internal events that provoke anger (such as people saying "no" or insulting us [external] and fears that "I'm not good enough" or feeling confused [internal]).

2. Identifying cues: physical signs of person's own anger—tightly clenched muscles, clenched fists, etc.

(Source: Dr. Barry Glick, Aggression Replacement Therapy)
Aggression Replacement

3. Using reminders: reinforce positives "he/she didn't mean to hurt you" or "it's not worth fighting over."

4. Using reducers: techniques such as deep breathing, counting backwards, imagining a peaceful scene, picturing the consequences of aggression.

5. Using self-evaluation: person thinks/talks about how well he or she used the above steps.

(Source: Dr. Barry Glick, Aggression Replacement Therapy)
Reducing tension

- Resist the urge to tell a client to "calm down." instead ask them to do the behaviors of a calm person. (Take deep breaths, shoulder shrugs)
- Be empathetic. Talk about the frustration or problem that has come up. Reflect feelings and behaviors such as "you seem angry."
- Remember not to take the anger personally. The person’s illness or the situation may be making them angry.
Reducing tension

Show a calm nature by:

a) moving slowly.
b) Avoid putting your hands on your hips.
c) Position yourself to the side of the person, so you are not squarely facing them.
d) Avoid extensive eye contact and physical closeness.
e) Do not touch an angry person.
f) Do not stand between the person and the door.
Reducing tension

- Always remind the person they have choices still. They can make a decision to talk later or to have time to relax before making a decision.
- Talk them through their choices if they need you too.
Reducing tension

Even if the person seems to be calming down, be patient—it takes a person about 30 to 40 minutes to calm down from anger physiologically (Griffin et al., 1995). If you have done what you can and things still seem to be escalating, leave the situation and/or get help.
If aggression occurs…..

- The use of defensive strategies will be key to your survival.
- Prior to the aggression try to create more space between you and your assailant.
- If you cry out for help, yell “FIRE” people will respond to that more than “help”.
If aggression occurs......

- Protect yourself from head injuries. Block blows with pillows, arms, clipboard, etc.
- If you fall, block the attack with your feet and legs.
- Weapon: Never reach for the weapon. Encourage the person to talk. Focus on the person, and keep your distance.
Where do I go from here?

- Put these ideas in action. Agree to try it for the next 30 to 60 days.
- Establish muscle memory with these strategies so that you can be better equipped should a situation escalate.