



# DE-ESCALATION



## WHY DE-ESCALATE?

Verbal de-escalation is an **imperative** step in dealing with the agitated patient.

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De-escalation should be **noncoercive, supportive, and safe.**

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Physical measures should be avoided at **all costs.**

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Successful de-escalation can take **less than 5 minutes**, and **reduce emotional and physical trauma** for patients and staff.

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## GUIDELINES FOR DE-ESCALATION



1. **Respect personal space.**
  - a. TWO arms lengths away from the patient.
2. **Do not be provocative.**
  - a. Keep a calm demeanor; avoid crossing arms; stand at an angle; avoid excessive direct eye contact.
3. **Establish verbal contact.**
  - a. Have one provider interacting with the patient at a time; introduce yourself, title, and role; explain why they are here, and what to expect from the encounter.
4. **Be concise.**
  - a. Short sentences and simple vocabulary; allow time for processing; repetition is key.
5. **Identify the patients' wants and feelings.**
6. **Listen closely to what the patient is saying, and show you are listening.**
7. **Agree with the patient, or agree to disagree.**
8. **Lay down the law, and set clear limits.**
9. **Offer the patients choices and optimism.**
  - a. Even small choices like food and blankets can be powerful and offer a semblance of control over circumstances.
  - b. Discuss medications.
10. **Following all encounters, debrief with the patient and staff.**

SOURCE: Project BETA 10 Domains of De-Escalation

**CODE WHITE:** A "**Code White**" is a safety mechanism triggered as an emergency response for a violent person or situation, where there is threat of injury or harm. **If you feel like your safety is in danger**, call for help and know how to trigger a Code White at your hospital.