

# SWC Safety Moment – October 2020

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## **“BEHEVIOUR”**



## “Encountering Undesirable Behaviour Amid COVID-19”

Nothing more effects the human body and mind then stress. The current situation with the COVID-19 has increased the stress factor for many people. Isolation, health concerns, financial situation, loss of work, concern about family members, etc. are a contributing factor in regards to human behaviours.

There are increasing reports about domestic violence, people blowing up “without” reason or even mental or physical assault.

One of our group had recently an encounter with a couple that felt that the youth didn't give them enough room during an outdoor activity. While the group behaved correctly, it seems that the couple had other ideas and made a few rude comments.

No how do we deal with that?

- Risk Assessment before the activity
- Risk assesment during the activity
- Protect youth – Keep them out of the risk zone
- Engage or disengage – Is it an assault, is Police assistance needed?
- Debrief – Talk to youth and try to make it positive

There are resources that you can apply in this situations.

- Behaviour Guide – Scouts Canada
- De-Escalation
- Scouts Canada

### De-Escalation

Sometimes being in the right and insist on your right doesn't help to clear the situation. When people are under stress their mindset can be different and you cant reason. In this case you have to de-escalate as fast as possible.

# **De-Escalating Tips In Light of Coronavirus Anxiety**

## **1. Understand That Behavior is Communication**

Look for signs of anxiety in body language, tone and cadence. Understand that crisis behavior reflects a need and consider what it is the other person might want.

## **2. Avoid The Power Struggle**

Challenging or exercising authority over a person can escalate negative behaviors. Considering options you can offer allows flexibility to address both parties needs and desired outcome.

## **3. Use Limit Setting**

Behavior can't be forced but setting limits can help us influence behaviors. Framing acceptable behaviors or outcomes can encourage the other person to choose the most productive option.

## **4. Practice Rational Detachment**

Don't take behaviors personally. Stay calm. Find a positive way to release the negative energy you absorbed during the conflict. Keep in mind, you can only control your own attitude and actions.

## **5. Develop Therapeutic Rapport**

Learn from the conflict and help the other person to learn from the experience. Focus on identifying and preventing the pattern of behavior in the future. Finally, put time and effort into repairing the relationship.

# TIP'S FOR DE-ESCALATING

**1. Don't take the bait.** Escalating conflict is a choice; don't go there. Let go of your need to control or

manage the other individual(s). Choose to **de-escalate**.

**2. Manage yourself.** Attend to your **body language** – ensure it is open, relaxed, and non-threatening.

Adjust your position to be at eye level with the other person or group.

**3. Speak softly and slowly.** Be factual and use “I messages” rather than “you” statements (e.g., “I’m finding this difficult” rather than “You always mess things up.”)

**4. Be respectful.** Acknowledge the other's point of view and position. Affirm that you're committed to working through the issue to the best possible solution.

**5. De-personalize.** Clearly **separate the problem** from the people involved. Name the problem, externalize it, and work together to resolve it (e.g., “We seem to have different ideas about . . . do

you agree?”; “What do you think about . . .? How can we work on this together?”).

**6. Listen carefully.** Rather than rehearsing your counter-argument in your mind, engage yourself fully in understanding the other's perspective, needs, and interests. Ask open-ended questions; use active listening techniques to clarify what you've heard.

**7. Be tentative.** Use language that indicates your openness to other perspectives (e.g., Maybe . . .;

What if . . .?; It seems like . . .; Perhaps . . .; I wonder . . .; I'm confused about . . .)

**8. Be strategic.** Think clearly and stay focused on goals. Look beyond the surface conflict for

underlying issues. Recognize what is, and isn't, in your control to change. Reflect on what you have

to offer the other individual(s). Challenge your own “all or nothing” thinking and irrational beliefs

about winning and losing. Choose your battles wisely.

**9. Focus on the future.** You have a much better chance of influencing the future than the past. Keep

the conversation in the present (i.e., “I am . . .” rather than “You always . . .”). Look ahead to define

a win-win solution. Work together to create a positive outcome.

**10. Take a break.** There are physiological changes in our body in the midst of conflict and it takes time for those “**freeze, flight,**

or fight” responses to diminish. Sometimes the best way to de-escalate conflict is to first take care of the physical and emotional reactions. Breathe deeply to relax, take a walk, distract yourself with Sudoku or Solitaire . . . just give yourself the time and space necessary to come back to the problem with renewed energy and a clear head.

**If you have any questions, concerns or if you would like to address a certain topic, please let myself, any one of the support scouts or one of the CK3's know,**

**Thank you and stay safe**

**Hans Uhr, DCC Safety, Shining Water Council**

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