

10 Principles of Verbal De-escalation

1. Respect the **personal space** of the individual; do not get uncomfortably close or block exits.
2. Do not be provocative or respond in anger, be in **control** and measured.
3. Establish verbal contact **calmly** with the individual.
4. Be **concise** and speak in short, easy to understand sentences or phrases. Repeat yourself often.
5. **Listen** closely to what the person is saying.
6. Identify the individual's **wants and feelings** and try to accommodate reasonable requests.
7. **Agree** or agree to disagree with the person's concerns, while avoiding negative statements.
8. Set **clear limits** with expected outcomes, but do not make demands or order specific behavior.
9. Offer **choices** and optimism.
10. Afterwards, **review** the event and look for areas of improvement.



BODY LANGUAGE

- Relaxed facial expression
- Speak softly
- Arms uncrossed, hands open
- Knees bent
- 2x arm's length distance



YOU MIGHT SAY...

- “No harm will come to you.”
- “I will help you regain control.”
- “I am here to help, not to hurt.”
- “This is a safe place.”



DO THEY WANT...

- Something to eat or drink?
- A quiet place to go?
- A chance to talk about things?

This information is based on consensus guidelines from Project BETA established by the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry.



Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

UNDERSTANDING AGITATION

For more information, visit DBSAAlliance.org/UnderstandingAgitationKit