



De-escalation Training

Fair Fight & Southern Poverty Law Center

*De-escalation
process
overview with
highlighted
best practices*

***** Nothing in this presentation should be construed as legal advice. Consult with your legal counsel regarding compliance with Michigan or Federal law.**

Goals/Strengths

Goals

- **OPEN**
- **SAFE**
- **SUPPORTIVE**

Strengths

- **You Have Power, Authority and Credibility**
- **Election Workers Can Play a Key Role in De-Escalation**
- **Your Leadership and Preparation Matters**

Through planning and training, we can create the conditions to minimize disturbance in the voting process and public meetings and safely de-escalate bystander disruptions

Today's Environment

**Hyper-partisanship &
proliferation of disinformation
and misinformation**

**State legislature intervention to
sow chaos and confusion**

**Increasing Tension, Threats,
Surveillance, and Attacks**

Understanding Causes of Conflict

Interests

- feelings about what is desirable

Needs

- Tangible or intangible: ie respect, honor recognition

Values

- Meaning-making and identity

Aspirations

- mental representations for which we strive, goals standards, individual principles; perceptions of fairness

Cultural

- exploring how people think and what their common sense tells them to do

Resources

- Scarcity and control of.

De-escalation Best Practices

Clerks: Key Principles

PLAN: Planning ahead makes your job easier in the moment

TRAIN: Avoid arguing, ordering, or defensive postures

RESPOND: De-escalate situations safely by drawing on CLARA

Do's and Don'ts

DON'T: Engage in actions that risk escalation

Immediately Order

Threaten

Attempt to Debunk

Argue or Criticize

Minimize

Name calling

Use Defensive Postures

Block exits or invade personal space

Interrupt

Photograph/Film

INSTEAD: Remain calm, confident, and clear

Request and Suggest *before* Command and Demand

Be Clear, Simple and Specific With Requests

Remember: Policy is not Personal

**Keep an even tone of voice
Remain calm**

Empathize

Contentious Meetings

Disinformation needs fear and anger to spread

Strategy

**Create
Space**



**Remember
Your
Audience**



**Emphasize
Shared
Values and
Expectations**



**Enforce
Rules
Consistently
and Fairly,
Follow up**



**Defuse,
Rehumanize,
Remain Calm**

CLARA Model

Calm and Center

Listen

Acknowledge

Respond

Assess

De-escalation Strategy: CLARA

Calm and Center Yourself:

Appear calm, centered, self-assured, even if you don't feel it. Avoid pointing, crossing your arms or other more aggressive postures

Listen:

Let the person vent and be sure to listen explicitly for feelings, needs, or values.

De-escalation Strategy: CLARA

Acknowledge: Begin by acknowledging the feelings, needs, or values you have heard. [Not about agreeing with their position, statement, or behavior.]


Ex. “I sense your aggravation at this situation. I hear your concern for safety.”

De-escalation Strategy: CLARA

Respond:

After acknowledgment, offer open ended or choice questions; address the issue; make a clear request or proposal.

Ex. “Will you tell me more about your concerns?” “I understand you have every right to feel angry, but it is not ok to threaten people here.”



Most people begin at “Respond”, **increasing the risk of escalation.**

Assess:

Trust your instincts: If de-escalation is not working, **STOP. Get help.**

C: Calm and Center Oneself

Centering helps one make contact with what is happening

This prepares one to respond and engage

Mindfulness Techniques Include:

Breathing

Asking the other person to sit down

Avoid pointing, crossing your arms, or other aggressive gestures

Mindfulness (per Merriam-Webster)

i. the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis

L: Listen

Mediation based active listening skills

Allowing for some of the speaker's story to be shared

Offering respect for the motivation of the speaker

Isolating the issues

Understanding the emotional response

Maintaining the Principles and values of the Election

Understanding people have different visions or concept of events or social constructs

A: Acknowledge

Implicit Bias Discussion (being in present and knowing how the interaction may affect you individually)

Reframing Discussion: Using neutral language to reframe the situation

R: Respond

Use Re-Framing in Neutral Language

Use Open-Ended Questions and/or affective statements

Avoid leading questions and accusations

Open-ended questions:

Asks for information without directing or leading the speaker in a particular track. Such questions show that the listener is interested in what is being said and encourage the speaker to relate events in their own words, in their own way, emphasizing what was important to them without interference with their natural train of thought. Such questions will assist the listener in understanding the needs, concerns, and priorities of the speakers.

WHERE?

WHO?

WHAT?

HOW?

~~**WHY?**~~

Re-Framing Defined

1. Reframing is a technique mediators use to clarify statements to take out harmful tone and identify the core facts of statements.

2. Reframing allows the listener to diffuse hostilities and refocus the parties toward collaboration.

Re-Framing Exercise

I called her and she never calls me back.

I am just so tired of constantly supporting them.

He is a liar.

I wish you hadn't failed.

If he would have just done what I said, we wouldn't be here.

She never pays attention to what I say.

It doesn't matter what I do, they are never happy.

A: Assess

- Trusting in your Team
- Trusting in your Training
- Following Best Practices of Security Experts
- Asking for Help when Needed

Scenarios

Scenario 1

- **During the early voting period, a group of frustrated voters show up at the Counting Board demanding ballots be rejected.**

What do you do before the process to prepare?

What do you do during the process when tensions rise?

What do you do after the process is complete?

Scenario 2

- **Election observers unlawfully allege fraud and misconduct, challenging ballots during ballot review for the purpose of causing significant disruptions.**

What do you do before the election begins?

What do you do during the process if tensions rise?

What do you do after the election?

Scenario 3

- **An employee was followed to their car by frustrated political activists.**

What do you do before the election begins?

What do you do during the interaction?

What do you do after the interaction?

What Makes This Important?

Wrap Up and Resources

- Suggestion: Informational Cards/Signs

Questions?