

Welcome! We will begin shortly. 😊

Let us know in the chat box if you have any needs before we begin. We have muted all microphones for ease of access.

De-Escalation Workshop

“A fight avoided is a fight won.”

-Payton Quin

De-escalation definition:

Preventing ourselves or others from getting into needless arguments or violence while maintaining safety.

“You can control the sails on your ship but not the winds.”

Acute Stress Response

- Release of hormones activates the sympathetic nervous system which stimulates the adrenal glands
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate
- Often results in becoming faster, stronger and feeling little or no pain

Many people have reported these changes to their perceptions while in “fight” or “flight.”

- **Time distortion:** Most report time slowing down, some report a speed up.
- **Visual distortion:** Objects and people appear much larger and closer than they actually are.
- **Tunnel vision:** Loss of peripheral vision, replaced by a hyper focus on the threat.
- **Auditory exclusion:** Temporary loss of hearing during high stress.

Signs that someone may be in fight or flight response

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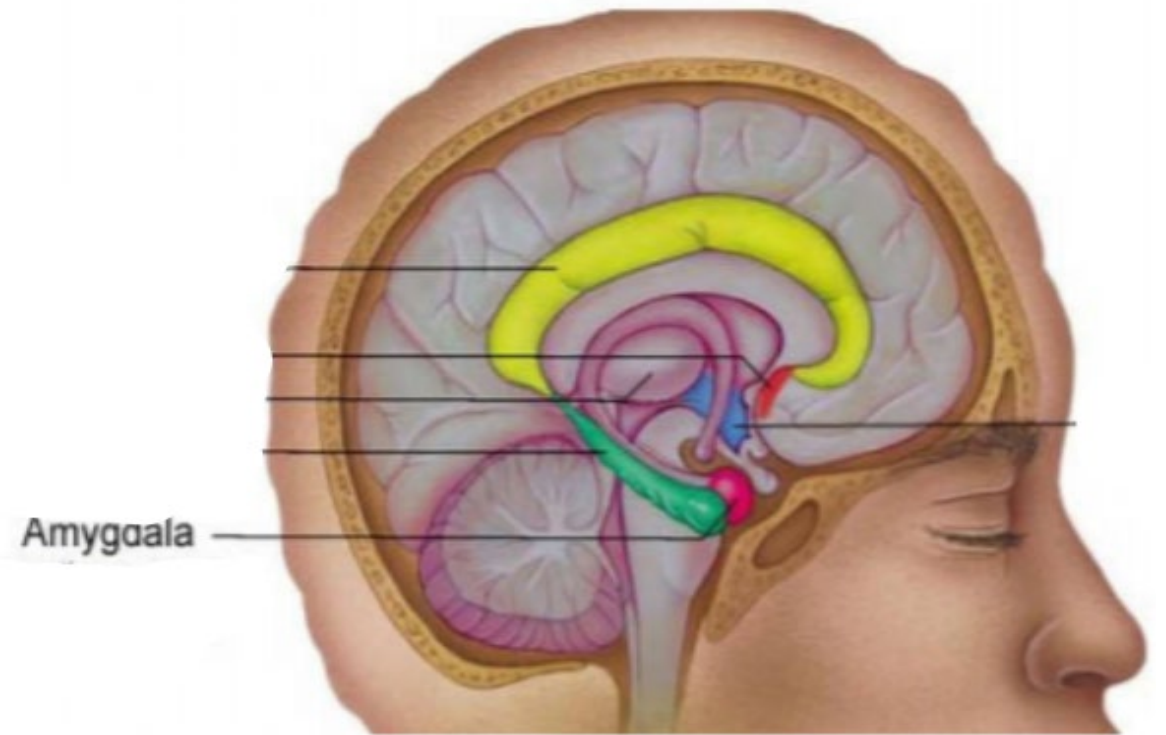
IMPACT
confidence ▶ safety ▶ empowerment

- Dilated pupils
- Pale or flushed skin
- Rapid breathing
- Trembling

After the threat is gone, it typically takes between 20-60 minutes for the body to return to its normal state.

