



De-escalating violence

Purpose

To identify practical ways of reducing or preventing violence. To open up the possibility that there can be many nonviolent responses to violence.

Preparation

Prepare a flipsheet of the 8 basic responses to de-escalate violence

Time

30 minutes

Materials

Flipchart, pens, de-escalation handout

Related tools

Nonviolent Communication roleplay

Description

Begin with a quick call-out of ways to de-escalate violence. Encourage quick top-of-the-head callouts and write up on a flipsheet whatever comes out.

Look at what's come out and work with the group to group the responses into meaningful categories. Introduce the handout *De-escalating violence* (you may also want to write up the headings as you go) and briefly introduce the eight responses. Ask the group if they see any similarities between their brainstorm and this list. Agree a list of possible responses, or go with the list in the handout.

Divide participants into eight small groups, give each group one flipsheet and ask them to write one of the headings from the handout on it, so that each group has a different heading:

1. Don't act frightened
2. Don't act frightening
3. Remain calm
4. Watch body language - yours and assailants
5. Use the unexpected to create wonder and surprise
6. Empathise
7. Know that the assailant is a human being capable of love
8. Allow a way out





Give each group and ask them to write practical examples of what this behaviour looks like. After a few minutes, ask the groups to pass their paper to the next group, like a conveyor belt, and ask them to add new suggestions. Avoid repeating what's already there. Keep passing the sheets until all the groups have worked on all the papers.

Ask everyone to put the sheets on the wall and invite the whole group to browse them.

Debrief

What do you notice?
Are these useful?

How will you use them?

