
VANDERBILT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

VERBAL DE-ESCALATION

Verbal De-escalation Agenda

Pre-Assessment

Statistics

Personal Response

Personal Space

Verbal Contact

Be Concise

Identify Wants & Feelings

Listen to Me

Set Limits

Agree or Agree to Disagree

Have Back up

Debrief

Reflection

Verbal De-escalation Objectives

1. Discuss factors contributing to disruptive behaviors in patient populations served at VPH.
2. Identify 11 steps of managing an escalating patient's behavior.
3. Apply verbal de-escalation skills in mock simulations.

Pre-Assessment

1. Explain some acts of aggression or violence you have seen while at work.
2. Have you felt frightened at work because of patient aggression or agitation? If yes, explain.
3. Have you ever had a time where you felt like you did not know what to do with an agitated or aggressive patient? If yes, explain.
4. What would you like to learn from this class?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ACE Questionnaire: Finding your ACE Score

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often**
 - a. Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?
OR
 - b. Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
Yes or No If yes, enter 1 _____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often**
 - a. Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?
OR
 - b. Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
Yes or No If yes, enter 1 _____

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**
 - a. Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?
OR
 - b. Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?
Yes or No If yes, enter 1 _____

4. Did you **often** feel that
 - a. No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?
OR
 - b. Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
Yes or No If yes, enter 1 _____

5. Did you **often** feel that
 - a. You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?
OR
 - b. Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
Yes or No If yes, enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?

Yes or No

If yes, enter 1 _____

7. Was your mother or stepmother

a. **Often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?

OR

b. **Sometimes or often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?

OR

c. **Ever** repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

Yes or No

If yes, enter 1 _____

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker, or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?

Yes or No

If yes, enter 1 _____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?

Yes or No

If yes, enter 1 _____

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes or No

If yes, enter 1 _____

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____ This is your ACE Score.

Statistics

60% of adults report experiencing abuse or other difficult family circumstances during childhood. (1)

26% of children in the United States will witness or experience a traumatic event before they turn four. (1)

Four of every 10 children in American say they experienced a physical assault during the past year, with one in 10 receiving an assault-related injury. (2)

2% of all children experienced sexual assault or sexual abuse during the past year, with the rate at nearly 11% for girls aged 14 to 17. (2)

Nearly **14%** of children repeatedly experienced maltreatment by a caregiver, including nearly 4% who experienced physical abuse. (2)

1 in 4 children was the victim of robbery, vandalism, or theft during the previous year. (2)

More than **13%** of children reported being physically bullied, while more than 1 in 3 said they had been emotionally bullied. (2)

1 in 5 children witnessed violence in their family or the neighborhood during the previous year. (2)

In one year, **39%** of children between the ages of 12 and 17 reported witnessing violence, **17%** reported being a victim of physical assault and **8%** reported being the victim of sexual assault. (3)

More than 60% of youth age 17 and younger have been exposed to crime, violence, and abuse either directly or indirectly. (4)

More than 10% of youth age 17 and younger reported five or more exposures to violence. (4)

About 10% of children suffered from child maltreatment, were injured in an assault, or witnessed a family member assault another family member. (4)

About 25% of youth age 17 and younger were victims of robbery or witnessed a violent act. (4)

Nearly half of children and adolescents were assaulted at least once in the past year. (4)

Among 536 elementary and middle school children surveyed in an inner-city community, **30%** had witnessed a stabbing and **26%** had witnessed a shooting. (5)

Young children exposed to five or more significant adverse experiences in the first three years of childhood face a **76%** likelihood of having one or more delays in their language, emotional or brain development. (6)

As the number of traumatic events experienced during childhood increases, the risk for the following health problems in adulthood increases: depression; alcoholism; drug abuse; suicide attempts; heart and liver diseases; pregnancy problems; high stress; uncontrollable anger; and family, financial, and job problems. (6)

Statistics

People who have experienced trauma are:

- **15 times** more likely to attempt suicide
- **4 times** more likely to become an alcoholic
- **4 times** more likely to develop a sexually transmitted disease
- **4 times** more likely to inject drugs
- **3 times** more likely to use antidepressant medication
- **3 times** more likely to be absent from work
- **3 times** more likely to experience depression
- **3 times** more likely to have serious job problems
- **2.5 times** more likely to smoke
- **2 times** more likely to develop chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- **2 times** more likely to have a serious financial problem

Verbal De-escalation Skills

Personal Response

- Think about body language and personal reactions to anger and distress. Where do you recognize triggers in yourself? What are your known triggers?

- What are some helpful tips to control your own biology when facing someone agitated or aggressive?

Allow Personal Space

- How can you assure a patient's personal space is respected?

- What allowances do you give for someone who is agitated or aggressive?

Verbal De-escalation Skills

Establish Verbal Contact

- What are the first things you say or do to establish rapport?

- How do you start up a conversation with someone who is visually upset or agitated?

Be Concise

- How do you keep your explanations short? What is necessary to say right now versus what can wait?

- What is in your current practice that could be overwhelming to a patient?

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