



# DE-ESCALATION

Understanding Behaviors



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W E L C O M E



DE-ESCALATION IS A  
POSITIVE MIND SET!

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Is what you are  
doing on your bus  
working for you?

TEENA MITCHELL 2023

Sometimes you  
have to rethink the  
things you thought  
you thought  
through.



-Winnie the Pooh



## OUR GOALS

- Get the students home or to school safely!
- Avoid conflicts
- Avoid physical contact
  - Don't try to physically force a student
- Leave emotions out of it!
- Apply de-escalation techniques

**Don't Let Three Steps from Freedom Turn into an Issue!**



# DOCUMENTING BEHAVIORS

- If behaviors get to a point of documentation, it should not come as a surprise to anyone!
  - We should already have communicated our efforts with:
    - Student
    - Supervisor
    - Administrator

All Documented Behaviors  
Should have a Strategy for  
Success!



Don't use referrals as a threat!



# MAINSTREAMING AND INCLUSION

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## Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

### Mainstreaming and Inclusion...

An **inclusion** classroom is a general education classroom that has students who receive special education. **Inclusion** is a teaching approach that focuses on including students with special education needs in the school community. **Inclusion** goes beyond placement in a general education class.

This is also the case with school buses. Students with disabilities can and do ride general education buses with or without supports





# STUDENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

## Students with Disabilities



most cases referrals are used as documentation to find a better way to transport

- **In most cases, the referral for a special needs student does not result in discipline**
- **There are stringent laws that govern suspending students with disabilities from the bus**
- **Suspensions are rarely used (usually only in extreme safety concern situations)**
- **Could be used to implement a BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan)**

DON'T RUSH  
THE PROCESS

GIVE SPACE

VALIDATE FEELINGS  
& EXPERIENCES

DON'T TAKE  
IT PERSONALLY

REMEMBER THE  
END GOAL

## WHAT IS VERBAL DE-ESCALATION?

Verbal De-Escalation is what we use during a potentially dangerous, or threatening, situation in and attempt to prevent a person from causing harm to themselves, to us or others.





# VERBAL DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

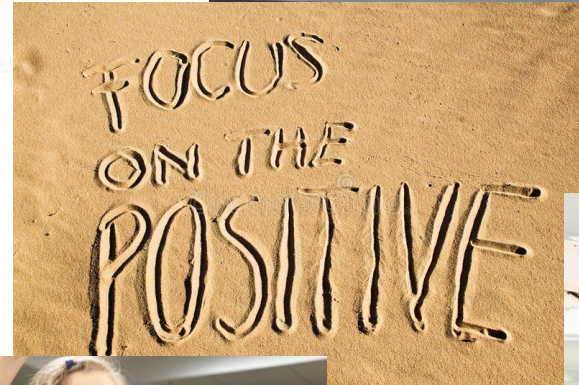
- Simply listening
- Empathizing with the other person
- Re-focusing the other person on something positive
- Giving helpful choices
- Distracting the other person
- Motivating the other person (especially useful with students)
- Setting limits

## Empathizing

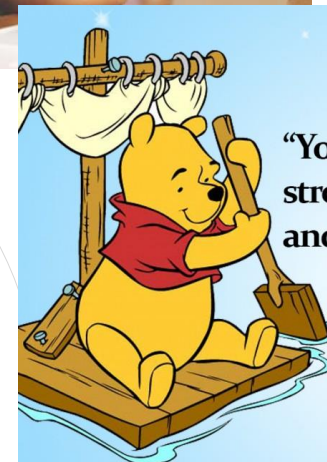
Reaching out with compassion, seeking to understand people's emotional needs and struggles, and being supportive

When people are upset, they often need empathy before they can hear what is being said to them.

Marshall B. Rosenberg



When Distraction is a Good Thing



**"You're braver than you believe,  
stronger than you seem,  
and smarter than you think."**

- Winnie-the-Pooh by A.A. Milne

## Active Listening Skills

## Expected Outcomes

1	Using open ended questions	• Person gives more information
2	Provides encouragement	• Person elaborates on topic
3	Paraphrasing statements	• Person feels heard and validated
4	Reflection of feelings	• Person feels more understood
5	Summarizing interaction	• Person sees new meaning in his story

