

Introduction to

# Crisis De-escalation

for Minneapolis Health Department  
Crisis prevention and response programs

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# What is a “crisis?”

A crisis happens  
when people are in a  
state of mind  
in which they are:

- **unable to cope with and**
- **adjust to the**
- **stresses of everyday living in a**
- **functional,**
- **safe way.**



# To De-escalate a Crisis:

Respond to the whole person  
**NOT** their behavior

## **BODY**

Their physical state

## **HEART**

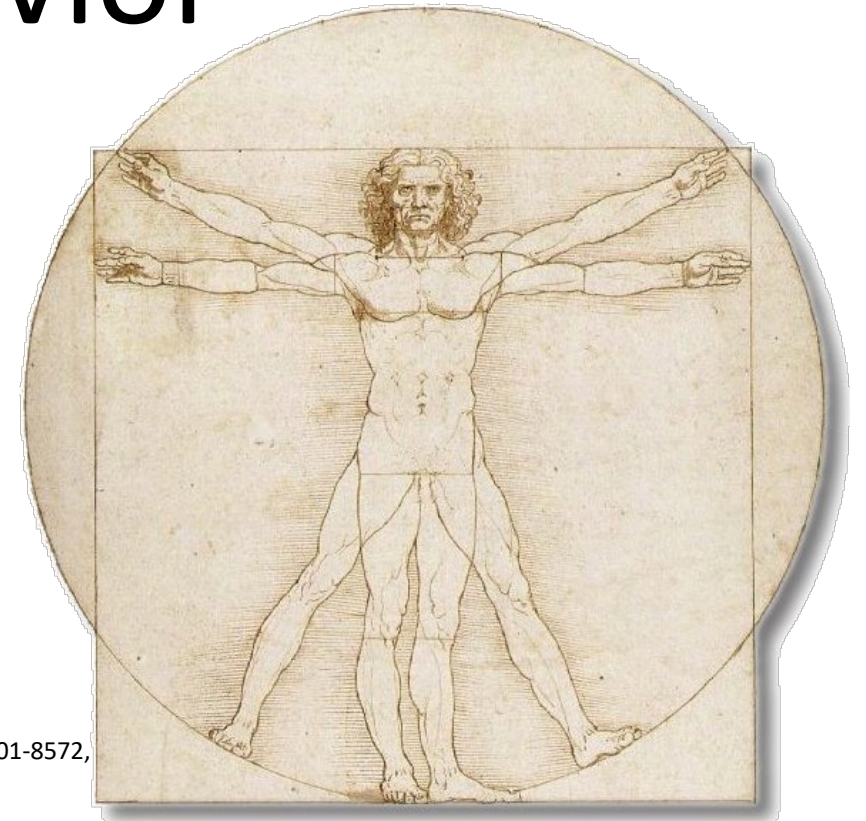
Their emotional state

## **MIND**

Their mental state

## **SPIRIT**

Their spiritual state



# Top Barriers to De-escalation across Cultural Communities

**Be aware of barriers they may be experiencing**

- Untreated Trauma
- Chronic Stress
- Misunderstanding,
  - Lack of knowledge or Insight
- Lack of Trust



