

The Art of De-escalation and Conflict Resolution

Lieutenant Jeremy Romo

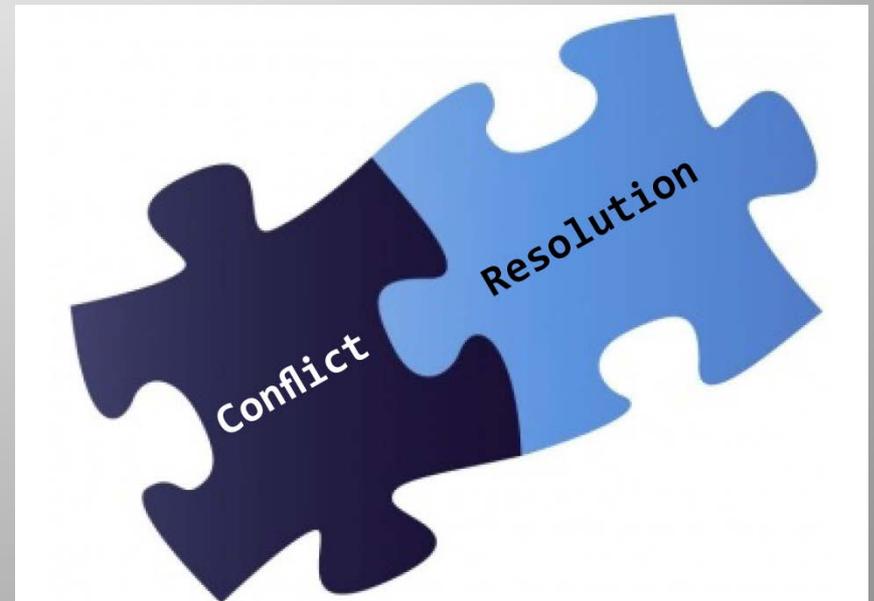
St. Louis County Police Department

Objectives

- Define conflict resolution and de-escalation.
- Explain the characteristics of someone that is in crisis.
- Describe the appropriate response to someone in crisis.
- List the benefits to applying conflict resolution and de-escalation in the workplace

What is Conflict Resolution?

Recognizing, defusing and controlling aggressive behavior through the use of crisis intervention techniques, communications in conjunction with an understanding of attitudes, emotions and behavior.



Benefits of Conflict Resolution

- Increased effectiveness in the workplace
- Stronger support from fellow employees and clients
- Less complaints and law suits
- Reduced job related stress
- Increased safety in the workplace



Definition of Behavioral Crisis

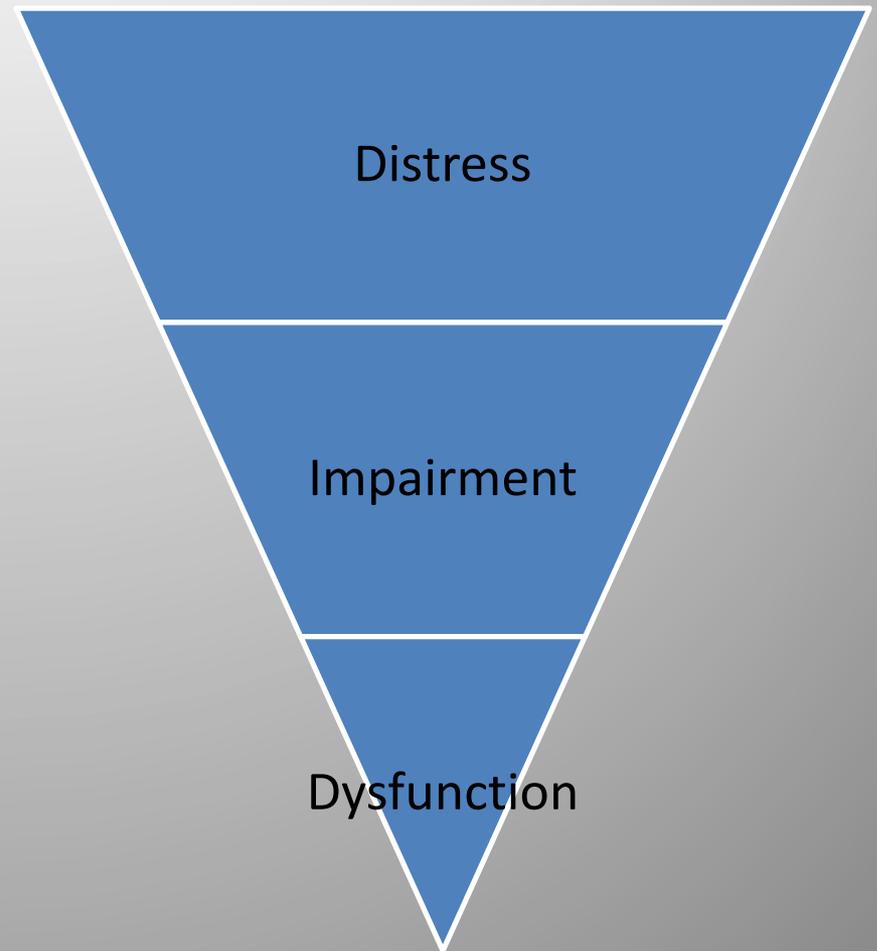
An episode of mental and/or emotional distress that is creating instability or danger and is considered disruptive by the community, friends, family or the person him/herself

