

# 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.



## 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?

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



Depression and Bipolar  
Support Alliance

## UNDERSTANDING AGITATION

For more information, visit  
[DBSAAlliance.org/UnderstandingAgitationKit](https://DBSAAlliance.org/UnderstandingAgitationKit)