

Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviour

Crisis Intervention

ESAO
10th Annual Conference
2008

Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviour

During this session:

- we are all friends,
- we will not intentionally hurt each other,
- nor will we intentionally embarrass anyone without purpose.

Main Topics

- Definitions
- Crisis Development
- Precipitating Factors
- Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication
- Rational Detachment
- Administrative Support

Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviour

Objectives

- Basic elements and dynamics of violent behaviour
- Identify escalation / de-escalation of a crisis
- Strategies and techniques to manage violent behaviour and maintain personal safety
- Administrative Support

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Overall objective

To manage the unacceptable behaviour and potentially violent behaviour with safety and care for both the staff and client.

Philosophy

Provide the best service, safety and security for staff, patron or student.

Remember:

You can't make someone do something they don't want to do, but for your safety, you can learn what you need to do"

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Applicable:

- laws,
- regulations,
- standards, or
- best practices,

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- **Whatever happened to:**
 - **gut feeling, intuition?**
 - **something or someone making you feel uncomfortable?**
 - **do the same standards apply at night?**
Working alone?

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Definitions

Threat

Anxiety

C r i

s i s

Crisis Intervention

!!!Threat!!!

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Definition

Threat

Actions

- staring
- taking pictures
- clench fist
- weapons

Statements

- or else
- ifs

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AnXiEtY

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Anxiety (unusual change / increase in behaviour)

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- Physiological manifestation
- Motor activity
- Mental state
- Emotional state

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Anxiety

Four Levels of Anxiety

1. Mild
2. Moderate
3. Severe
4. Panic

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Crisis

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Crisis

- colleague bringing a weapon
- someone persistently staring at you
- patron screaming profanity at another patron / you
- a patron being harassed
- a patron demanding service you can not provide
- a student asking another to go out for coffee

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Types of Crisis

Long term

Short term

Threat + Anxiety + Crisis =

Crisis Intervention

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Definition

The 4 Basic Behaviour Levels During Crisis Development

4 Basic Behaviour Levels

- There are 4 levels in the development of crisis intervention.
- For your personal safety, it is important to realize when to withdraw or seek assistance.
- It is equally important to recognize at what behaviour level you are in and react accordingly.

4 Basic Behaviour Levels

Crisis Development

Staff Intervention

Four Behaviour Levels

Crisis Development

1. Anxiety

2. Defensive

3. Acting-Out-Person

4. Tension Reduction

Staff Intervention

1. Supportive

2. Directive

3. Crisis Intervention

4. Therapeutic Rapport

Verbal Escalation Continuum

Crisis Development

Staff Attitudes

2. Defensive

- irrational
- challenges you personally or your authority
- will give some clues of loosing control

2. Directive

- staff takes control
- set limits
- limits should be clear, concise and **enforceable**

Verbal Escalation Continuum

Verbal Escalation Continuum

1. Questioning

Intervention

Verbal Escalation Continuum

2. Refusal

Intervention

Verbal Escalation Continuum

3. Release

Intervention

Setting Limits

- keep it clear and simple
- keep it concise, focused, to the point
- make sure limits are enforceable (do it)
- make sure it is reasonable

Verbal intervention should offer options which gives the patron control over their behaviour.

Verbal Escalation Continuum

4. Intimidation

Intervention

5. Burnout

Intervention

And now
for something
completely different.

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Source: Library Hotline 7 /91

On the lighter side ...

The staff of the Warren-Trumbull County Public Library, OH, was disgruntled because the toilet paper in the ladies' washroom was always gone. The head of maintenance insisted that the supply was replenished every morning. Finally, the technical processing department decided to treat the rolls like books and circuited every roll of toilet paper on hand. The very next day, a woman who had no books in her arms set off the security alarm. When the Circulation staff asked her to open her purse, they found three rolls of paper. She tried to tell them that it was her paper, and that she always carries it, but examination revealed security stickers inside the rolls.

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Understanding the 4 Basic Behaviour Levels is one issue; managing aggressive or unacceptable behaviour is another.