### Hearing

- Accidental
- Involuntary
- Effortless

### Listening

- Focused
- Voluntary
- Intentional

# LISTENING

## Three Main Listening Skills:

- **Engage:**
  - Use un-intrusive gestures (such as nodding of your head, saying okay or asking an infrequent question.)
- **Attend:**
  - Physical and mental attention
- **Reflect:**
  - Paraphrasing and reflecting, using the feelings of the other person. (empathy)
- No other activities when listening.
- Multi-tasking is not good when you are listening.
- **What is the difference between “hearing” and “listening”?**





## DE-ESCALATING POSITIVELY

- Use positive and helpful statements such as:
  - “I want to help you!”
  - “I understand you are upset, what can I do to help you?”
  - “How can I make this a better ride for you?”
  - “How about I let you choose a seat that you would like so we can get you home today!”
  - “Help me understand how I can help you.”



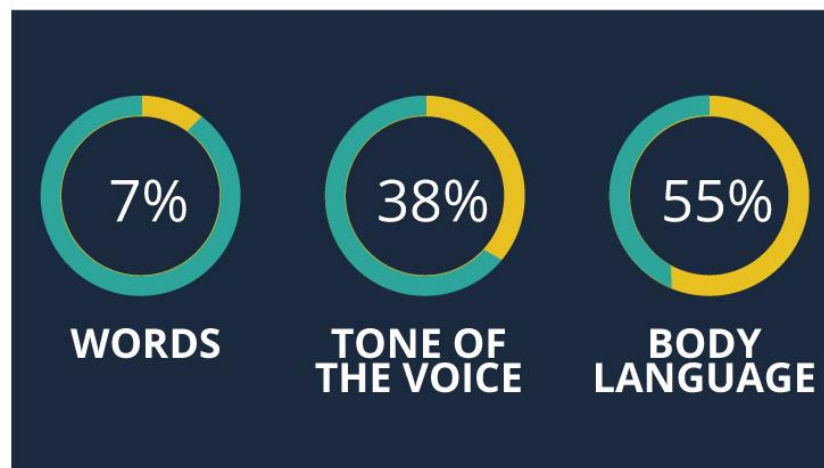
One choice can change everything.



# Body Language

- How much of our communication is non-verbal?

80% to 93%



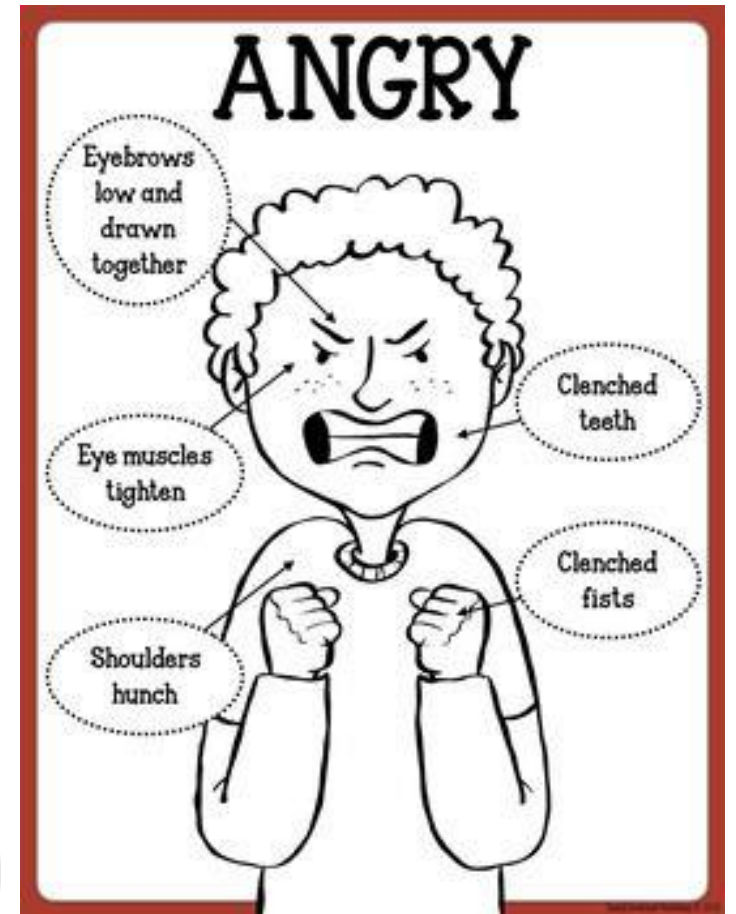


# Body Language

- What you are saying verbally and what your body language may be showing can be very different!



Recognizing and understanding the non-verbal cues from another person.





