

TEN TIPS FOR CRISIS PREVENTION:

- 1. BE EMPATHIC:** Try not to be judgmental of your client's feelings. They are real - even if not based on reality and must be attended to.
- 2. CLARIFY MESSAGES:** Listen to what is really being said. Ask reflective questions, and use both silence and restatements.
- 3. RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE:** Stand at least 1 1/2 - 3 feet from the acting-out client. Encroaching and personal space tends to arouse and escalate people.
- 4. BE AWARE OF BODY POSITION:** Standing eye-to-eye, toe-to-toe with the client sends a challenge message. Standing one leg length away and at an angle off to the side is less likely to escalate the client.
- 5. PERMIT VERBAL VENTING WHEN POSSIBLE:** Allow the client to release as much energy as possible by venting verbally. If this cannot be allowed, state directives and reasonable limits during lulls in the venting process.
- 6. SET AND ENFORCE REASONABLE LIMITS:** If the client becomes belligerent, defensive, or disruptive, state limits and directives clearly and concisely.
- 7. AVOID OVERREACTING:** Remain calm, rational, and professional. How you, the staff person, respond will directly affect the client.
- 8. USE PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES AS A LAST RESORT:** Use the least restrictive method of intervention possible. Employing physical techniques on a client who is only acting out verbally can escalate the situation.
- 9. IGNORE CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:** When the client challenges your position, training, policy, etc..., redirect the client's attention to the issue at hand. Answering these questions often fuels a power struggle.
- 10. KEEP NON-VERBAL CUES NON-THREATENING:** Be aware of your body language, movement, and tone of voice. The more a client loses control the less he listens to your actual words. More attention is paid to your nonverbal cues by the primitive, emotional portion of the client's brain once the cortex disengages.