

De-escalation: Verbal and Non-Verbal

- Non-verbal behavior accounts for roughly 65% of communication,
- Concepts to remember:
 - Project a confident and attentive demeanor-
 - Maintain appropriate eye contact, neutral facial expression, minimize extraneous movements.
 - Non-verbal minimal encouragers, ie, head nods
 - Mirror Calm:
 - Move calmly and slowly, which will illicit a similar response from the subject
 - Maintain safe distance and positioning
 - Bladed stance, use physical barriers, stack opponents

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- Verbal behavior accounts for the remaining 35% of communication- 5% words themselves, the remaining 30% tone, pitch, and volume,
 - Mirror calm- speak calmly, slowly, and clearly
 - Use active listening skills
 - Emotion labeling, eg, “you sound frustrated/ scared/ angry, can you tell me more,”
 - Minimal encouragers- “mmm hmmm” or nodding in agreement
 - Attempt to determine and use hooks (topics or concepts that appeal or give a positive outlook to subject) and triggers (topics or concepts that agitate subject)
 - Acknowledge the agitated person’s feelings,
 - Intentional pauses- subjects may feel the needs to file ‘dead air’ by talking, thereby giving you more information,
 - Communicate clearly and calmly,

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- While de-escalation techniques may prove useful in many situations, it is not always the most appropriate response.
- A quick and accurate assessment is critical to resolve the incident prudently.
- You must constantly monitor the impact of your behaviors and statements on the arousal level of a potentially volatile individual.
- Officer safety is the top priority