



DE-ESCALATION KEY TIPS AND REMINDERS

There has been plenty to be anxious and stressed about over the course of the past 9 months for adults and youth. A common side effect of ongoing stress is its impact on our memory and ability to retrieve information from our brains. With this in mind, this document is meant to help you, the faculty and staff at our schools, as a reminder of general tips around de-escalation that our brains may not be accessing right now due to our own stress. Below are some tips and reminders to help de-escalate a situation.

- Be yourself. “The right words” are unimportant. If you are concerned, your voice and manner will show it.
- Don’t rush to problem solving too fast. Quite often the first things someone says during an emotional crisis is not the significant issue, it may have just been the proverbial “straw that broke the camel’s back”.
- Ask open ended Questions – “When did this happen?”, “What is going on?” to help guide what problem you are actually dealing with.
- Acknowledge that the person you are dealing with has a right to have the feelings they are experiencing. “You have a right to feel how you do.” This type of statement is validating and can encourage the person to continue to explain the “why” behind the emotion(s). This can also lead the conversation to discussing how to express these emotions in a different way.
- “Help me to understand...” This simple statement is an extremely powerful tool. It acknowledges that we do not understand what is happening for them and want to better understand in order to help. It also verbally tells the person that they have some power in this moment (to teach us, the teachers, something new about them and their situation) while they are feeling out of control.

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