



N E T W O R K

BUILDING TRUST ACROSS COMMUNITIES

De-escalation and Violence Prevention Tips

GOAL: Interrupt conflict behavior and prevent violence before it happens. We are not here to solve the problem/system that has caused the escalation to the point of violence.

CRITICAL COMPONENT: DO NOT ever put yourself in harms way. Exit immediately, and take others with you, if violence is imminent or occurring.

DO: ✓

1. Be situationally alert at all times—all 360 degrees in front, to the side and behind you
2. Remain calm and centered and professionally detached.
3. Every now and then, stop, look around and listen: be aware of tunnel vision where you may not notice a deteriorating situation as it evolves.
4. Interact with respect with all of those involved.
5. Listen deeply. Repeat back to people what they are saying.
6. Show empathy and understanding for how they are feeling.
7. Point to and help them uncover other options they can take that are not violent.
8. Support them in taking a break (of at least 20 minutes) before they take any action.
9. Recognize your limits in skills to intervene or continue intervening.
10. Pay attention to your own body language. Do not show signs of threatening.
11. Be positive and offer a sense of hope to everyone involved.
12. Work in a small team of responders when possible.
13. Maintain informality and your independence from any authoritative groups. IE: police, national guard, militias, etc.
14. Consider who the appropriate back-up intervention support is and alert them if more help is needed. Police? Community Mediators? Community leader?
15. Trust your intuition and instincts in all aspects of the intervention.
16. Think about how to safely disengage if someone is growing agitated at you.

DO NOT (DON'T): ❌

1. Don't intervene if violence is occurring
2. Don't stay in the area if the police declare the event an "unlawful assembly"; you should leave.
3. Don't intervene if the situation is already calming down.
4. Don't get comfortable and put your guard down.
5. Don't judge what you see someone or a group doing.
6. Don't try to convince someone to understand the others' point of view.
7. Don't intervene if you find yourself angry or passionate about one side's story.
8. Don't believe everything you hear.
9. Don't take sides.
10. Don't intervene without permission if an authoritative group has already intervened.
11. Don't add to the fire.

BIG PICTURE BEST PRACTICES:

- Analyze conflicts thoroughly at every stage of their cycle.
- Target processes during the intervention to ensure that the most optimal outcome will be achieved in the most efficient manner.
- Before an intervention, ensure that an intervention will do no harm to the situation in order to ensure the correct interventions are selected.
- After the intervention, reflect on the lessons learned so approaches can be modified for similar conflicts in the future.

NETWORK / WORK IN A TEAM:

- Pre-identify persons/groups that you think can help prevent conflict/violence.
- Engage with them before intervention is needed
- Discuss your physical activities, where you will all be, what the location is like
- Establish trust and a methodology for working together.
- Plan your activities with a "buddy" who knows you are there, you know they are there, and you have each other's cell phone numbers

PHYSICAL SAFETY BEST PRACTICES FOR SITUATIONS

- Bring with you:
 - Two face masks, highly recommended to be KN95 not just cloth
 - Swimming goggles is a good idea, to be able to see if there is gas used
 - Personal first aid kit in a zip lock bag for your pocket, with band aids, gauze, medical tape, etc.
 - A cell phone with a map of the area easily visible on it
 - A small flashlight if at night
 - Picture ID

- In your car
 - Bottles of water
 - Milk, in case you are exposed to gasses like tear gas, you can rinse your skin and eyes
- Be situationally aware
 - Review a map of the area beforehand if you are not familiar with it
 - Mark the place on the map where your car is
 - Take a photo of some landmark where your car is
 - Take photo of you and what you are wearing and send it to someone who knows where you went in case they need to describe your appearance later
 - Tell that same person when you are intending to return so they will know if you are late that something might have happened to you.

<https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/trust/>