“Amygdala hijack” — *Emotional Intelligence, 1995*

- ▶ Amygdala: part of the brain that senses threat
- ▶ Responds to threats faster than the cerebral cortex.
- ▶ In “fight” or “flight” -- *the instinctive part of the brain is running the show until the rational part of the brain catches up.*



Keep the rational part of your brain in charge and if it gets hijacked, get it back quickly!

Adrenaline Management Exercises:

1. Finding your breathing. Noticing where it is, and its characteristics
2. Points of contact
3. Tapping
4. Peaceful imagery
5. *Have healthy ways to get anger and stress out of your body daily, i.e. hitting a heavy bag or hard work out etc.*

How fight, flight and freeze manifest in preemptive responses:

- ***Fight:** threat posturing or arguing*
- ***Flight:** ignoring problems*
- ***Freeze:** not being able think or speak*

Exercise

- Identify your threat triggers (*even the imaginary ones*) and assess their real threat value.
- Identify your past response tendencies and note how they served you or did not serve you.
- With the knowledge gained from the answers to those questions, make the needed adjustments.

Othering

- Reframing the person we are in conflict with as less than us
- Makes it easier to say or do things that we would not do to a respected equal
- When we start thinking this way, we are moving closer to inappropriate violence or hostility

Acting scary when feeling scared

- Showing willingness to be violent and not afraid of the other person.
- Intended to *stop* violence, and it works sometimes
- If the other person is using the same strategy, a situation could escalate to serious violence
- Other person may use self-defense because they feel threatened, resulting in serious violence
- If the situation goes violent it will be hard to claim self-defense in a legal proceeding



Replacing Fear with Anger

- Fear often makes us feel powerless
- Overriding fear with anger can give us a sense of power
- Anger can give us a sense of false justification to cause harm

When anger is driving the car, it leads us down the road to greater calamity.

Assessing the Situation

- **Safety assessment-** “Is it safe to engage or continue engaging? How do I know? Is it worth it?”
- **Effectiveness assessment-** “Can I make this situation better or worse? Am I making this situation better or worse? How do I know?”

De-escalation Mindset

Think *“I am interacting with a scared, aggravated, or confused person who is having a bad day.”*

...instead of *“Now I have to deal with this jerk!”*

Strategic Positioning & Body Language

- ▶ Safe distance & angle
- ▶ Use obstacles and barriers
- ▶ Clear escape route
- ▶ Avoid body language that could be read as aggressive, threatening, disrespectful or submissive



Emotional Warning Signs for Escalating Violence

- ▶ Othering Language
- ▶ Threatening tone of voice
- ▶ Threatening body posture: chin thrust out, puffed up chest
- ▶ Hitting or throwing objects
- ▶ Striking their own body
- ▶ Verbal threats



Physical Warning Signs for Escalating Violence

- ▶ Repositioning or taking off hat, glasses or jacket, moving hair, moving valuables
- ▶ Reaching in pockets or lifting shirt (reaching for weapon)
- ▶ Getting close enough so they can strike the other person without taking a step
- ▶ Tucked chin, muscle tension
- ▶ More protected body position, waiting for opportunity to strike the other person
- ▶ Decrease in talking or not talking
- ▶ Hyper-focus on the other person



Common threat posturing vs. Attack positioning

Threat posturing vs. Threat posturing



Threat posturing vs. Attack positioning



QUESTIONS? CONNECT WITH US!

To inquire about more classes & private workshops, please contact

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For general information & to learn more about our classes, please visit us at www.impactboston.org
or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter at IMPACT Boston!

SUPPORT RESOURCES

<http://impactboston.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Support-Resources-Services.pdf>

FEEDBACK FORM

<https://forms.gle/qF2y2AAJJGRZXQ78A>

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