



De-Escalation Techniques

Basic Communication Skills

State of Georgia
Crisis Intervention Team
Training Program



Safety! Safety! Safety!

- As with everything we do, we never jeopardize our personal safety.
- You escalate and de-escalate depending on the situation as dictated by your departmental policy and procedures.



Force Continuum

- Officer presence
- Verbal commands
- Soft empty hands
- Hard empty hands
- Impact weapons
- Lethal force



Memphis Model

- Model developed following the shooting of an unarmed consumer and subsequent community outcry
- Partnership of law enforcement, NAMI, and mental health professionals traveled to Memphis, Tennessee for two-day orientation and then returned for forty-hour course



Why C.I.T.?

- Sixteen percent (16%) of the population in jail and in prison is mentally ill.
- Large number of calls for service involve mental illness issues.
- The training leads to a reduction in officer and consumer injuries.
- Repeated calls are reduced due to the problem-solving skills that are used by C.I.T. officers.



Breakdown of CIT

- Crisis – A crucial or decisive point; a traumatic change in a persons life
- Intervention – To compel or prevent an action
- Team – A number of persons associated in work or activity



Requirements for an Effective CIT Officer

- Ability to be a team player
- Good listening skills
- Empathic understanding
- Effective problem-solving skills
- Assertiveness
- Capacity to remain calm and in control



Effective Communication

- It is defined as the passing of information between one person and another that is mutually understood and results in the other person behaving in a manner that demonstrates understanding.
- CIT officers must be given sufficient time to accomplish the mission – Don't Rush!



Communication

- 7% of communication is verbal
- 93% of communication is not communicated by spoken words



Body Language - Kinesics

- Eye contact
- Body gestures (e.g., holding one's fist)
- Posture
- Body positioning in space
- Facial expressions
- Arm-crossing



Effective Listening

- Listen for the total meaning
- Respond and focus on what the consumer is telling you – block out distractions
- Reflecting statements show that you are listening
- Being sincere and real will convey understanding



Active Listening

- Minimal encouragers – Brief responses (sounds) that indicate your presence and that you are listening
 - Best used when consumers are talking and attempting to expressing themselves.
 - “Uh-huh . . . Okay . . . Yeah . . . Really . . .”
- For these to be effective, you must be sincere



Active Listening Techniques

- Introduction
- “I” Statements
- Restating
- Mirroring and Reflecting
- Paraphrasing and Summarizing

Officer Introduction

- Introduce yourself
 - “Good Morning”/”Good Afternoon; I’m Officer _____, and I’m a CIT officer with the _____ Police Department.” “What's your name?”
 - Introduction promotes communication
- Be prepared to explain the reason that you are there



Role-Playing

- Role-playing is a practical learning technique used in mastering the various de-escalation skill/techniques
- Everyone is initially uncomfortable when beginning the role-play exercises
- Don't forget this exercise is a learning experience
- Scenarios are derived from real life experiences
- Feedback is constructive

“I” Statements

- These statements reflect “what” you are seeing and hearing
 - “I can see that you are upset/angry.”
 - “I hear in your voice that you are _____.”
 - “I’m here to help you.”/“I want to help you.”
 - “I will keep you safe.”
 - “I care . . . I have time . . . I’m listening . . .”
 - “I appreciate your help and cooperation.”
- They convey that you are listening and understanding, and that you care.

Restating Statements

- Projects understanding and that you are listening
 - Consumer: “I don’t know what I’m going to do. My family doesn’t want me here.”
CIT Officer: “You’re not sure where you can stay for awhile, but home doesn’t seem to be the best place right now.”



Reflecting/Mirroring Statements

- Reflecting the consumer's feelings
- Accomplished by repeating the last few words
 - Consumer: "I'm tired of everyone not listening to me and it makes me angry."
 - C.I.T. Officer: "It makes you angry."



Summarizing/Paraphrasing Statements

- Restating the information or previous statements in your own words
- These statements should include the main points of the previous content
 - C.I.T. Officer: “Okay, so what you have told me is that . . ., and you feel . . . Do I understand you correctly?”

Open-Ended Questions

- These questions cannot be answered by a simple “yes” or “no”
- Avoid using “Why?” questions – They can lead to defensiveness
- These types of questions can assist the officer in acquiring additional information, and can also assist the officer in determining whether the consumer is in touch with reality
 - “Tell me more about” “What else . . . ?” “When did this happen?”



Closed-Ended Questions

- Helps the officer to obtain a commitment
 - Begin with the question, “Are you . . .?” or “Do you . . .?” or “Will you . . .?”
- Can also help the officer to request specific information
 - “Are you thinking of hurting yourself?”
 - “Will you let me take you to get some help?”



Don't argue with the consumer!

- The consumer has a right to feel or say whatever they want to say/feel
- Don't "buy into" delusions – Defer the issue in the best possible manner
- Be courteous, using such words as "please" and "thank you"
- Don't take the consumer's words/actions personally
- Be flexible and use your listening skills



Behaviors to Avoid

- **Avoid using “Why?” questions**
- **Do not allow your feelings to interfere with your professionalism, and always focus on the behavior you want from the consumer**
- **Avoid speaking loudly when it is not necessary**
- **Do not lose sight of officer safety skills**
- **Do not rush – you have time**
- **Avoid allowing yourself to be intimidated by other officers who you may think know better than you – Use them to support you**



Training

- “If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it!”
- Keep updated and refreshed about your training
- Safety First – De-escalation will not work 100% of the time
- Always remember the reason that you entered law enforcement.



Summary

- Introduction
- “I” Statements
- Restating Statements
- Mirroring and Reflecting Statements
- Paraphrasing and Summarizing Statements



Questions

“There are no
stupid questions!”



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