



Scenario-Based Skills Training – De-escalation Strategies

SLIDE 17.1 TITLE SLIDE

SCENARIO-BASED SKILLS TRAINING – DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

Time: 120 minutes

Slides: 21

Purpose: This module contains de-escalation strategies for officers.

Instructor:

Ideally, this module should be co-taught by an officer with experience in crisis response and a mental health professional from your community.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this module, participants should be able to:

1. Identify critical de-escalation learning points;
2. Explain the use of Hooks and Triggers in crisis response;
3. Name and demonstrate the Four Plays for verbal de-escalation; and
4. Identify potential escalating factors in crisis situations.

Activities:

- Scenario Practice

Additional Materials:

- None



Module Overview



Review and Practice

- Planning for de-escalation
- De-escalation skills and strategies
- “The 4 Plays” for verbal de-escalation
- Crisis response toolbox
- Escalating factors

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SLIDE 17.2

MODULE OVERVIEW



Trainer Note: Explain that participants will be continuing role-play scenarios during this module. Remind participants that they will communicate with individuals they respond to in ways that promote a person’s preference for communication and understanding of what is being said. Participants will use what they learned from prior modules on how best to communicate with people with various conditions and disabilities.

Emphasize that this module is designed to assist officers in their development of skills and strategies that can assist in the de-escalation of incidents involving persons experiencing a crisis. With that said, officers should be informed that they can do everything right—use every strategy presented in this module—but de-escalation may not work 100% of the time. Still, the use of these strategies aims to enhance the safety of crisis incidents and aid in the diversion of individuals in crisis to services.



De-escalation Is About...



SAFETY – using time and **skills**

ENGAGING – using strategies with **confidence**

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SLIDE 17.3 DE-ESCALATION IS ABOUT...

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Trainer Note: To begin this module, highlight that safety is a critical factor embedded in crisis response and de-escalation. This includes the safety of all involved in a crisis situation—police officers, persons in crisis, and other community members. Note that de-escalation is not just about learning skills and strategies. It requires the practice of skills and strategies so that they can be used with confidence in crisis situations.



Planning is Part of Effective De-escalation



Planning considers safety, skills, and strategies

- It is never too early to develop a plan
- It is never a bad idea to assess or re-assess a plan
- It is never too late to adjust and/or change a plan

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SLIDE 17.4 PLANNING IS PART OF EFFECTIVE DE-ESCALATION

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Trainer Note: Emphasize each point on the slide, referencing the content below. Provide examples of these points from your own experience as time allows.

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Content Note: This slide is about the importance of planning for officers' response to persons in crisis. In many instances, patrol officers may not believe they have the time to develop or initiate a plan for their response to individuals in crisis. It is true that officers are often expected to respond to call events that may require quick decisions and action to ensure public safety. However, when possible, it is beneficial to take the time in crisis events to assess the situation and develop a plan for response. This process is like the work of SWAT or hostage negotiators, who engage in planning prior to acting.

If during their response, officers feel that the methods of their plan are not effective, it is completely appropriate to re-assess the situation and adjust the tactics of their response. Officers should also be comfortable in altering their plans as new information arises on the scene.



De-escalation: The Basics



- Communicating during crisis events require “STRATEGIES”
- Strategies should always support safety. Consider...
 1. Information and surroundings
 2. Positioning / repositioning and personal space
 3. Visual and other sensory distractions
 4. Limit shouting



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SLIDE 17.5 DE-ESCALATION: THE BASICS



Trainer Note: This slide should be used to help ground officers throughout the de-escalation module. Do not present these points as if the officers are new recruits; rather, use this slide to instill a reminder of the importance of some of the basic principles of de-escalation.

The instructor should make note that throughout this, safety, as well as other basic law enforcement training skills, will stay intact. However, in addition to sound law enforcement training skills, officers will be introduced to new skills and strategies. Example: The Instructor giving “new” emphasis to “No Shouting”—see Content Note and Exercise below.

