DE-ESCALATION

WHY DE-ESCALATE?
Verbal de-escalation is an imperative step in dealing with the agitated patient.

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

Physical measures should be avoided at all costs.

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

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.