



# De-escalation Techniques

Presented by:

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&

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# Bios

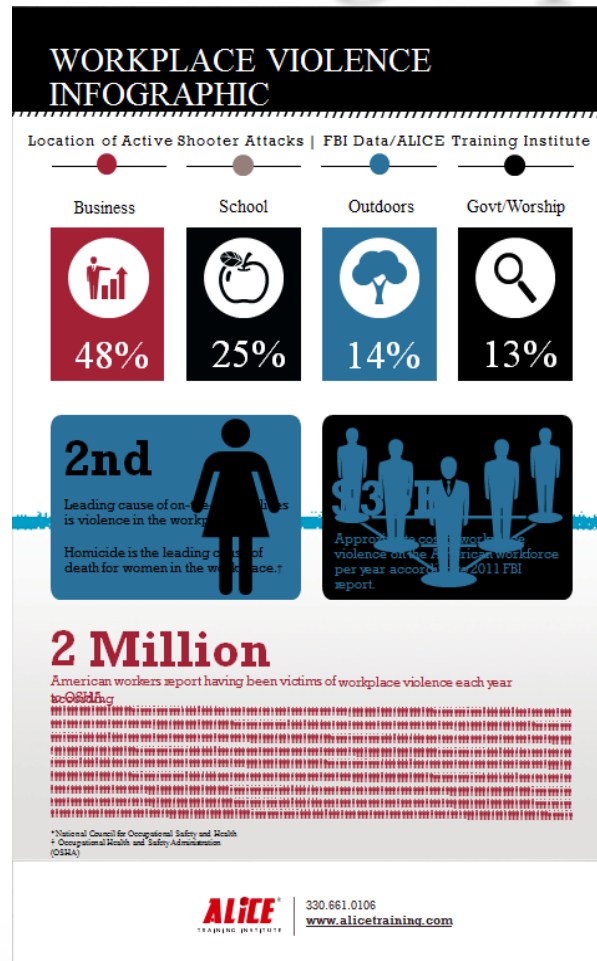
## **Dennis Merrigan**

- Fire Dept. Battalion Chief / 1992 – Present
- Post Grad Cert. Terrorism Studies
- MS Crisis/Emergency/Disaster management
- BS Crisis/Emergency/Disaster management
- AS Criminal Justice

## **Dennis F. Dougherty**

- Med-Tex Services, Inc. 2012 – Present
- Highway Patrolman (retired – 21 years)
- Crisis Officer
- Tactical Team Leader
- BS Criminal Justice
- AS Emergency Management and Planning

# FBI Infographic



# Two Key Concepts to Remember



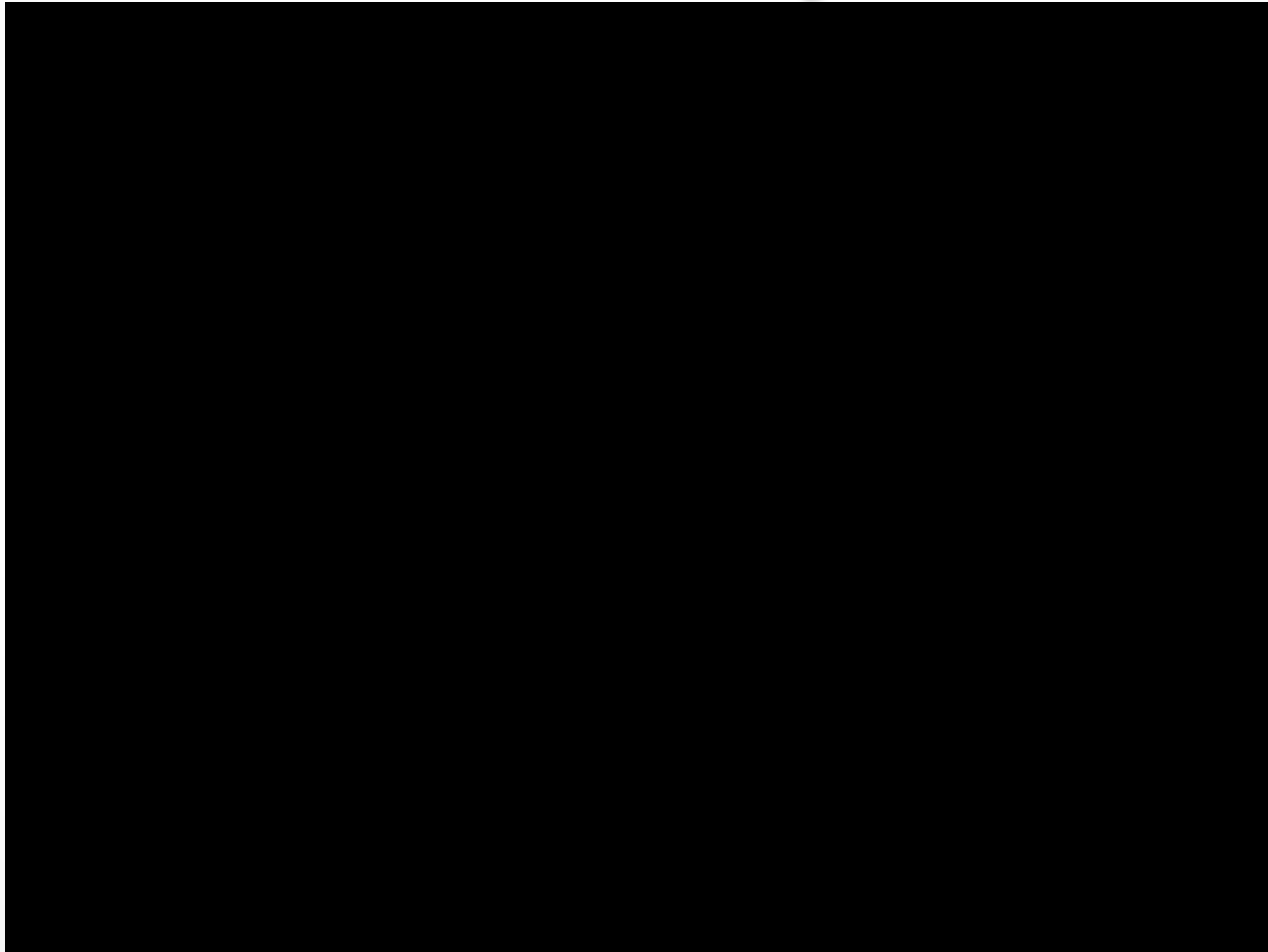
1. Reasoning with an angry person is not possible. The first and only objective in de-escalation is to reduce the level of agitation so that discussion becomes possible.
2. De-escalation techniques are inherently abnormal. They go against our natural 'fight or flight' reflexes. To be effective, we must remain calm and centered. We need to be professionally detached. Therefore these skills require practice to become useful.