There are contributing factors that can escalate or de-escalate a crisis.

Be aware of them.

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1. Precipitating Factors

- Are the likely reason(s) why a person reaches a level of anxiety, loses control and gets into a crisis.
- We do not have any control of other people's Precipitating Factors.

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examples,

- Loss of personal power (control)
 - may act out to get it back
- Displaced anger,
 - burst of energy towards us NOT because of us
- Physical and Psychological
 - tiredness, grief, alcohol, drugs,

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Precipitating Factors

- Frustration
- Rejection
- Attention Seeking
- Change (fear of)
- Maintain Self-Esteem
- Peer Pressure

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2. Professionalism

- We are there to help them
- We know the parameters of our service
- It is our choice to be there and to provide service

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3. Recognize Your Own Anxiety

- your own Precipitating Factors
- anxiety builds up very quickly
- sometimes explosive
- may cause immobility
(jeopardizes personal safety)
- may lead to inappropriate action / reaction

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Fear / Anxiety

Unproductive

1. Freeze, inability to react

2. Over-react

3. Inappropriate reaction

Productive

Increase speed / strength

Decrease in reaction time

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Rational Detachment

Do not take the acting out person personally.

- Staff must stay in control of own behaviour.
- Maintain professional attitude and not overreact or act inappropriately.

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It is important to be aware of non-verbal anxiety signals when approaching a potentially aggressive person.

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Non-Verbal Communication

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Non-Verbal Communication

Proximics

Kinesics

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Proximics

- ones personal comfort zone
- varies from 1.5 - 3 feet
- cultural influence

- Intrusion
- perceived as a threat
 - increases anxiety
 - increase probability of crisis
 - personal safety

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Kinesics

- body language, posture, movement, positional

“To your face” stance

- unsafe (personal safety)
- challenging
- threatening
- increase anxiety
- potential crisis
- assaultive
- decrease chance of defusing

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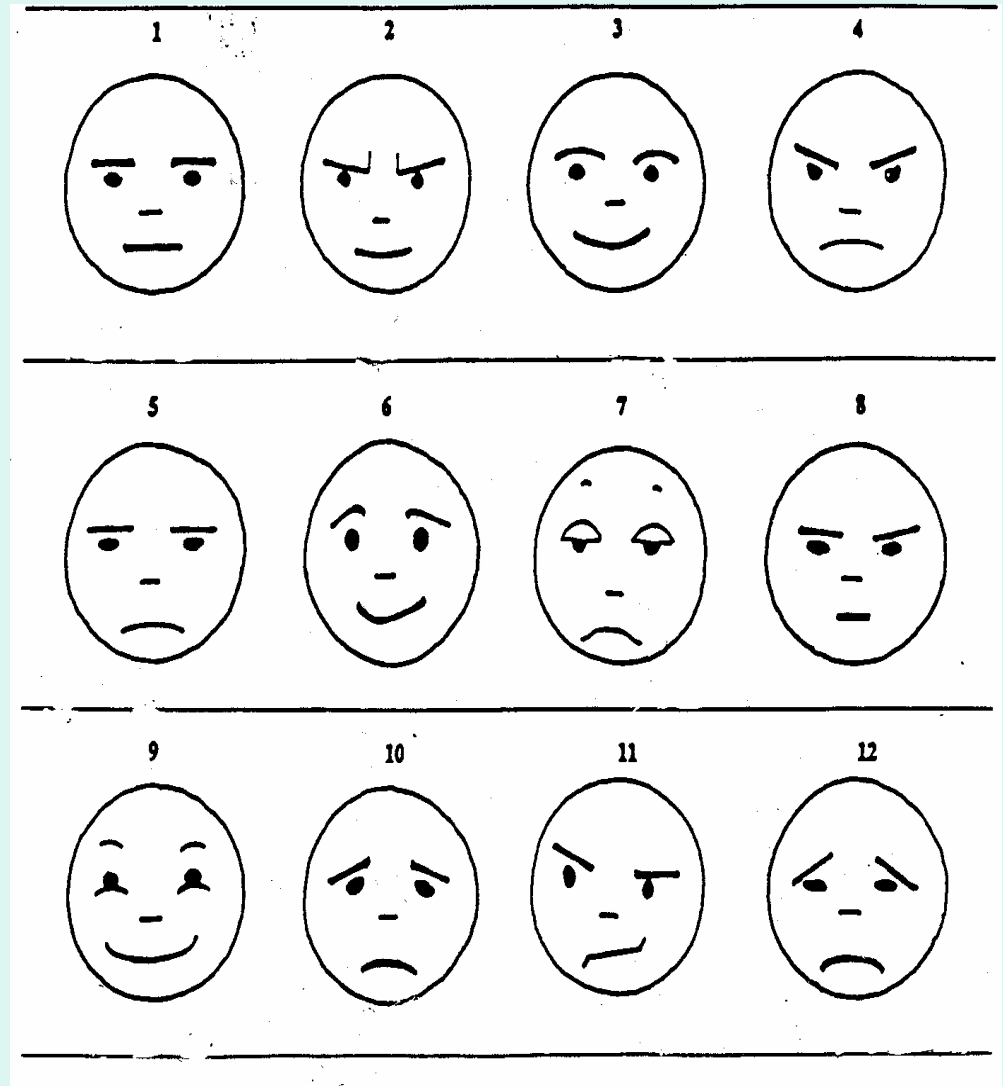
Supportive Stance

