

De-Escalation That Works: Managing Threat Response Under Pressure

SAFER LLC

Safety Awareness and Field Education Resources LLC

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Who is your instructor?

Bob Graham

- ◆ WA State CIT Coordinator
- ◆ Worked with Juvenile Offenders for 13 years @ Echo Glen Children's Center
- ◆ WSCJTC Advanced Training Division
- ◆ Certified Crisis Intervention Specialist III
(National Anger Management Association)
- ◆ Success Signals Certified Instructor

Course Objectives



- Identify strategies to maintain a respectful tone to meet needs of diverse constituents
- Learn to recognize early signs of escalation in client behavior (verbal and non-verbal cues of anger or distress)
- Apply verbal and non-verbal de-escalation tactics to defuse tense situations and reduce agitation

Human Threat Response System



What Triggers our threat response.



Human threat recognition

- ◆ Freeze-Jawless Fish
- ◆ Fight or Flight- Reptilian response
- ◆ Submission or Dominance – Mammalian brain
- ◆ Facial recognition – Modern primates



Planning

- ◆ What are your risks?
- ◆ How have you prepared for them?
- ◆ How can you prevent them?
- ◆ What is your plan?

“If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up someplace else.” - Yogi Berra

“Planning is what allows calm to show up when chaos walks in.”-Bob Graham

TOTALITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES

CONTROL YOURSELF

- ◆ Identify situations which cause you stress
- ◆ Your physical limitations
- ◆ Confidence in your ability to respond

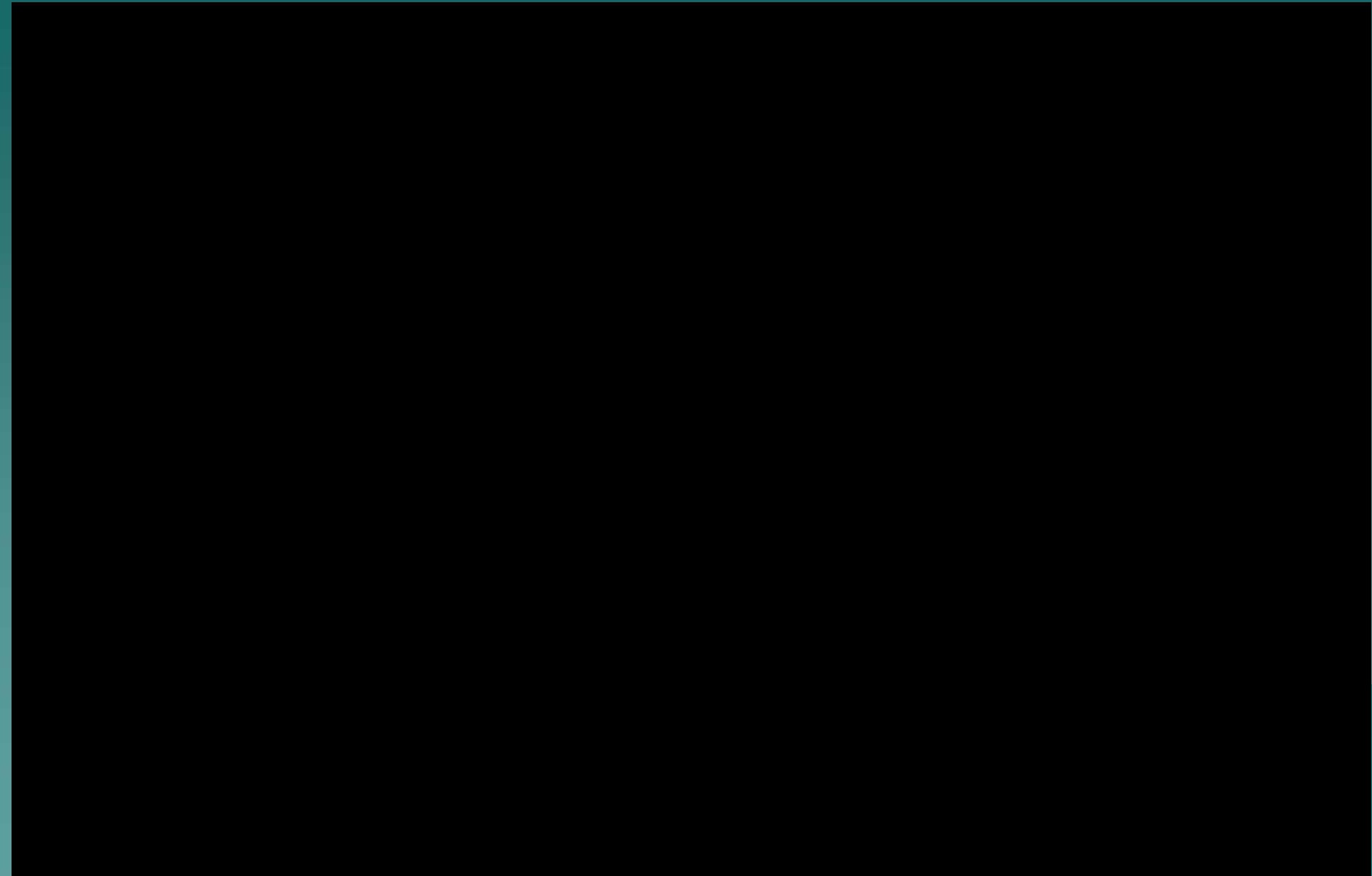
CONTROL THE ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ Who is around (back-up, show of force, support persons strengths)
- ◆ Back-up