Officers should already be familiar with Points 1–3 under “Safety Awareness.” These principles have been taught in basic training. As an instructor, briefly review 1–3. However, point 4 may need further emphasis. This point has been taught for many years within law enforcement training, but some training does not suggest it as intensely as it should. Reference the content below as needed.



Content Note: Officers should not shout at a person experiencing a crisis. This will almost certainly escalate levels of fear or confusion that may be present. If shouting occurs by other officers on the scene, the lead officer should intervene to calm the situation.

EXAMPLE: Shelby County, Tennessee. On a rainy December night, deputies were collecting information and waiting on additional support regarding an armed man who reportedly went into the woods to kill himself. The man exited the woods near the deputies, whereby, the deputies engaged in several shouting commands. The Sergeant on the scene called “Timeout” which immediately stopped deputies from shouting. This “timeout” call allowed for de-



escalation, subsequently leading to a safe outcome for all. In addition, the universal understanding of the word “timeout” also stopped the man’s movement.

Case in point: When five officers simultaneously experience a feeling of danger, it is very likely that each officer will simultaneously initiate shouting of commands. Leadership is critical at this point to stop shouting and direct attention to other de-escalation skills and/or strategies.

Training slide summary: Shouting at a person who is experiencing a crisis is working against what the officer(s) are attempting to accomplish. This learning point also supports another learning point of “*slowing everything down.*”



Activity: Ask for four volunteers from the class for this exercise. On a hand signal given by the instructor, each of the four officers should shout their designated command three times loudly and quickly at the instructor, all at the same time. This exercise helps to make the point that shouting will likely escalate the person experiencing a crisis, not de-escalate the person. Shouting can significantly increase the level of fear and confusion the individual is experiencing.

- Officer 1: “Turn around!”
- Officer 2: “Put your hands up!”
- Officer 3: “Get on the ground!”
- Officer 4: “Face away from me!”



Trainer Note: The instructor should also discuss how others, including bystanders and family members of the person in crisis, may contribute to escalating a crisis. The responding officer should direct their backup officer, if present, to help de-escalate others on the scene. If there is no backup immediately available, the officer will need to de-escalate others or move the person in crisis to an area in which others cannot continue to escalate the situation.



De-escalation Requires Awareness



- Psychosis may be frightening
- Delusions and hallucinations may be present
- Communication efforts can help slow things down
- Setting limits and seeking cooperation can provide structure to the interaction
- Continue to express safety
- Use active listening skills
- Build rapport first, then move to problem-solving

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MODULE 17.6 DE-ESCALATION REQUIRES AWARENESS



Trainer Note: This slide is meant to be a quick review of key points for de-escalation that emphasize a variety of things to be considered and remembered when using verbal de-escalation strategies. Highlight each of the points on the slide. Use the content note to support this discussion.



Content Note:

- **Psychosis may be frightening** – When discussing this first bullet, ask participants what they remember as the symptoms of psychosis before moving to the next bullet on delusions and hallucinations. Let them know that a state of psychosis may be very frightening for the individual and can lead to impulsive and unpredictable reactions and behaviors. When the officer is aware the person may be experiencing some form of psychosis, it is important for the officer to provide a sense of safety to the individual. This can help the person regain a sense of control.
- **Delusions and hallucinations may be present** – Remind participants not to buy into delusions or play along. They can validate that the person is experiencing these things but do not need to agree or dispute. They can also revisit delusions for purposes of safety for the individual and others. Also, make note of command hallucinations that often instruct the person to “act” on their thoughts. It’s helpful to ask the person what the voices are saying to them in order to determine if they may act on them.
- **Be mindful of sensitivity to touch, light, sound, etc.** – Remind participants that some individuals with IDD may become overstimulated by their environment and may even try to run away.



