



## DEFUSING ANGER & AGGRESSION

Safe Strategies for Secondary School Teachers

### MODULE 4: REDUCING AGITATION

**T**he teacher first follows reasonable procedures in trying to get Michael to start work, but the situation escalates because she does not recognize or address his agitation. His body posture, facial expressions and curt responses are all signs that he is agitated.

#### Why is it important to reduce agitation?

Serious problem behaviors are usually preceded by agitation, so if we address agitation we can avert more serious problems. Besides, when students are agitated their class involvement is limited because they are distracted. There are two critical steps in reducing agitation:



#### 1. *Recognize the signs of agitation*

Agitation can show itself in one of two ways. The agitated student may either

- Become more active
- Shut down and become withdrawn

#### 2. *Use effective strategies to help the student settle down and resume class*

Once you recognize the signs of agitation, here are the steps in addressing it:

- State the task
- Communicate concern
- Allow space
- Attend to other students
- Help student begin work

Here are some strategies for dealing with agitation:

- Give recognition and support
- Provide space
- Present options
- Allow for preferred activities
- Stay in proximity to the student
- Allow for independent activities
- Allow for movement
- Provide relaxation activities
- Involve the student in the plan