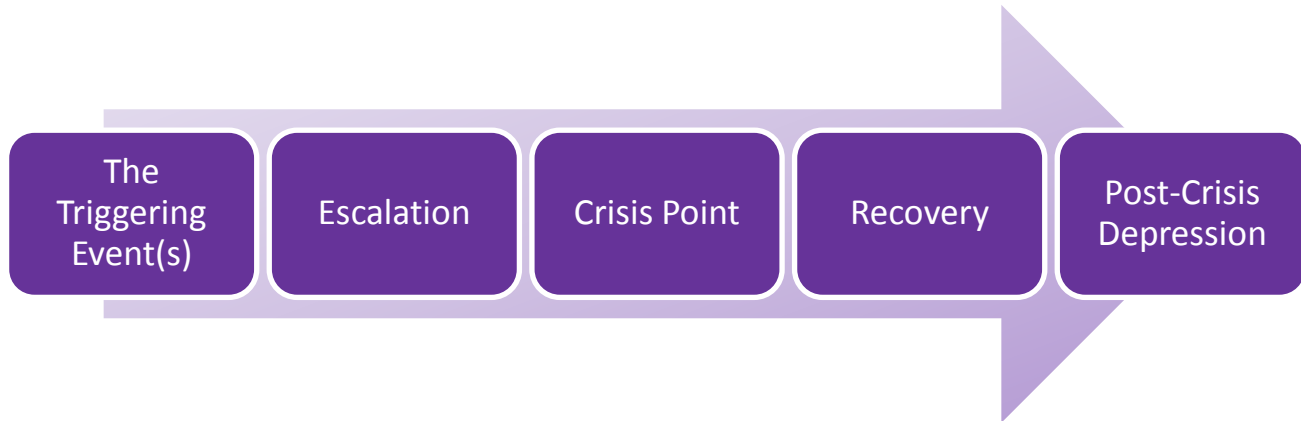


The Assault Cycle



1. The Triggering Events - Occurrence perceived by the individual as a serious threat to him/her.

TWO TYPES:

- Fear Inducing Events – Give the person the perception he/she is under threat or about to lose something of value.
- Frustrating Circumstances – Give the person the idea that his/her efforts or demands have been useless.

2. Escalation Phase - Person's body and mind prepare for a fight. He/She may respond physically or taunt the perceived threat, if it is a person.

3. Crisis Point - Aggressor explodes into violent acts against the threat.

4. Recovery Phase - Aggressor's body relaxes and mind decreases its vigilance. The confrontation is seen to be over, even if temporary.

5. Post-Crisis Phase - While aggressor tries to return to stable base level, he/she often experiences fatigue, depression, and guilt.

Steps in Verbally Defusing Potential Violence

I. OBSERVE THE SITUATION/READ THE CLUES

II. DETERMINE YOUR SAFETY

- A.** Is the person getting calmer or getting more upset?
- B.** Can you be with this person or group and be reasonably safe?
- C.** Should you call security, the police, or should you escape?

III. LEADER BEHAVIOR

A. Facial Features

- Relaxed
- Serious (not stern) looks
- Good eye contact (not staring)
- Attentive, focused on the person

B. Body Stance

- Standing diagonally, about 3-5 feet away
- Hands down to the sides, palms facing person
- Weight equally balanced on both feet

C. Voice Tone

- Calm, quiet, remember to breathe
- Slow paced
- Sound confident that you can help them

D. Attitude

- I have time for you
- You are an important person
- Together we can make things better
- Let's talk about it

E. Words Being Said

- "I'd like to see if we can work this out"
- "Please tell me more about what happened"
- "Tell me about how you have been unfairly treated"
- "Why do you say...."

Words Being Said continued

- “Let’s go to a place where we can talk more privately”
- Listen to the story without changing the subject/interrupting
- Clarify those things you don’t understand
- Listen on two levels-the meaning of the words and the emotional meaning
- Use their words or similar words when you talk about the situation
- Use words that show you understand how he/she might be feeling (e.g. “You must have been feeling like what you said didn’t mean anything.”)
- Be willing to hear a differing views or opinion. Look for the areas you can agree on

Words Being Said - Setting Limits

- “If you continue to yell, I will ask you to leave”
- “I understand you are angry, but treating the staff this way is not acceptable”
- “Take some time to cool off, and we will talk later this afternoon”

Words Being Said - Refocusing

- “Now that I have heard your complaint, I’d like to talk about what we can do to improve things”
- “I don’t understand how swearing at me will improve things”
- “I can’t help you when you are yelling instead of telling me what’s wrong”
- If you can’t help, take them to the person who can

Words Being Said - Ending the Interaction

- Complete the problem solving process.
- Break it down into doable steps
- Review any agreements and conclusions
- Discuss future interactions/follow-up (if applicable)

IV. FUTURE RISK/INVOLVING OTHERS

- A.** Is potential danger gone?
- B.** Do you need to report this? If so, to whom?

The Environment

- Arrange the room and seating in a manner so that you:
 - can get out of the door
 - can place a desk/table between you and the other person
 - don't block the path to the door
- Remove any heavy, items that can be thrown
- Remove sharp objects

Safety Planning

- Alert others when talking to a potentially “dangerous” person
- Meet in an accessible (not isolated) room
- Plan an interruption to check safety
- Have a safety code to call another person if the situation escalates
- Meet in a public place, if it is safer
- Follow your library’s violence prevention plan
- Review the library plan yearly

Note: These training materials are general in nature and have been designed and developed to facilitate discussion and to promote learning. The print materials are presented with the understanding that they are not to be construed as the direct rendering of, or as a substitute for, legal or specific case management advice.

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