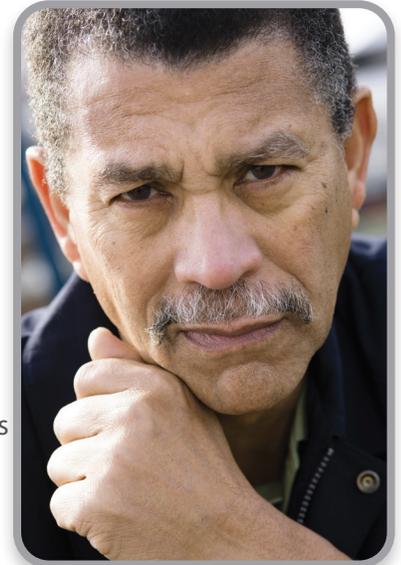


# Tips to De-escalate Challenging Situations

When people are experiencing a high level of fear and anxiety, staff may notice a wide range of emotions and behaviors, such as increased anxiety levels, crying spells, crying out, fear, aggression and agitation. Here are some verbal de-escalation tips that will help staff provide the best possible care and safety when intervening in these situations:

1. Listen to the concern(s).
2. Remain calm and speak in a monotone voice.
3. Answer questions the person may have about the situation; be concise and honest.
4. Dispel misinformation.
5. Offer reassurance that everything that can be done, is being done.
6. Politely tell the person what you would like him/her to do.
7. Offer choices. Ask, "What can I do to make you feel better?" Follow through if it is within your control. For requests outside of staff control, share the need with management. Alliant Quality's [Comfort Menu](#) offers many helpful options.
8. Do not become involved in a power struggle or escalate the situation. Know when it is time to step away and allow a colleague to engage the person.
9. Be mindful of nonverbal body language: facial expressions, eye contact, hand movement, posture, gestures (stand to side of person with open hands).
10. Do not take the interaction personally.



Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Some individuals may exhibit less-noticeable symptoms or behaviors such as extreme sadness, isolation, insomnia, or refusal to get out of bed. In the mist of crisis situations, these behaviors can easily be overlooked because they do not require staff's immediate attention. Attending to these symptoms is equally as, if not more, important. The suggested tips are also effective for these engagements. Staff should be mindful of any changes in behaviors. Obtain a behavioral health consult if symptoms of aggression or depression persist.

## Additional behavioral health resources

### [Verbal de-escalation for clinical practice safety:](#)

This page from American Nurse Today, January 2019, provides verbal de-escalation techniques

### [Living With Mental Illness During COVID-19 Outbreak- Preparing For Your Wellness](#)

This web site provides information and wellness tips for individuals living with mental health conditions during the COVID-19 outbreak.

### [Stress and Coping](#)

From the Centers for Disease Control, this page provides COVID-19 tips and resources on managing stress and self care.

### [Coronavirus Anxiety—Helpful Expert Tips and Resources](#)

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America provides COVID-19 resources, including videos, tips, and blogs on managing anxiety and coping

### [Mental Health and COVID-19- Information and Resources](#)

This page from Mental Health America contains resources for parents, caregivers, older adults, and tools and information on anxiety.