- *Adapted from the Seattle Police Department*



Characteristics of Crisis

1. Disruption of one's general state of psychological balance
2. Usual healthy coping mechanisms have failed
3. Distress, impairment or dysfunction.



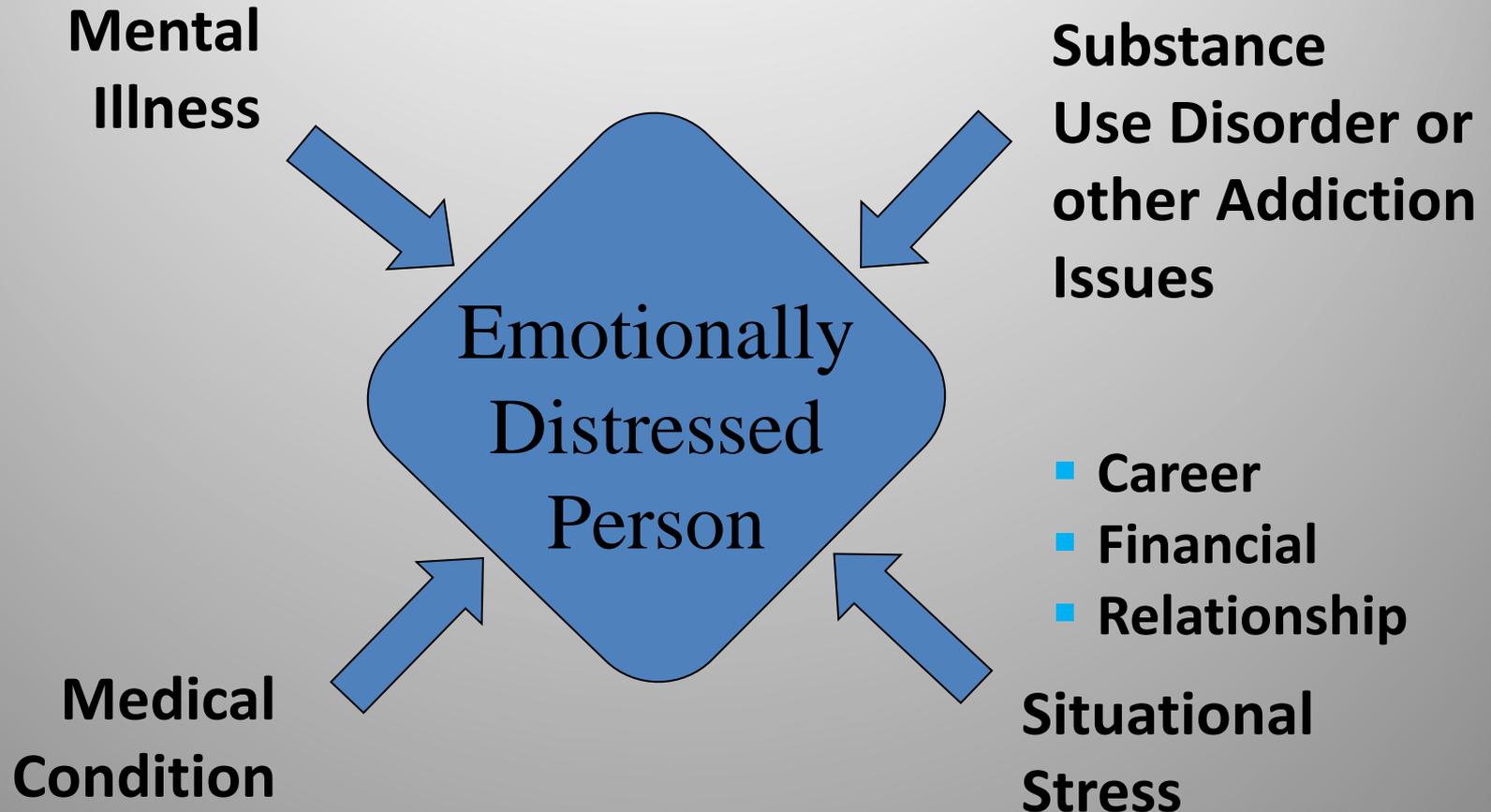
Crisis State

A precipitating event has recently occurred and the subject's normal coping mechanisms have not worked to resolve the situation

The subject is acting and responding from an intense emotional level rather than a rational/thinking level, in response to a highly stressful situation



Crisis Recognition And Response



Adapted from Nassau County, NY Police Department

Common Signs of Agitation With Someone In Mental Health Crisis

- Raised voice
- High-pitched voice
- Rapid speech
- Pacing
- Excessive sweating
- Excessive hand gestures
- Fidgeting
- Shaking
- Balled fists
- Erratic movements
- Aggressive posture
- Verbally abusive

Crisis Recognition And Response

Crisis Intervention