- **Stimming** – Remind participants that some individuals will engage in repetitive, self-stimulating behaviors (e.g., hand flapping, rocking) to calm themselves. As long as these do not pose a risk to safety, they should allow the person to stim.
- **Communication efforts can help slow things down** – Encourage officers to communicate with people experiencing a crisis to slow things down. Remind officers that they communicate with their words, tone of voice, and body language. It is important to keep these things consistent.
- **Setting limits and seeking cooperation** – This can help to provide structure to the interaction. It can help the person slow things down and keep everyone safe.
- **Continue to repeat information gathered** – Ensures the information gathered is factual and can help the officer find topics to connect with the individual that builds rapport.
- **Continue expressing concerns about safety** – It's helpful to express personal concerns about safety – e.g. “I want you to be safe,” “I want to help you resolve this safely.”
- **Use active listening skills** – Remind the participants what they learned in the prior section on verbal skills (e.g., restatement, reflection, summary).
- **Build rapport first then move to problem-solving (connect then direct)** – This was covered in verbal skills in the rapport building section. When the officer establishes rapport with the individual experiencing a crisis they are more apt to work with the officer to find a solution to the crisis.

Critical De-escalation Learning Points



1. Your delivery matters (words, tone, body language)
2. Gather information to build understanding
3. If communications break down / "handoff"
4. Officer leadership is critical
5. Be aware and address feelings of fear experienced by...
 - Person in crisis
 - Responding officers
 - Others present



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SLIDE 17.7

CRITICAL DE-ESCALATION LEARNING POINTS



Trainer Note: Emphasize each of the points on the slide. These learning points give attention to critical concepts for effective de-escalation. Note that many of the points have been previously introduced but are worthy of bringing back up as the class moves toward de-escalation communication skills and strategy practice. A lengthy discussion on each point is not required.



Content Note:

1. **Your delivery matters** (words, tone, body language). This learning point was covered in the communication skills module.



Ask the class participants if they can remember what is important about WORDS, TONE, AND BODY LANGUAGE for de-escalation. Why are these things important when responding to a person experiencing a crisis?

2. **Gather information to build understanding.** It is important to ask open-ended questions and to make clarifying statements and questions. Collecting information has multiple purposes, including to:
 - (a) Help officers understand the uniqueness of people with lived experiences,
 - (b) Develop an understanding of the specific circumstances of the crisis,
 - (c) Slow things down, and
 - (d) Demonstrate an officer's genuineness and concern to help.



3. An officer should **be willing to hand off the communication role** in a crisis situation to another officer or service provider if the person in crisis does not want to talk to them. In some instances, an officer can be performing excellent de-escalation skills, but the person in crisis takes a stance not to talk to the officer (or any officer). Opening and maintaining communication is a primary goal in crisis situations, thus a “hand-off” is appropriate. After the “hand-off” the officer should assume a supporting or backup role on the scene, as needed and appropriate.
4. **Officer leadership is critical** when responding to crisis situations. Remind officers that planning is part of effective de-escalation. They must consider who’s taking the lead in the situation, what the course of action will be, and how they will use de-escalation skills and strategies to respond to the incident.
5. It is important to **be aware of and address feelings of fear** experienced by the people who are part of the crisis situation. Addressing fear issues should be interwoven with de-escalation skills and strategies. Responding officers should monitor and seek ways to ensure safety, provide structure to the crisis situation, and bring reassurance and safety to all individuals associated with the crisis.



Critical De-escalation Learning Points



6. Slow everything down
7. Provide choices
8. Test compliance, comprehension, and understanding
 - (a) Do you remember my name?
 - (b) Please look at me OR Please sit here
9. Remember two people talking ≠ one person listening

Once de-escalated, divert from the criminal justice system, when possible.



SLIDE 17.8 CRITICAL DE-ESCALATION LEARNING POINTS (continued)



Trainer Note: Highlight the rest of the de-escalation learning points, providing examples from your experience as time allows. Reference the content note below to support this discussion.



