



Kentucky Association of Counties

Bringing it down a notch: De-escalation techniques for the workplace

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De-escalate definition

to decrease in intensity or magnitude, to reduce the intensity of (a conflict or potentially violent situation)

“Decreasing the intensity of a situation through strategies, techniques and tactics.” – **Jack Ryan**, Legal and Liability Risk Management Institute

Why do we have confrontations in the workplace?

- **Stress of the unknown:** What is it going to cost me? What hoops am I going to have to jump through? How will it effect my way of life?
- **Conflict:** new regulation, rule or laws, family court, dispute over tax bills
- **Personality differences:** alphas personalities: It's not personal, so don't make it personal.

Signs of agitation

- Aggressive posture
- Raised voice
- Pacing
- Balled fist
- Out of the ordinary hand movements
- Facial expressions
- High pitched voice
- Rapid speech
- Verbally abusive/threats

Techniques for de-escalation

- Communicate effectively.
- Active listening: eyes, ears, mouth
- Stay calm and maintain personal control.
- Be honest and open.
- Be apologetic: “I’m sorry,” goes a long way.
- Be confident and nonthreatening.
- Show empathy.
- Express genuine concern.
- Don’t judge.

Strategies for de-escalation

Have an action plan.



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Strategies for de-escalation

- **Stall:** Take a moment to refocus.
- **Focus the blame:** On the state, Frankfort, etc.
- **Tag team:** Have a coworker take over communication.
- **Intervention:** Call in the boss.

Tactics to prepare for the last resort of self defense

- Create and maintain distance where possible.
- Plan an escape route.
- Position yourself to place barriers or shields between you and the individual.

Some people are just _____.

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Plan B

When all else fails...



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