A process to assist individuals in finding safe and productive outcomes to unsettling events

*Adapted from Police Training Institute
University of Illinois*

Importance of Time in the Crisis Communication Process

Time (passage of time) generally has a positive effect on crisis intervention

- Reduces anxieties and
- Increases rational thinking

At the onset, everyone's anxieties are high and rational thinking is low.

Barriers To Successful Crisis Intervention

Emotional Barriers

Anger, pride, depression, anxiety, frustration, disappointment, sadness

Physical Barriers

Buildings or structures, space, distance, elevation, weapon, any object that impedes progress

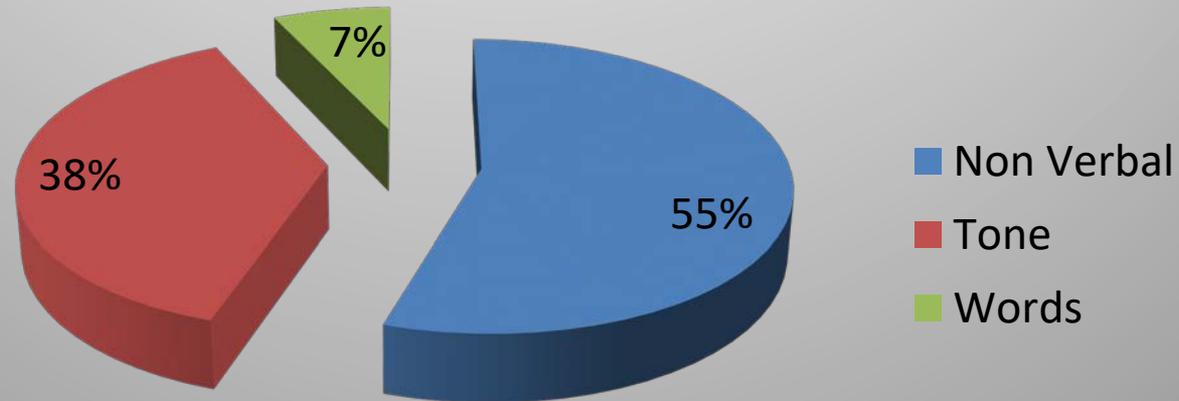
Other Potential Barriers

Language, Culture, Bias (overt or implicit), differences in perception or viewpoint, position, financial

3 Aspects of Communication

- Body language
- Tone
- Word Choice

Communication



“Voice” - Your #1 Tool

The WAY something is said can be 5x more important than What is said.