Content Note:

6. Reiterate how important it is to **slow everything down**. Slowing things down provides time to formulate an appropriate plan for response. Additionally, when an officer can slow the intensity of the situation down, it provides a greater opportunity for the person in crisis to recover and can increase their ability to understand questions and directions from the officer, as well as work together with the officer on a resolution.

Have the participants give examples of how to slow things down. Note that it may be more effective to communicate the desire to slow things down in multiple ways.

Some examples may include:

- (a) Using your hand in a low position gently moving up and down to indicate “slow down,” using the words “please slow down.”
 - (b) Taking a step back to give a little more space.
 - (c) Using empathic words such as “I am here to keep you safe; you will be okay.”
 - (d) If a person is pacing, do not pace with them as this can keep the energy up.
7. **Provide choices.** People with behavioral health conditions and/or IDD may live in environments with limited choices, especially when living in group homes or similar settings. When to sleep, when to get up, when to leave, when to return, what can or



cannot be eaten, and when they can and cannot smoke are some examples of limitations within these restrictive settings.

Offering choices can convey respect to the person as officers are connecting with them (e.g., “would you like to sit down, or stand, or would you like to go outside and talk”). Offering choice also reflects making reasonable accommodations for the person and/or honoring preference, when able.

- 8. Test compliance, comprehension, and understanding.** This point introduces the importance of officers testing the compliance of the person in crisis. When a person complies with the requests of the officer, it indicates the person can hear the officer and rapport may be established.



Trainer Note: Use the demonstration and question below to support a discussion on testing the compliance, comprehension, and understanding of a person in crisis.

Measuring a person’s compliance is not always about how a person connects verbal words to formulate understandable sentences. Think, for example, of when a person exhibits disorganized thinking. The person turns away from the officer and continues speaking bizarre and disorganized words. The officer requests the person to look at them. The person turns and looks at the officer but continues to speak in a disorganized manner.



DEMONSTRATION: The instructor should play a person exhibiting disorganized thinking. Invite a participant to role-play the responding officer. Tell the participant to engage with the person (instructor) to get their name. The person turns away from the officer and continues speaking bizarre and disorganized words. The officer requests the person to look at them. The person turns and looks at the officer but continues to speak in a disorganized manner. The instructor should stop the demonstration and ask the class if the officer is communicating with the person. *Most will say no communication has taken place.* However, ask the participants to consider the point below:

- The officer requested the person to look at them and the person complied. Communication is most often measured by a person exchanging words/thoughts in a consistent and orderly manner. Although the person’s words and thoughts were disorganized (even bizarre), the person heard the officer’s request and turned and faced the officer. *Communication did take place.*

Another example could be a person stimming (e.g., rocking back and forth, making repetitive hand movements, looking down) and the officer asks them to look at them.



The instructor should expand the officer’s awareness of successful communication efforts within crisis situations. Officers should evaluate their communication efforts throughout the crisis event. Sometimes they may believe they are not communicating and losing control. However, it is possible that they are missing communication successes such as compliance with simple requests (e.g., “please look at me” or “will you please sit here?”).



Content Note:

9. Remember that **two people talking does not equal one person listening**. Although this seems obvious, this point is often missed by officers in their attempts to gain and/or regain control of a person who is speaking in a disorganized manner. Officers must remember:
 - (a) Patience is important. It can give a person more time to understand what is being communicated.
 - (b) Setting expectations for communication can be helpful. Officers should correct the person who interrupts them with specific and concrete instructions: “When you talk, I will listen and when I talk, you will listen. We can’t both talk at the same time.”
 - (c) Patience does not mean you allow the person to say or do whatever they feel like.

Remind officers that the hallmark of crisis response programs is to divert individuals from the criminal justice (and juvenile) system, when possible. The de-escalation learning points presented across the past two slides are strategies that can be used to support diversion. Providing additional time and space can slow things down, reduce fears, and allow for meaningful recovery time to support a safe disposition. Recovery starts at the crisis event. Officers are often the first people to engage in the person’s recovery from the crisis.

