



DEFUSING ANGER & AGGRESSION

Safe Strategies for Secondary School Teachers

MODULE 6: RESPONDING TO CRISIS BEHAVIOR

As we have seen, in many cases the teacher can defuse a problem. Sometimes, however, a teacher needs to treat a situation as a crisis, such as when a student's behavior indicates drug or alcohol use, possession of a weapon, serious threats, aggression, or unexpected behavior. In these cases, the teacher needs to follow emergency procedures and get help. In responding to crisis behavior, follow these steps:



Step 1: Pause and assess

Do not respond immediately. Look at the floor, look at the student and keep still. Ask yourself, "Is this an emergency situation?" If so, "Yes," move to the next step.

Step 2: Physically disengage and send for help

Say to the student very calmly, respectfully and firmly, "Just a second," and step back in a calm and deliberate manner. Without looking at the student, move to the nearest classroom and follow your school's emergency procedures.

The most important consideration in this scenario is SAFETY FIRST. There is no shame or loss of respect in disengaging from a dangerous situation. Never feel obligated or pressured to take care of such situations by yourself.

Summary

There is no question that educators face serious challenges in dealing with problem behavior. These problems have multiple causes and require multiple solutions. The purpose of this program is to highlight one safe and sensible approach to responding to problem behavior: DEFUSION.

The most common feature of this strategy is to focus on staff behavior. The way we respond to the problem behavior can either defuse or escalate the behavior. The most important message to take away from this program is to recognize the significant effect your responses have on the outcome, and to examine your own way of responding to problem behavior.