



De-Escalation Techniques for Teachers

Michigan State Police

Objectives

- Discuss conflict and how it can be beneficial.
 - Provide de-escalation and deflection techniques.
 - View a classroom situation in which de-escalation skills were utilized.
 - Discuss best courses of action.
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Questions

- Has anyone experienced a situation in which they had a conflict with a student?
 - Did it escalate or de-escalate?
 - What worked or did not work?
 - What was the outcome?
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Conflict

- Conflict is not always a bad thing. It can be helpful to your personal and professional growth.
 - Conflict can be an opportunity to resolve issues the student has with a teacher, if it is completed in the correct manner.
 - Learning to understand and compromise with the student is a skill that is vitally important in your professional career.
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Verbal De-Escalation Defined

- Verbal de-escalation is a targeted intervention for use with a student who is at risk for aggression.
- It involves using calm language along with other communication techniques to diffuse, redirect, or de-escalate a conflict situation.

How to Handle Conflict

Natural Reaction - **CONFRONTATION**

vs.

Studied Response - **DEFLECTION AND REDIRECTION**

Deflection Techniques

Springboard - focus technique

- “I appreciate that...but...”
- “I’m sorry you feel that way...but...”
- “I understand...but...”
- “That may be true...however...”

How to Respond

- As a teacher, you must maintain a calm demeanor and steady, level voice, even in the face of intense verbal disrespect or threats from the student.
 - Speak softly and slowly; step back and try to see the situation from the student's perspective.
 - Speak respectfully to the student.
 - Strive to appear calm even if you are upset or anxious.
 - Avoid the use of sarcasm, teasing, reprimands, or other negative comments.
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De-Escalation Techniques

(The Three “C’s”)

- Confident
 - Calm
 - Create space
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De-Escalation Techniques

- Speak slowly.
 - Lower your voice.
 - Avoid staring.
 - Avoid arguing or being confrontational.
 - Show concern through your responses.
 - Be prepared to react!
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De-Escalating Conflicts

(The Five “R” Methods)

- **RECEIVE** the comments from the student without interruption and do not become defensive.
 - **REPEAT** the comments of the student as objectively as possible.
 - **REQUEST** the student provide a way of dealing with the problem.
 - **REVIEW** the options and decide on the best approach.
 - **RESPECT** the student even if you disagree.
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Best Courses of Action

- Always attempt to de-escalate any dangerous situation.
 - This can be accomplished through words and body language.
 - Self-defense should only be used as a last resort.
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Deflection Techniques

Your language must be professional.

- Professional language sounds better; teachers should communicate in a professional manner.
- It disempowers the individual and allow you to maintain control.
- Avoid using profanity. Profanity may be viewed as a sign of weakness that lowers you to the level of the individual with whom you are dealing. It may also be a precursor to “setting off” an individual.

Readiness to Respond

- Use calming posture.
- Keep hands open and visible to the student.
- Show open and accepting body language. Stand at an angle instead of facing the student directly.
- Avoid “clenched” body language such as crossing arms or balling hands into fists.

If You Cannot Defuse the Situation

- Do not hesitate to seek assistance from other teachers, counselors, or administrators immediately.
 - If the student becomes violent, protect yourself from the assault and subsequently follow the reporting policy set forth by your school district.
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