Hooks and Triggers

A method to use when gathering information during a crisis

- **Hooks** – are things you find to build rapport
- **Triggers** – things you learn from the person that may escalate their behaviors

Active listening can help identify hooks and triggers to de-escalate a crisis

 

SLIDE 17.9 HOOKS AND TRIGGERS



Trainer Note: This should be an animated slide. The title will be the first thing to appear. Use the **Q&A** and content notes to support your discussion on “hooks” and “triggers.”



Ask participants to explain what “hooks” and “triggers” are. Following their responses, click forward to discuss the points on the slide.



Content Note: Hooks and Triggers are tools to use when engaging a person during a crisis. The use of Hooks and Triggers can enhance understanding, create empathy, and lead to de-escalation. Gathering information (one of the de-escalation learning points) is a critical step for the use of Hooks and Triggers.

Hooks are things the officer learns about the person that can help with connecting in a positive way to build rapport. This is done by using active listening skills. Hooks may be things such as noticing a baseball cap and asking if that is their favorite team or one they follow. The officer may learn they like cars and can use the topic of cars to engage. Referencing one’s child or children may be a hook. Other hooks may involve meeting a basic need for an individual, such as offering them water, having them move to a cool place if it is hot outside, allowing them to hold a personal item that gives them comfort (particularly for people with IDD, if there is no safety concern), or other reasonable accommodations such as allowing the person to smoke, if possible. The purpose behind hooks is to help distract the person from the crisis moment temporarily in order to make a connection for building rapport.

Triggers are things the officer has learned that may be upsetting to the person or cause the person to escalate. These may be the source of the crisis for certain people. A person



with IDD may escalate if a personal object is removed. Again, if safety is not an issue, it will be helpful to allow the object to be held. The officer can pick up on triggers by observing the person's body language and reaction to certain topics. These should be avoided when trying to de-escalate the crisis or recognized by the officer and validated so the person knows you are listening and understanding where they are coming from.



Ask participants to give examples of some Hooks and Triggers they have used and experienced in their work.

Crisis Response Toolbox



Verbal de-escalation strategies are like tools in a toolbox:

One “strategy” does NOT make a toolbox



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SLIDE 17.10 CRISIS RESPONSE TOOLBOX

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Trainer Note: Acknowledgement of the nine learning points for de-escalation and the use of Hooks and Triggers is a good segue into a discussion of an officer’s toolbox for crisis response. The purpose of this slide is to discuss how de-escalation is not just one way of doing something. Use the content note below to support this discussion.

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Content Note: The picture shows common tools you might find in a toolbox. There are many tools that might be able to do the same job, depending on the circumstances. For example, if you are using a wrench and the bolt becomes stripped, you may have to switch to pliers to get the bolt out. Often, we may get comfortable with our “go-to” tool but realize it does not work every time. Officers need to be open to using a variety of skills and strategies and have a backup plan, much like another tool in the box.

How does this relate to crisis response? In crisis response, you want to use your experience, newly gained knowledge, and instincts to form and change your strategy and performance to fit the situation. One strategy, or one tool, does not fit every situation. Officers need multiple skills and strategies in their toolboxes. There is no one “tool” that prevents or resolves all crises.

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International



Verbal Skills and De-escalation Strategies



SKILLS

- Tone of voice
- Body language
- Recognizing emotions
- Listening
- Restating
- Reflecting
- Summarizing

STRATEGIES

- Use a safe distance
- Slow things down
- Minimize distractions
- Redirect
- Offer choices
- Be attentive to psychosis
- Recognize fear issues

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SLIDE 17.11

VERBAL SKILLS AND DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES



Trainer Note: This slide is a recap that segues into the next section, “Putting it All Together.” This slide reinforces the variety of skills and strategies covered up to this point that can be used when practicing de-escalation. In essence, the skills and strategies listed represent an officer’s toolbox. Do not spend much time on this slide except to say this is a visual reminder of skills and strategies that will be assessed during scenario training.

