

De-Escalation Techniques

Key Concepts

- Don't take control if you don't have to
- Express support and concern
- Listen to their story
- Ask how you can help them
- Don't argue or reason with psychotic thinking
- Be low key: offer support, "We are here to help."
- Give them space: don't make them feel trapped
- Avoid sudden or quick movements
- They can't handle a lot of stimulation
- Unpredictable, always think of your safety
- Have only one person do the talking
- Others should keep some distance
- Ask casual observers to leave
- Use short, simple sentences
- Speak slowly and softly
- Avoid touching or shouting
- Avoid continuous eye contact
- Sit and talk at a psychotic person's side

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Officer Safety

- Do not take risks
- Do SLOW DOWN and assess
- Do not shout orders or quickly move in too close
- Do continue trying to establish communications and rapport
- Consider calling in a mobile crisis team of mental health professionals (DHS Emergency Services)
- Do not prematurely introduce less-lethal weapons, they may not work and may provoke an attack
- Do take as much time as is needed under the circumstances
- Individual may display extraordinary strength so avoid physical confrontation
- Explain policies, especially handcuffing
- Pain compliance techniques will probably NOT work
- After the person is restrained, DO NOT HOG TIE. Make sure the individual's position allows them to breathe easily. Monitor vital signs and call for medical aid.