- alleviates anxiety
- personal safety
- offers escape route
- honors personal space
- communicates respect
- less threatening
- less challenging

Whom to trust

Find:

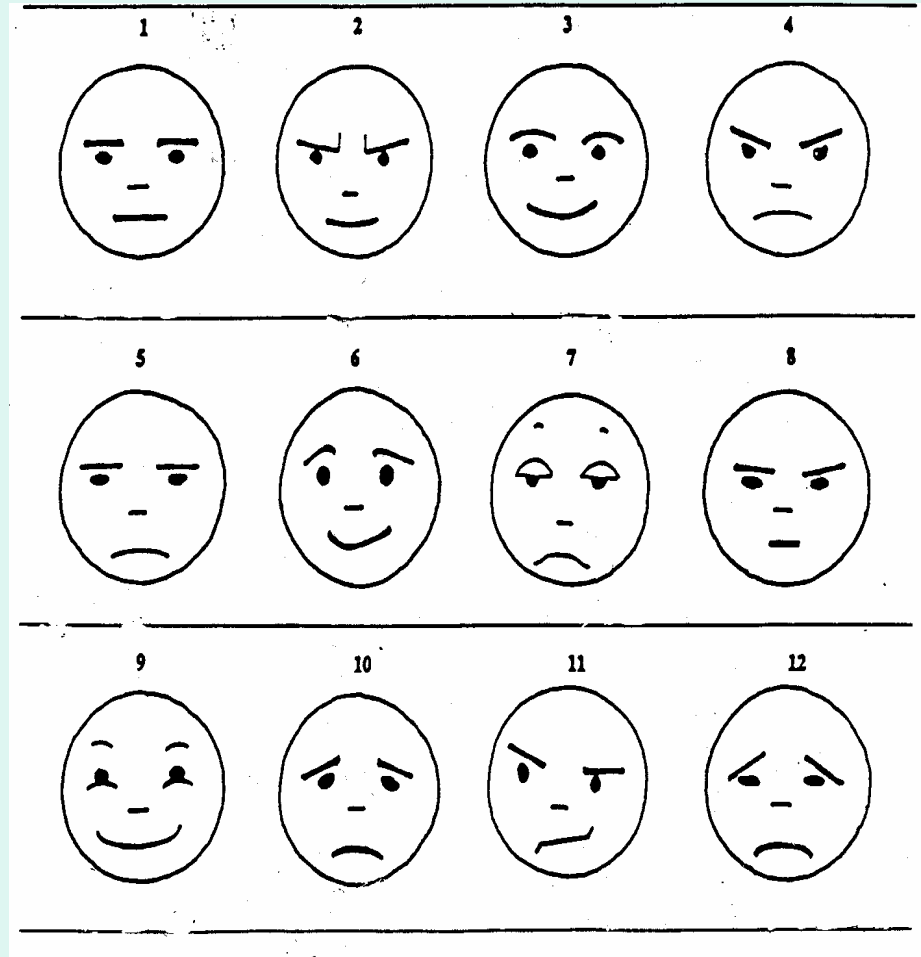
- a tired patron
- an “A” student
- a failing student
- dishonest person
- sneaky individual