Additional Materials:

- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Law Enforcement Policy Center, August 2017 [Updated], *Interactions with Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Model Policy, Concepts & Issues Paper, Need to Know...* Alexandria, VA: IACP, <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/IntellectualDevelopmentalDisabilityBinder.pdf>.
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Law Enforcement Policy Center, August 2018 [Updated], *Responding to Persons Experiencing a Mental Health Crisis: Model Policy, Concepts & Issues Paper, Need to Know...* Alexandria, VA: IACP, <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/MentalIllnessBinder2018.pdf>.



SLIDE 17.12 PULLING IT TOGETHER



Trainer Note: This slide is a transition slide for how to put de-escalation skills and strategies into practice. Instructors should now introduce themselves in a new training role—they are still instructors, but now they are also coaches. This is a more fitting role for completing this training module.

Attributes that are often associated with coaches include:

- Possessing skills, experience, and knowledge
- Giving 110% to support, guide, correct, and encourage team members

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International

Verbal De-escalation: “The 4 Plays”



1. Introduction/Greeting
2. Ask for the person’s name
3. Express what you are seeing to the person
4. Summarize –
Be an “active listener”



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SLIDE 17.13

VERBAL DE-ESCALATION: “THE 4 PLAYS”



Trainer Note: Briefly highlight each strategy on the slide, providing examples from your experience as time allows. An explanation of each of the plays does not need to take place; this will happen on the next slide.

NOTE: Remind the class participants that as they go through “The 4 Plays” they will use communication strategies that encompass a person’s preference or ones that facilitate understanding of what is being said. These communication strategies were taught in prior modules related to the different conditions and disabilities.



Content Note: Every winning team has a winning playbook. There are numerous skills specific to de-escalation, but what is being presented is a four-play playbook that can be used in crisis response. These four plays are performance skills to start, maintain, and sustain de-escalation performances and strategy deployment. Mastering these four plays can enhance officer performances while de-escalating and meeting the needs specific to the crisis event, issues, and circumstances.

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International

Play Numbers 1 and 2 –

1) Introduce yourself, provide a greeting
Hi, my name is Sam or Officer/Deputy Cochran

2) Can you tell me your name?

Be respectful and polite. Keep your greeting and introduction simple.

SLIDE 17.14
PLAY NUMBERS 1 AND 2



Trainer Note: Briefly highlight the two plays on the slide. Reference the content below as needed.



Content Note: The first two plays engage our culture (i.e., who we are as people). Our culture suggests we introduce ourselves to people we meet, respectfully and courteously. Most officers do this; however, sometimes, officers present their uniforms as an introduction. While it does not always achieve the desired result of building rapport, an introduction, should be achieved. It might be more appropriate to delay the introduction to a more fitting time within the crisis. Sometimes, the officers know everyone, and everyone knows the officers. The word “greeting” can be substituted in place of “introduction.” A greeting is an acknowledgment or recognition of familiarity with the individual.



Practice Vignette: Ask for a volunteer to come forward. Present and play out a scenario. Ask the volunteer to demonstrate Play #1 (Introduction/Greeting) and Play #2 (Asking for the person’s name). When the officer demonstrates this, have them sit down. Ask for another volunteer to come forward. In this scenario, do not give your name immediately to see how the officer performs. With appropriate persistence (patience), give the officer your name.

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International

Play Number 3 – “I Can See You” (seeing emotions)



Express to the person what you are “seeing”

- “I can see you’re angry.”
- “I can hear from your words that you’re upset.”
- “You seem to be upset.”
- “You appear to be confused – I would be too under these circumstances.”



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SLIDE 17.15 PLAY NUMBER 3 – I CAN SEE YOU (SEEING EMOTIONS)



Trainer Note: Introduce Play Number 3. Emphasize that officers should ask themselves what emotions they are seeing exhibited by the person in crisis to inform their response to the situation. Reference the content below as needed.