# Precipitating Factors

- Loss of personal power
- Maintain self-esteem
- Fear
- Failure
- Seeking attention
- Displaced anger
- Psychological or physiological causes



# What would you do?



# Linked Behaviors

## People who are most likely to commit workplace violence include:

- Recently fired employees or those with the perception that he/she soon will be fired or laid off
- The employee who feels that he/she is not being heard
- The person involved in separation, adultery, divorce or child custody
- People who believe they have no voice about changes in their job
- People with romantic or sexual obsessions
- People (employees or others, i.e.: visitors) who have exhibited bizarre behaviors
- People who have made threats or have intimidated others
- People who have exhibited angry outbursts
- Employees with a history of interpersonal conflict with coworkers or supervisors
- People that often have a sense of persecution/injustice
- People with a history of past violence
- People who report a past history of violence by family members, especially if they can justify past violent behaviors
- People who have exhibited major behavioral changes
- People with a past history of alcohol or other drug abuse and/or psychiatric problems
- Employees that cannot take criticism and show contempt for the company and the boss
- People involved in stalking behavior or discussing stalking as a good thing
- People that exhibit feelings of desperation, such as divestment of valued property or other indicators of impending suicide

# Signs of Agitation

- Raised Voice
- Rapid Speech
- High Pitched Voice
- Fidgeting
- Shaking
- Balled Fists
- Erratic Movements
- Wild Gesturing
- Pacing
- Aggressive Posture





# Non-Verbal Techniques

Model these non-verbal behaviors:

Control your breathing

Control your voice (volume and tone)

Control your body language

Control your vocabulary

## **REMEMBER:**

Calm is just as contagious as fear or panic

# Non-Verbal Techniques

- Appear calm and self-assured
- Select an appropriate location
- Maintain limited eye contact
- Maintain a neutral facial expression
- Maintain an alert posture
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Speak soothingly
- Position yourself for safety

# Non-Verbal Techniques

## *Positioning yourself for safety:*

- Be at eye level
- Stay at the same height
- Angle yourself 45 degrees
- Maintain distance
- Keep exit clear
- Always face the person



# Verbal Techniques

- Disregard content, focus on calming
- Use a soft, slow and low tone of voice
- Do not interrupt
- Do not get defensive
- Respond selectively
- Be honest
- Empathize with feelings NOT behavior
- Do not analyze emotions
- Do not attempt to argue or persuade
- Identify external controls as institutional

# The 10 Principles of Listening

## 1. Stop Talking

- “If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear.” Mark Twain

## 2. Prepare Yourself to Listen

- Relax. Focus on the speaker

## 3. Put the Speaker at Ease

- Help the speaker to feel free to speak

## 4. Remove Distractions

- Focus on what is being said

## 5. Empathize

- Try to understand the other person's point of view

## 6. Be Patient

- A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished

## 7. Avoid Personal Prejudice

- Try to be impartial

## 8. Listen to the Tone

- Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying

## 9. Listen for Ideas – Not Just Words

- You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces

## 10. Wait and Watch for Non-Verbal Communication

- Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important

# Simple Listening Skills

## Simple Listening Skills:

- Listen
- Nod
- Do not interrupt
- Let them vent



**CLOSED**



**OPEN**



# Responsive Listening Skills

**To listen responsively, listen with the intent of understanding, instead of replying**

Use responsive listening to enhance the ability to:

- obtain information
- identify problems
- resolve conflicts
- improve the accuracy of communication
- solve problems
- motivate the speaker

# Ending De-escalation

- When the person has calmed down, you can then begin to address their individual situation in the same patient and professional manner that you have already displayed

-OR-



# Ending De-escalation

- The person you are working with does not respond to your efforts at de-escalating the situation and you need to end the interaction without exacerbating things or putting yourself or anyone else in harm's way

# Sample: Written Policy

## **SAMPLE WRITTEN POLICY STATEMENT:**

**This organization does not tolerate workplace violence. We define workplace violence as actions or words that endanger or harm another employee or result in other employees having a reasonable belief that they are in danger. Such actions include:**

- Verbal or physical harassment
- Verbal or physical threats
- Assaults or other violence
- Any other behavior that causes others to feel unsafe (e.g. bullying, sexual harassment)

**Company policy requires an immediate response to all reports of violence. All threatening incidents will be investigated and documented by the employee relations department. If appropriate, the company may provide counseling services or referrals for employees**

**The following disciplinary actions may also be taken:**

- Oral reprimand
- Written reprimand
- Suspension
- Termination



# Questions?

THANK YOU