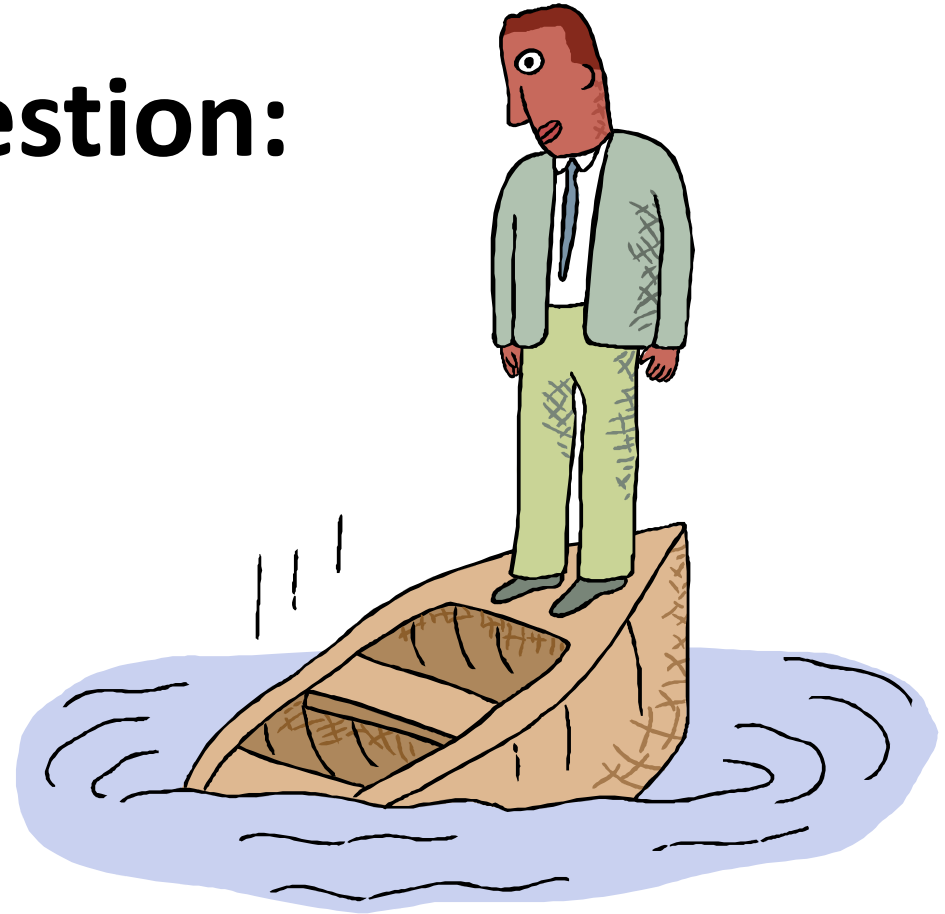
# Crisis Intervention Skills and Techniques are Called for When:

- You believe the person may be feeling they are in a crisis
- You seek to improve communication
- You want to gain voluntary compliance



Questions?

**Slow down and assess.  
Ask yourself the Key Question:**



**“Why is this happening today at this time!”**

# Safety First

- Consider your safety at all times.
- Be aware of your exits.
- Move away from potentially hazardous items.
- Remove casual observers.
- Keep a safe physical distance.
- Do not take risks.
- Slow down and assess.





# Safety First

- Do not introduce a threat, it may not work & can provoke an attack.
- Take as much time as is needed under the circumstances.
- Always avoid physical confrontation.



# Make it a normal social interaction

- Play the role of **host** to your guest.
- Make it an interaction between two human beings with no authority or status difference.
  - Introduce yourself
  - Ask for the person in crisis' name
  - Offer to help
  - Convey that you care
  - But do not touch the person or move in too close
- Summarize and say what you think is occurring
  - I understand you may not want to wear a mask
  - I understand you do not feel safe when others are not wearing a mask

# Active Listening is your Main Tool

Separate the person from the problem.

- Recognize what the actual problem is.
- Work with the person in crisis to find a solution.
- Listening builds trust.
- **Trust** is the basis for voluntary compliance.



