

De-escalation ideas

De-escalation and Resolving Conflict Respectfully

- Ensure facial expression and ‘tone of voice’ (what you say/how you say it) matches body language: ‘congruency’.
- Develop an awareness of what message your body language is conveying to the other person (while you are monitoring theirs).
- Express an interest in resolving the issue or meeting the other's needs and concerns, as well as your own.
- Acknowledge the importance of their perspective (ask, listen and find out what it is!) This expression of empathy can also help de-escalate an angry person.
- Avoid expressing ‘judgment’ of his/her behaviour during conflict (can be a trigger).

Reframing to Reduce Conflict

“We’re not retreating, we’re just advancing in a different direction”.

- When faced with hostility, it is natural to push back or defend. Reframing is a way to change directions.
- Reframing reflects understanding, then helps to change the emphasis from differences to common ground, by shifting from blame into a more positive framework for understanding each other’s perspectives.
- A reframe based upon what the person clearly values, can lead to new directions and shared understanding.

A Reframing Example:

- “You’re late! I’ve been sitting here for half an hour waiting; you obviously think it’s not important!”
- Unhelpful escalators: Arguing, ‘defending’ yourself, ‘correcting’, justifying, blaming others, getting angry back.
- Try Reframing: “Attending this appointment is obviously important to you and it’s important to me too.” “I really appreciate you coming on time *and I’m really sorry that I was late.*” (A simple apology can also help de-escalate feelings of ‘justified anger’).