Content Note: The third play is one of the most important de-escalation skills, though it is often underutilized. People who have behavioral health conditions or IDD can feel like no one sees or understands them. Remind officers that the previous module on Communication Skills emphasized being empathic; this is what Play Number 3 is all about. It is about providing reflective statements on the emotions that you see in people. Demonstrating that you see how someone is feeling during a crisis can be very helpful.

Officers in uniform represent an important status. The fact that officers may see and acknowledge the emotions experienced by the person in crisis when others (family, neighbors, government officials, etc.) may not, can demonstrate respect for the person and their experience and provide hope.



Practice Vignette: Ask for a volunteer to come forward to participate in a scenario. Ask the volunteer to demonstrate Play #3 in the scenario practice. After the volunteer successfully identifies an emotion, have them sit down. Ask for another volunteer to come forward. Change up the scenario to demonstrate a different emotion to see if the participant can identify the emotion.

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International

Play Number 4 – Summarizing



Person: “Everyone is always bothering me – the devils take my money, I can’t get my case manager to do anything, I am getting kicked out of my apartment, the FBI is the cause of my phone problems, and I don’t like taking my meds, they make me sick. Nobody cares – it makes me angry!”

Responding Officer:

(The engagement) – “Okay, let me see if I understand you”

(The summary) – “You’ve told me that people are bothering you and your case manager is not helping you, and that your meds are hurting you because they make you feel sick. Did I understand you correctly?”



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SLIDE 17.16 PLAY NUMBER 4 SUMMARIZING



Trainer Note: Introduce Play Number 4 (Summarizing – Being an Active Listener).

This should be an animated slide. The statement from the person will be presented first, followed by the responding officer’s engagement statement and then their summary. Read the vignette on the slide and ask for volunteers to provide a summary. Show the engagement and summary statements after participation from the class.



Vignette: “Everyone is always bothering me – the devils take my money, I can’t get my case manager to do anything, I am getting kicked out of my apartment, the FBI is the cause of my phone problems, I don’t like taking my meds, they make me sick. Nobody cares – it makes me angry!”

[ALTERNATE EXAMPLE] A person is stimming in public – rocking back and forth. When an officer engages, the person yells that they want to be left alone. “Go away. I am just minding my own business. I don’t know where I am, but that’s ok. I’m ok.”



Ask class participants what they would NOT want to include in their summary to the individual. In the scenario presented on the slide, officers should not buy into the individual’s delusion. However, they should repeat back the facts of the situation. This ties back to active listening and the summarization/paraphrasing of the individual’s words.



Content Note: Formulating and presenting a summary requires practice. Officers should commit to frequently practicing how they would give a summary. The more officers practice, the better the outcome of their performance.

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International

Verbal De-escalation: “The 4 Plays”



1. Introduction/Greeting
2. Ask for the person’s name
3. Express what you are seeing to the person
4. Summarize –
Be an “active listener”



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SLIDE 17.17

VERBAL DE-ESCALATION: “THE 4 PLAYS”



Trainer Note: Highlight each point as a reminder for participants before they begin the role-plays. Have this slide posted during the role-playing to help participants remember what plays they should use. Make note that these Plays do not need to go in order. There may be times the person doesn’t give their name right away so the officer may choose to address emotions they are seeing or hearing and after some questioning about the crisis they may go back to asking for the person’s name. Also, the officer will want to remind the person of their name by stating it again or asking the person if they remember the officer’s name.



Vignette: For this vignette, the instructor will play a dual role, you will be the actor and the coach/instructor. When thinking about a scenario to act out, keep them simple. Some examples are, checking the welfare of a person upset on a park bench, a suspicious person talking to themselves in a park, or a person rocking back and forth and yelling in a park. This exercise is about the participants using the four Plays correctly.