# Read the Signs





# WHAT IS YOUR BODY LANGUAGE SAYING?

- Finger pointing -
  - accusing or threatening
- Shoulder shrugging -
  - uncaring or unknowing
- Rigid walking -
  - unyielding or challenging
- Jaw set with clenched teeth
  - not open-minded to listening to his/her side of the story





## Body Language

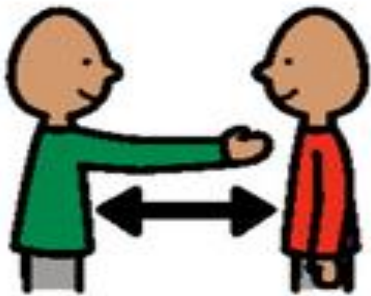
- One eyebrow raised –
  - “sternness”
- A hard stare –
  - “threatening gesture”
- Closing eyes longer than normal –
  - “I’m not listening” and/or “Change your message!” (This may be a warning that you are unintentionally escalating the situation!)





# PERSONAL SPACE

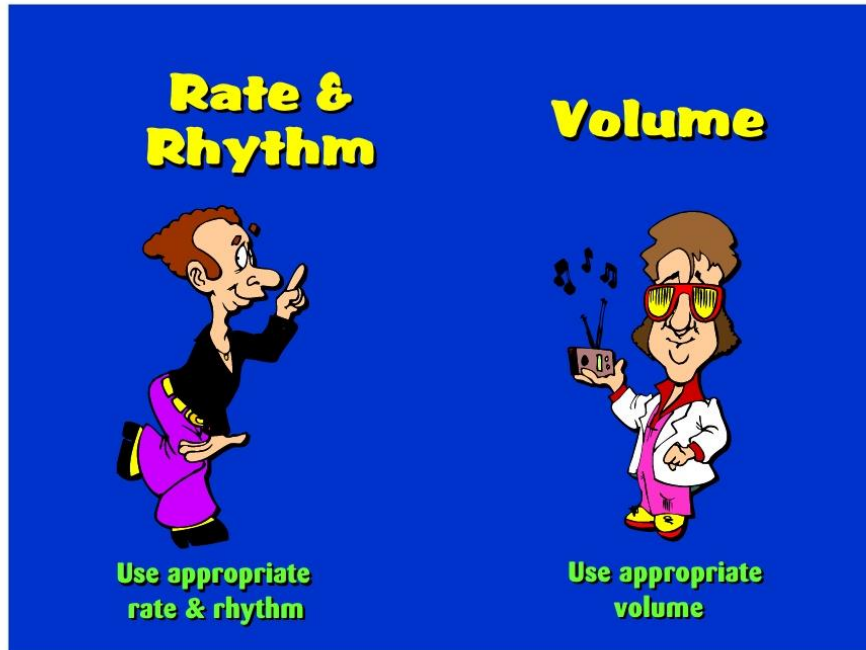
## Personal Space



- Invasion or encroachment of personal space tends to heighten or escalate anxiety.
- How much space is considered personal space?
  - usually about 3 feet -- far enough away so you cannot be hit or kicked.
    - Face to face
    - Nose to nose
    - Toe to toe
    - Touching
    - Finger pointing
- **Do not touch a hostile person** -- they might interpret that as an aggressive action.
- Keep your hands visible at all times -- you do not want the other person to misinterpret your physical actions.



# TONE OF YOUR VOICE



- A lowered voice level may set a tone of anger which could create fear or challenges.
- A raised voice may set a tone of anticipation or uncertainty which may promote excitement or disruption.
- Speak slowly -- This is usually interpreted as soothing.
- A controlled voice is one of calm and firmness which promotes confidence in both parties.
- Always be respectful to the other person.
- Using “please” and “thank-you”



# AVOID

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- Avoid becoming emotionally involved -- control your emotions at all times.
- Avoid engaging in power struggles.
- Avoid becoming ridged in your process.
- Avoid telling the other person that you “know how he or she feels.”
- Avoid raising your voice, cussing, making threats, and giving ultimatums or demands.
- Avoid aggressive language, including body language.
- **Do not attempt to intimidate a hostile person.**





