10 Principles of Verbal De-escalation

1. Respect the **personal space** of the individual; do not get uncomfortably close or block exits.

2. Do not be provocative or respond in anger, be in **control** and measured.

3. Establish verbal contact **calmly** with the individual.

4. Be **concise** and speak in short, easy to understand sentences or phrases. Repeat yourself often.

5. **Listen** closely to what the person is saying.

6. Identify the individual’s **wants and feelings** and try to accommodate reasonable requests.

7. **Agree** or agree to disagree with the person’s concerns, while avoiding negative statements.

8. Set **clear limits** with expected outcomes, but do not make demands or order specific behavior.

9. Offer **choices** and optimism.

10. Afterwards, **review** the event and look for areas of improvement.

This information is based on consensus guidelines from Project BETA established by the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry.

**BODY LANGUAGE**
- Relaxed facial expression
- Speak softly
- Arms uncrossed, hands open
- Knees bent
- 2x arm’s length distance

**YOU MIGHT SAY...**
- “No harm will come to you.”
- “I will help you regain control.”
- “I am here to help, not to hurt.”
- “This is a safe place.”

**DO THEY WANT...**
- Something to eat or drink?
- A quiet place to go?
- A chance to talk about things?