**JOB AID: De-Escalation Techniques**

**DEFINITIONS**

Precipitating factors: The causes of an individual’s behavior that can include internal events (illness, mental health, effects of medication) and/or external events (traffic, finances, family relationships).

Rational detachment: The ability to manage your own behavior and attitude during a stressful event, which involves being aware of what may provoke you.

Para verbal communication: The tone, volume and cadence in which verbal communication is delivered.

**DIFFUSING A SITUATION**

**Step 1** – **Universal Greeting**

* Establish trust by introducing yourself (name and role) in a friendly way.
  + “Good morning. My name is Janis, and I am a nurse on this unit for the hospital. I understand you have some concerns about the care of your child. Can you tell me more?”

**Step 2 – Assess the Situation**

* Determine the individual’s mood. Consider their tone of voice and body language in addition to what they are saying. Take note of the environment and who else may be present in the room.
* Ask open ended questions to better understand the situation—who, what, when, where, etc.
* Always Assume a Supportive Stance.
  + Maintain 4 to 6 feet between you and the individual.
  + Stand at an angle or off to the side on the person with your stronger, dominant side away.
  + Balance your weight and keep your hands waist-high and open.

**Step 3 – Explain and Empathize**

* Take time to explain why you are addressing the problem. Use language that conveys empathy and respect.
  + “I hear how frustrating this is for you.”
* Use active listening techniques:
  + Nodding your head to assure the individual you are engaged in the conversation.
  + Offering general leads like “I see” or “What happened next?” to guide the conversation forward.
  + Leaning forward conveys understanding and respect.
  + Paraphrase what the individual told you. This builds rapport and confirms that you understand and care about what they are saying. “What I hear you saying is….”

Individual: “I cannot believe I won’t be able to leave tonight. I miss my own bed.”

Paraphrase: “It sounds like you’re feeling frustrated because you want to go home.”

* Anticipate varied responses such as confrontational and/or disrespectful, this will allow you not being taken off guard and can remain calm.
  + Use **verbal deflectors** to express empathy while also communicating to the individual how you will work with them to solve the issue. Examples include:
    - “I hear that sir, however…”
    - “I hear what you are saying……, however this is what we need to do now …”
    - “I would be upset, too, but right now…”

**Step 4 – Provide Solutions**

* Whether you can or cannot provide a solution, the key is showing the individual that you made some type of physical effort to help them.
* Offer positive options first before negative options. Provide a “peace phrase” at the end of the negative option to negate any threatening or challenging tone.
  + Example: “Ma’am, I can help you get this done much quicker so you can be on your way before rush hour, if you lower your voice. Unfortunately, if you continue to use profanity, I may need to call Security, and they will have you escorted out of the building, and that is the last thing I want to do. Can you work with me on this?” “Will you let me help you?”

**Step 5 – Confirm Cooperation –** *Optional depending on the situation*

* Ask them: “Is there anything I can say to earn your cooperation?” This allows them another opportunity to cooperate before you have to bring in another party to help with the situation.

**Step 6 – Take Action**

* If you are not able to gain the individual’s cooperation, follow through with the negative options provided. Failure to do so will destroy any credibility you may have with them and others.
* If a solution was agreed upon, follow-up with the individual at a later time to make sure they are okay.