

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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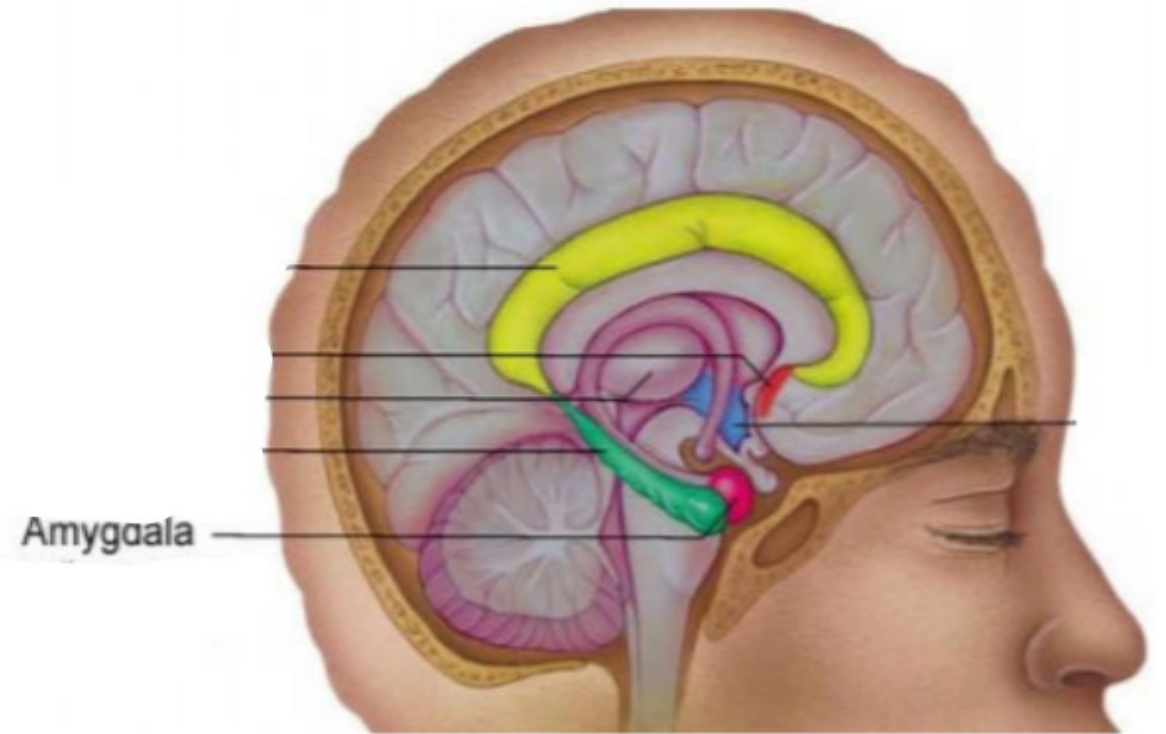
IMPACT
confidence ▶ safety ▶ empowerment

- 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 helping 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



De-escalation Strategies

- **Keep it light-** Calm, friendly greeting. If possible and safe, create a relaxed setting, like, getting the person to sit down with you before you talk
- **Bring up the issue in a nonjudgmental or accusatory way-** If enforcing rules, “Hey, I noticed that you are doing _____.” vs. “Hey, stop doing _____!”
- **Let them have their say-** Don’t interrupt or get redirected. Be understanding and listen, it might be helpful.
- **Make a verbal contract (when applicable)-** “Can you promise me that you will make a better effort in the future to follow _____ rule?” Or “In the future I would be happy to help you again but next time could you treat me with respect and have more patience? Thank you.”

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
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SUPPORT RESOURCES

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

FEEDBACK FORM

<https://forms.gle/Lq2KWks63YppnW8F6>

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