



TIP 1

BE EMPATHIC AND NONJUDGMENTAL.

When someone says or does something you perceive as weird or irrational, *try not to judge or discount their feelings*. Whether or not you think those feelings are justified, *they're real to the other person*. Pay attention to them.

Keep in mind that whatever the person is going through, it may be the most important thing in their life at the moment.

TIP 2

RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE.

If possible, *stand 1.5 to three feet away* from a person who's escalating. Allowing personal space tends to *decrease a person's anxiety* and can help you *prevent acting-out behavior*.

If you must enter someone's personal space to provide care, explain your actions so the person feels less confused and frightened.

TIP 3

USE NONTHREATENING

TIP 5

FOCUS ON FEELINGS.

Facts are important, but *how a person feels is the heart of the matter*. Yet some people have trouble identifying how they feel about what's happening to them.

Watch and listen carefully for the person's real message.

Try saying something like "That must be scary." Supportive words like these will let the person know that you understand what's happening—and you may get a positive response.

TIP 6

IGNORE CHALLENGING QUESTIONS.

Answering challenging questions often results in a power struggle. When a person challenges your authority, *redirect their attention to the issue at hand*.

Ignore the challenge, but not the person. Bring their focus back to how you can work together to solve the problem.

TIP 9

ALLOW SILENCE FOR REFLECTION.

We've all experienced awkward silences. While it may seem counterintuitive to let moments of silence occur, sometimes it's the best choice. It can *give a person*

and how he or she needs to proceed.

Believe it or not, silence can be a powerful communication tool.

TIP 10

ALLOW TIME FOR DECISIONS.

When a person is upset, they may not be able to think clearly. Give them a few moments to *think through what you've said*.

A person's stress rises when they feel rushed. Allowing time brings calm.