**REMEMBER EVERYONE WINS IF YOU DE-ESCALATE THE SITUATION WITHOUT A MAJOR INCIDENT!**



# De-Escalation Tips



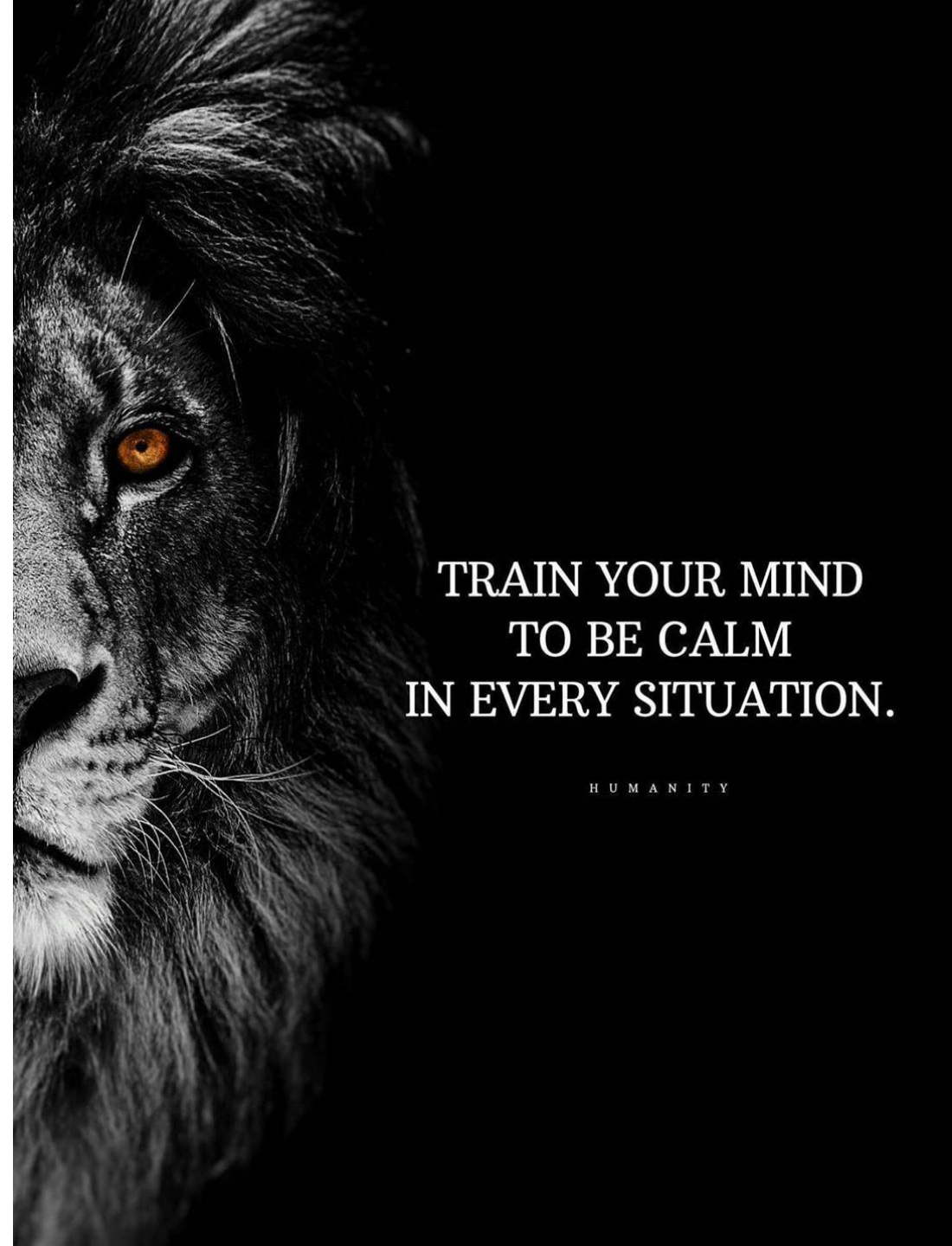
- Listen
- Focus on their feelings
  - It may not be logical at the moment, but it's how they feel
- Ignore challenging questions
  - Focus on what they think will help them calm down
- Choose wisely what you insist upon
  - The goal is a peaceful solution
- Give choices
- Allow silence for reflection
- Allow time for decisions
- Watch for non-verbal clue or threats
- Set Limits
  - Offer choices with consequences (**not threats with ultimatums**)



**You can't be a part of the solution  
if you don't recognize how you  
are a part of the problem.**

If you cannot “calm”  
yourself then you will  
never “calm” others!

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TRAIN YOUR MIND  
TO BE CALM  
IN EVERY SITUATION.

HUMANITY









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THANK YOU