Whom to trust

Find:

- a person who will not reach over the counter and punch you.



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Paraverbal Communication

Especially during a crisis,

- “It is not what you say,
it is how you say it”
- 85 - 90 % absorbed through
non-verbal communication
- 10% through spoken words
(make it count)

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Paraverbal Communication

Tone: avoid inflection of impatience,
condescension, inattention

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Paraverbal Communication

Tone: avoid inflection of impatience,
 condescension, inattention

Volume: keep volume appropriate for the
 distance and situation

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Paraverbal Communication

Tone: avoid inflection of impatience,
condescension, inattention

Volume: keep volume appropriate for the
distance and situation

Cadence: deliver the message at an even
rhythm

Sound professional

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Administrative Support

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How safe is your library? (2007)

Elisa F. Topper of Dundee Township Public Library, Illinois

Abstract

Purpose: "... to draw attention to the fact that libraries need to be alert about security in the workplace"

Findings: "...awareness that situations happen in the library..."

Safe Havens no longer

Dealing with the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Her golden rule is "never think about confronting patrons".

OH&SA

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Occupational Health & Safety Act, Ontario

Part III, Section 25, sub-section (2), (h)

“... an employer shall, take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.”

“...a supervisor shall ...”

Criminal Code of Canada

Human Rights

Employers' Best Practices, Policies, Standards

“... gut feeling, intuition...”?

“... how about something or someone making you feel uncomfortable ...?”

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Administrative Support

1. Policy on Personal Safety
2. Emergency Procedures
3. Reporting / Investigating Protocols
4. Personal Safety Programs
5. Training

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Administrative Support

1. Policy on Personal Safety

- Clearly define prohibited activities
- State the commitment to enforce
- Disciplinary procedure
- Applicable sanctions
- Appeal procedures

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Administrative Support

2. Emergency Procedures

include procedures relating to personal safety,

- harassment
- threats
- intimidation
- obscene phone calls
- suspicious behaviour, etc

“If you feel uncomfortable or feel there is a problem; there is.”

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Administrative Support

3. Reporting / Investigating Protocols

- identify to staff who to report to
- identify who will investigate the incident
- have a specific incident report form
- catalogue information on all the reports
- provide the JH&SC the same information and seek recommendations
- provide complainants status of investigation

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Administrative Support

4. Personal Safety Programs

- Emergency Procedures
- Library Conduct Regulations
- Personal Safety Awareness (staff & students)
- Many other University wide programs, services and resources

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Administrative Support

5. Training

- Crisis Intervention
- Emergency Procedures
- Personal Safety Awareness (staff and students)
- Reporting and Investigating of unacceptable incidents

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Administrative Support

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Workplace Violence Prevention Program

7 Steps to Developing Workplace Violence Prevention Program

1. Policy
2. Risk Assessment
3. Prevention
4. Education and Training
5. Incident Reporting and Investigation
6. Incident Follow-Up
7. Program Review

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Womens media.com

Title: Tongue Fu!: Deflect, Disarm, & Diffuse Any Verbal Conflict

By Sam Horn

My three favourites from her 7 Tongue Fu! Tips,

- # 1 When people complain, don't explain.
Instead, Agree, Apologies, Act.

- # 2 If accused wrongfully, don't defend or deny.
Instead, ask the accuser to explain.

- # 7 Turn "can't because" into "sure, as soon as"

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Lastly,
Remember

“You can’t make someone do something they don’t want to do, but for your own safety, do what you need to do.”