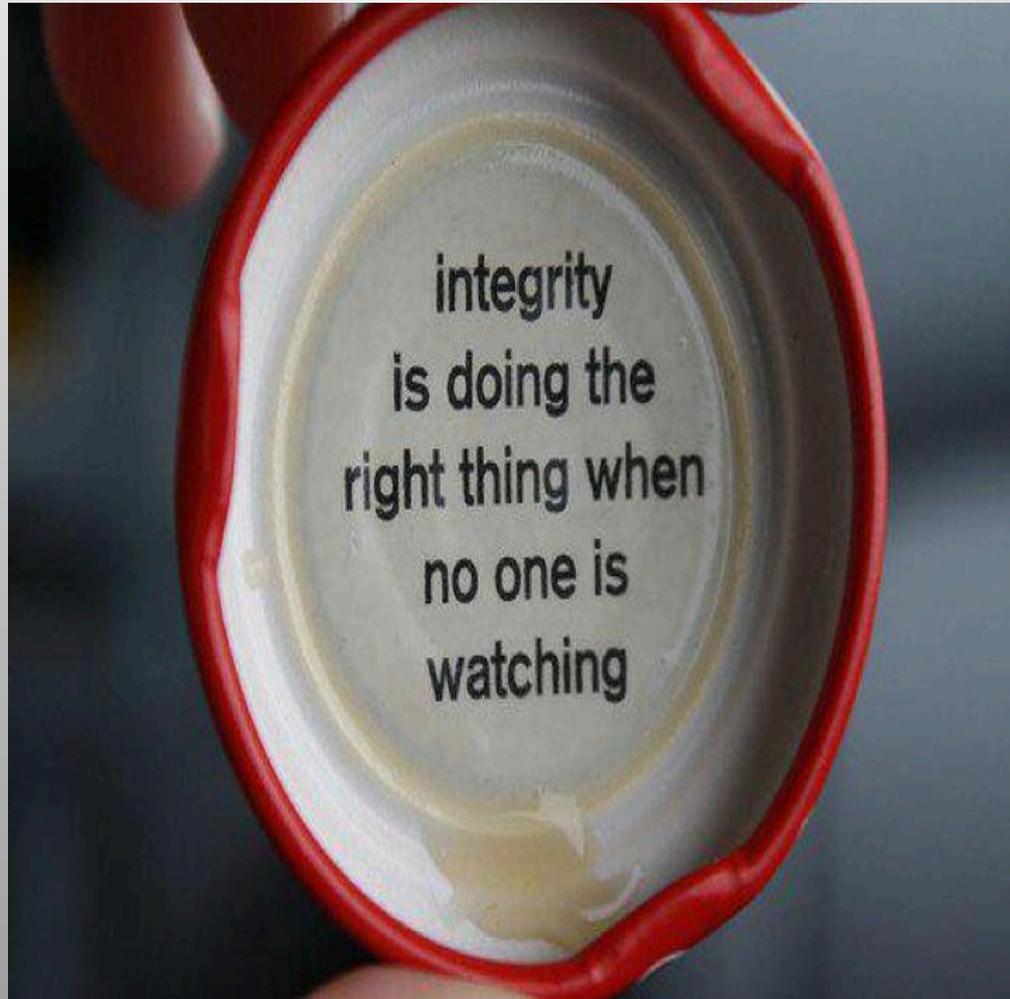
Tone of voice, demeanor & projected sincerity are more important than any single phrase that you may use.