Ask for a volunteer or select a participant to help you. Explain to them that they will be the responding officer to the chosen scenario. Advise them that the goal of this vignette is for them to practice the 4 Plays. It is acceptable to leave the slide with the 4 Plays on the screen to help the participants. (Remember during this scenario the instructor is playing a dual role of actor and coach so you may need to pause the scenario by calling a “time-out” to coach the participant as to what they might need to say).

The instructor will ask for a volunteer or select a participant to come forward (this will be done 2 or 3 times if time permits) and tell them the scenario they are responding to. The instructor asks the volunteer to demonstrate all 4 Plays as the scenario progresses. The instructor then asks for another volunteer to come forward to participate in a second practice vignette asking them to complete all 4 plays. The instructor may change the scenario to demonstrate a



different crisis illustrating different emotions to see how well the participant can identify emotions and summarize the crisis. Remember to include scenarios of both people with behavioral health conditions and those with IDD. If time permits, repeat this a third time.

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International

Keep Escalating Factors in Mind



- Hearing voices, paranoia, fear
- Rapid speech/movements
- Body “language” **NOT** consistent with “words”
- Sensitivity to loud noises, flashing lights, touch
- Law enforcement presence, tone of voice, volume
- Providing confusing or conflicting directions
- Missing “relevant” statements
- Missing “relevant” questions



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SLIDE 17.18 KEEP ESCALATING FACTORS IN MIND



Ask class participants what escalating factors they saw demonstrated during the earlier practice vignettes. Acknowledge when participants state the correct escalating factors. **Follow up by asking what they think or know to be escalating factors during a crisis that either they have been involved in or have witnessed.** Be sure to include examples involving people with behavioral health conditions and IDD. After they have answered, click, and show the above list of escalating factors.



Trainer Note: Highlight each point on the slide and discuss how these things can escalate a crisis. Another potential escalating factor that you may emphasize includes when officers must go “hands-on” to take an individual into custody for either a civil involuntary commitment or arrest. Officers sometimes congregate near the patrol car where the person is in custody to do an informal “debrief.” The person may become upset upon hearing the officers discussing the crisis details, possibly causing the person to re-experience the crisis. Officers need to take caution and continue to provide a safe environment, even if transporting for a civil involuntary examination or to jail if warranted.

The instructor should also discuss how others may contribute to escalating a crisis. Others may include bystanders and/or family members. Bystanders may shout at the person experiencing a crisis as well as family members may shout or argue with the person experiencing a crisis. The family may be in crisis when they call the police. The officer will need to direct their backup officer, if present, to help de-escalate bystanders and/or family members. If a backup is not immediately available, the officer in charge will need to de-escalate others or move the person experiencing a crisis to an area in which others cannot continue to escalate the situation.

Source: Major Sam Cochran, University of Memphis and CIT International



Tips for Effective Responses



1. Observe and listen
2. Share observations
3. Develop rapport
4. Gather additional information, if needed
5. Work together to resolve

QUICK TIPS

SLIDE 17.19 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSES

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N**

Trainer Note: Briefly highlight each point on the list and point out examples that have been demonstrated throughout the week.



Plan for Solutions



- Pay attention to safety concerns
- Promote available options, offer reasonable choices
- Use time and patience to work through the crisis
- If possible, explain what will happen before acting/engaging
- Promote recovery; Continue to build rapport during transport

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SLIDE 17.20 PLAN FOR SOLUTIONS



Trainer Note: Reinforce each point on this slide based on what has been demonstrated today and throughout the week. Reference the information below, as needed.



Content Note: Officers need to understand the word *recovery*. Recovery often starts with officer engagement with a person experiencing a crisis and continues through the engagement of other crisis services and linkage to longer-term services as appropriate.



Module Wrap-Up

Questions?

This curriculum was created through support by Grant No. 2020-NT-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

SLIDE 17.21 MODULE WRAP-UP



Trainer Note: Use this as an opportunity for participants to ask questions before moving on to the next module.

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