MANAGE THE SUBJECT

- ◆ Baseline behavior
- ◆ History (violence, drugs, alcohol, mental health concerns)
- ◆ Friends and acquaintances
- ◆ Thinking distortions / Risk thinking

The Awareness Test





 **FH Innovation!**

SENSORY SCANNING

Visual Scanning

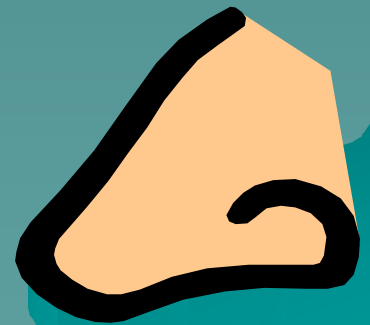
- ❖ Other People
- ❖ Weapons
- ❖ Escape Routes

AUDITORY SCANNING

- ❖ Slurred Speech
- ❖ Talking to Self

OLIFACTORY SCANNING

- ❖ Odors (drugs, chemicals, alcohol)
- ❖ Hygiene (change in baseline)



PROFESSIONALISM

- ◆ Be assertive but courteous
- ◆ Always introduce any other staff working with you
- ◆ Avoid “fish bowl” effects
- ◆ Be respectful to subjects and third parties
- ◆ Smile and pleasant demeanor

Dog's body language



Mammalian Dominance



Reading Body Language

- ◆ Head and Neck
- ◆ Eyes
- ◆ Hands
- ◆ Stance

Why Verbal De-escalation?



Intervention

◆ C

◆ I


◆ A

◆ L

◆ A

◆ S

C: Check for Safety

- ◆ Slow Down
 - ◆ Look around
 - ◆ Is it Safe?
 - ◆ Who is around?
 - ◆ Orient yourself
- 
- A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in a darker teal color, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

I: Introduction

- ◆ Give them your name
- ◆ Ask for theirs
- ◆ Use it

A: Ask

- ◆ Open ended Questions
- ◆ Who, Why, Where, What

L: Listen

- ◆ Active Listening Skills
- ◆ Body language
- ◆ Verbal cues

90/10 Rule

Its not about the Nail

A: Alignment

- ◆ Reflective Statement
- ◆ “I” Statements
- ◆ Feeling and Content
- ◆ “I can see how you could feel that way”

S: Support

- ◆ I can help
- ◆ I know some people
- ◆ Let me make a call

Verbal Tactics / Behavioral Zones

- ❖ Baseline
- ❖ Anxiety Behavior
- ❖ Defensive Behavior
- ❖ Aggressive Behavior
- ❖ Danger Behavior



Baseline Behavior

- ◆ Behavior that an individual Normally displays.
- ◆ Behavior is driven by past experiences and current expectations
- ◆ Culture and gender can contribute to Baseline behavior.



Anxiety Behavior



- ◆ The first level of escalation from baseline.
- ◆ Objective is to de-escalate behavior back to baseline.
- ◆ What are some characteristics of Upset Behavior?

Characteristics of Anxiety Behavior

- ◆ A change in Baseline Behavior
- ◆ Crying
- ◆ Pacing
- ◆ Increased sensitivity to noise or movement
- ◆ Increased body movement



Response to Anxiety behavior.

- ◆ Acknowledge behavior *(verbalize your observations)*
- ◆ Define problem by asking open ended questions. *(you can ask closed ended if needed)*
- ◆ Summarize and respond to feeling and content.
- ◆ Ask person to verbalize options
- ◆ Problem Solve
- ◆ Develop a plan.

Non-Verbal for Anxiety Behavior

- ◆ Face the person
- ◆ Maintain good eye contact
- ◆ Keep an open posture
- ◆ Speak slowly and without excess emotion.



Defensive Behavior

- ◆ Objective is to de-escalate behavior and return to baseline while planning escape routes and defensive responses.
- ◆ What does Defensive Behavior look like?



Characteristics of Defensive Behavior

- ◆ Red face
- ◆ Protection of personal space
- ◆ Tightening of muscles
- ◆ Talking loudly, rapidly



Response for Defensive Behavior

- ◆ Describe the Behavior
- ◆ Define Appropriate Behavior/Set Limits
- ◆ State options and resulting consequences
- ◆ Give the person a choice
- ◆ Say “it is your decision” and Wait
- ◆ Develop a follow-up plan

Non-Verbal for Defensive Behavior

- ◆ Avoid Crowding the person
- ◆ Maintain Calm
- ◆ Try to get the person to sit down
- ◆ Get person to move to a new location
- ◆ Remove others from scene
- ◆ Plan escape route/analyze defensive options.

Aggressive Behavior

- ◆ Behavior that presents a serious threat. (*out of control behavior is not limited to physical activity*)



- ◆ What does Aggressive behavior look like?

Non-Verbal for Aggressive Behavior

- ◆ Find an escape route
- ◆ Analyze defensive response options
- ◆ Increase space between you and them
- ◆ Maintain non-threatening body language
- ◆ Minimize verbal communication.



Responses for Aggressive Behavior

- ◆ Reaffirm the consequences of a violent act.
- ◆ Describe behavior in relation to what they want
- ◆ Ask is it working?
- ◆ De-escalate or leave



Danger Behavior

◆ Pre-attack Indicators

- Stare and Freeze
- Target glance
- Head drop
- Witness Check
- Felony Stretch

Review Course Objectives



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Questions?

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