**Person**



**Problem**

# Express empathy, NOT sympathy

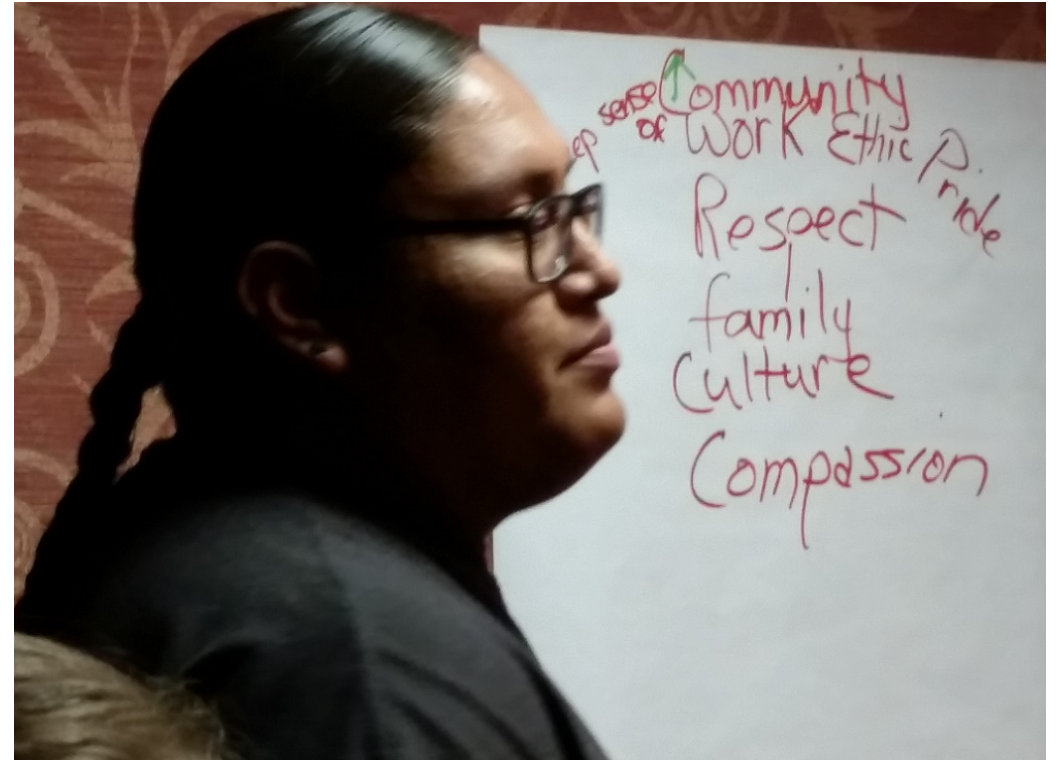
## Use De-escalation techniques

- 1. Listen,
  - 2. Empathize,
  - 3. Build Rapport
- 
- Work to achieve **Trust**
  - Explain Why You Are There  
and What Will Happen
  - Provide choices for them, give them options to save face and resolve the crisis
    - Step to a quiet spot to discuss
    - Talk to a supervisor or
    - Give information about available assistance



# Rational Detachment

- Being able to maintain control by not taking negative comments, sexual remarks, insults, or aggressive behavior personally—no matter what.
- **It's not about you.** You just happen to be standing there with them.



Questions?

# Backup Team Resources

- Coworkers who are good at de-escalation
- Supervisor
- Hennepin County Mobile Crisis Team, COPE, if you suspect a psychiatric crisis
- 911 if weapons or danger of severe injury to you or others is present
- Agencies that respond to veterans, suicidality, homelessness and other serious situations
- Hennepin County:  
<https://www.hennepin.us/residents/emergencies/community-resources>

# Crisis Contact Numbers in Hennepin County

**Adult Crisis: Hennepin Co Crisis Social Services 952 933 3860**

**Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis: Hennepin Co COPE 612-596-1223**

**Detox: Hennepin Co 612-879-3646**

**VA Medical Center, Minneapolis, OEF OIF Crisis: 612-467-3757**

**Child Protection: Hennepin County: 612-348-3552**

**Bridge for Runaway Youth: 612 377 8800**

**People Inc., Metro Homeless Outreach: 651-774 0011**

**United Way 2-1-1 call 211 or text 898-211**

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255**

**LGTBQ Crisis 800-800-0350**

**Day1 DV / Human Trafficking 866 223 1111. text 612 399 9995**

**Tubman Women Shelter 612 825 3333**

**Crisis Connection 612 379 6363**

## **Suicide Assessment/History Taking**

If concerned ask directly, be honest:

**Risk Factors:** Previous attempts; Specific plan; Alcohol or drug use; Access to lethal means; Lack of support system



# Review of Key De-escalation Concepts

- Don't take control if you don't have to
- Express support and concern
- Listen to their story
- Ask how you can help them
- Don't argue or reason with psychotic thinking
- Be low key: offer support, "We are here to help"
- Give them space: don't make them feel trapped
- Avoid sudden or quick movements
- They can't handle a lot of stimulation
- Unpredictable, always think of your safety
- Have only one person do the talking
- Others should keep some distance
- Ask casual observers to leave
- Use short, simple sentences
- Speak slowly and softly
- Avoid touching or shouting
- Avoid continuous eye contact
- Sit and talk at a psychotic person's side
- If there is a public safety risk - call 911 and ask for a CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) trained officer

Questions?