Remember:

Calm is just as contagious as fear or panic

How to React to Someone In Mental Health Crisis

Conduct yourself with Integrity



Maintain Professionalism

**the skill, good judgment,
and polite behavior that
is expected from a
person who is trained to
do a job well
(Merriam Webster)**



Maintain Self-Control

When confronted, with a difficult employee, the first step is not to control their behavior, but to control your own behavior

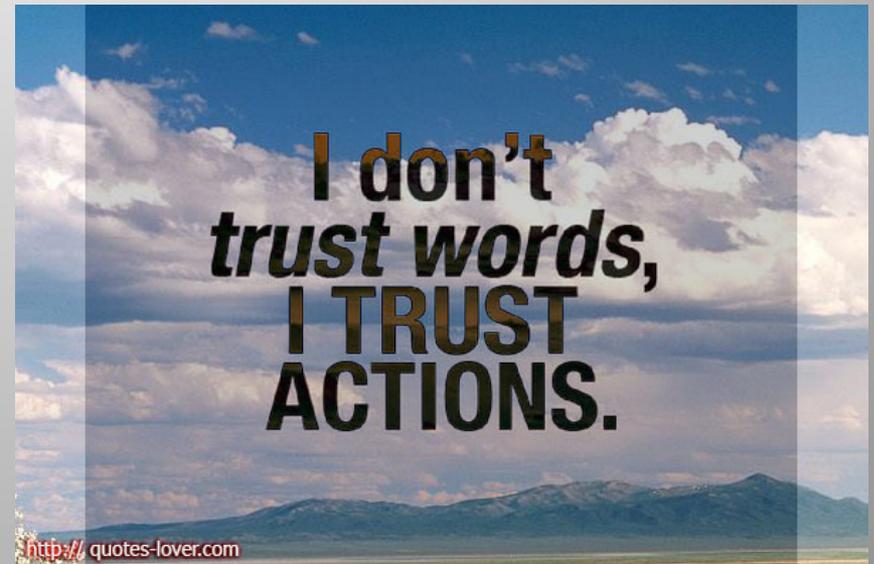
The ***only*** aspect of a crisis situation that we have absolute control over is ***our*** own Emotions

SELF-CONTROL

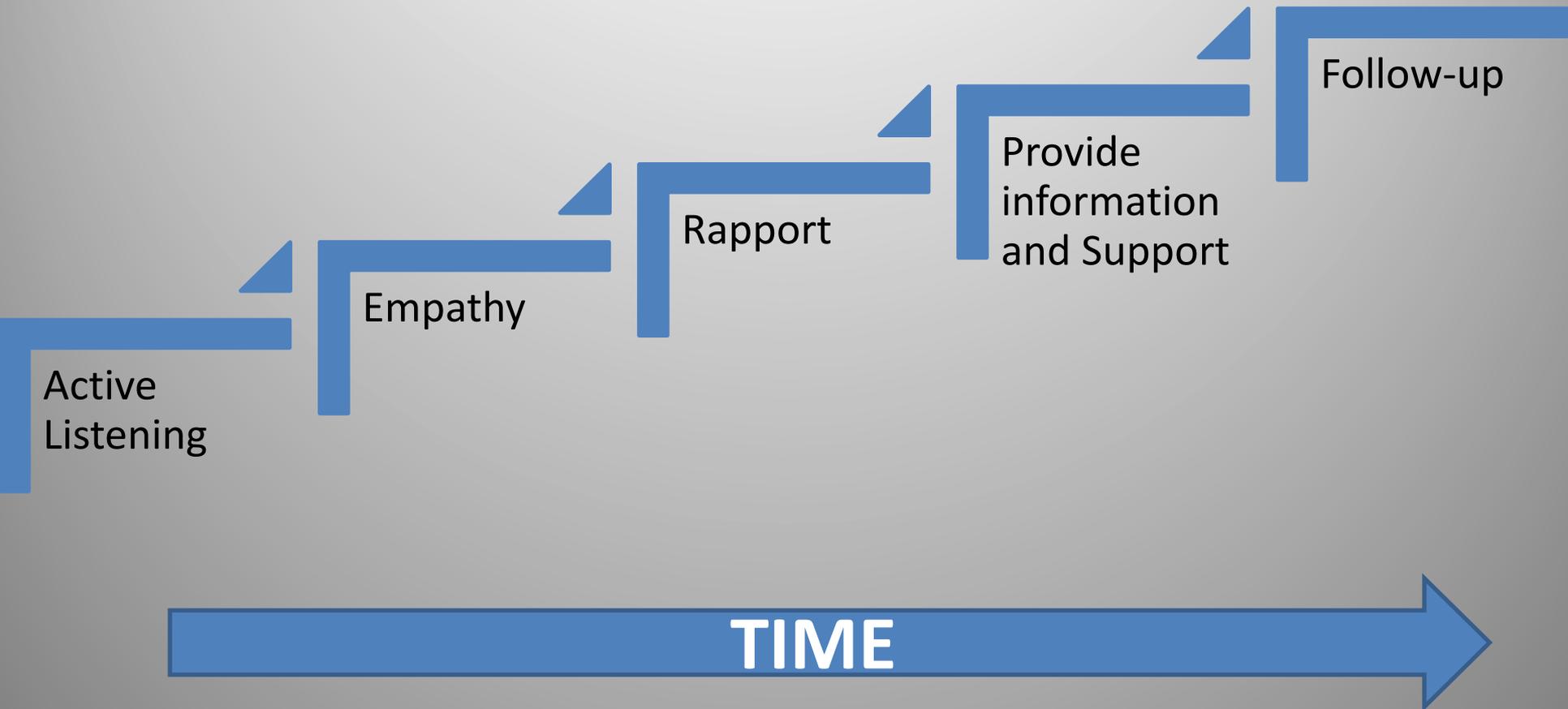
Choosing to do what is right
when I feel like doing wrong

