

## Ways of De-Escalating Conflict or Possible Violence

1. Speak softly.
2. Speak slowly.
3. Be aware of your body language:
  - Use appropriate eye contact
  - Relax, take a deep breath
  - Have your legs and arms uncrossed
  - Sit or stand at eye level, not up or down
4. Keep thinking, "We can find a win/win solution to this problem."
5. Ask for a break if you need it. Take time out to cool down.
6. Use "I" messages or statements.
7. Repeat and try to clarify: "Could you explain that to me again?", "I think I heard you say...", "I'm not sure but it sounds like you..."
8. Be aware of your choice of words:
  - Words that escalate a conflict: never, always, can't, won't, don't, should, shouldn't, unless, better not, etc.
  - Words that de-escalate a conflict: maybe, what if, I feel, it seems like, I think, sometimes, perhaps, I wonder etc.
9. Affirm the other person's needs and point of view. E.g. "It sounds like it's hard for you to..." or "I appreciate your situation..."
10. Ask open-ended questions which cannot be answered by "yes" or "no." Instead of "Did Ricky hit you?" you could say, "Can you tell me what happened?"
11. Be aware of what is happening for you:
  - Is your voice, calm, relaxed, and in control?
  - Are you really listening?
  - What is your body language communicating?
  - Are you brainstorming possible solutions?
  - Are you thinking about the other person's point of view?