Maturity and Respect

If you appreciate another person's sense of dignity, self-worth, curiosity, and healthy suspicion, then you will never be upset by people who initially challenge your authority.



De-escalation Process



THE ART OF LISTENING

ACTIVE LISTENING



Nonjudgmental Active Listening

Objectives of Active Listening

- Lower emotions and return subject to “normal”
- Establish rapport and influence
- Gather information
- Encourage behavioral change

Active Listening Skills

- Open-ended questions
- Explicit phrases
- Minimal encouragers (non-committal response)
- Effective pauses
- Reflecting or mirroring
- Paraphrasing of content
- Paraphrasing of emotions

BARRIERS TO ACTIVE LISTENING



Barriers to Active Listening

Advice, Judgment, problem solving or Persuasion

Pushing a conversation about Crisis Situation

Comparing

Interrupting

Arguing



Other Things You Should Not Do When Interacting With Someone In Crisis

- Tell them to “snap out of it”
- Be sarcastic
- Problem solve
- Make light of their experiences
- Avoid Blame
- Dismiss their feelings
- Treat someone with mental illness as unintelligent
- Expect rapport to develop quickly
- Trivialize their problems
- Argue moral issues

Empathy

“Identification/Understanding of another’s situation, feelings and motive.”

**PLACING YOURSELF IN SOMEONE ELSE’S POSITION AND
SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH THEIR EYES**

You do not have to feel what they feel or agree with them to provide empathy

Rapport



A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned are “in sync” with each other, understand each other's feelings or ideas, and communicate smoothly

Phrases That Damage Rapport

“Calm Down”

- May be perceived as an order.

“I Understand”

- Often the phrase used by others to interrupt and jump into problem solving.
- Understanding must be demonstrated.

Phrases That Damage Rapport

- **Why?”**
 - Feels accusatory, creates defensiveness.
- **“You Should” & “You Shouldn’t”**
 - Judgmental statements that may cause feelings of inadequacy/shame/anger.

Provide Information and Support

- Information vs. Advice
- Help them identify what is causing their crisis
- Learn local internal and external resources
- Provide information on options to address cause of crisis



Follow-up

- Give subject hope
- Have realistic expectations
- Continue to provide support until the crisis passes



Benefits of De-escalation and Conflict Resolution in the Workplace

- Workplace Safety
- Promotes resilience
- Increases employee productivity
- Liability



QUESTIONS

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