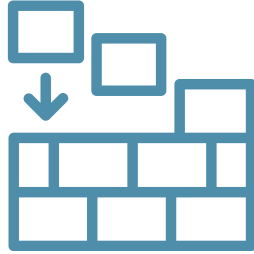


# De-Escalating altercations



Brains reacting in a stress response (fight, flight, freeze or flock), can only process a few words. This is not the time to rationalize with them.

The initial goal is to de-escalate the violent activity - resolution and consequences come after.

## De-Escalation Strategies

- Use a firm & authoritative voice.
- Maintain a safe, non-threatening distance and stance.
- Tell the children/youth who you are and call them by their names.
- Demand they stop and reinforce the rules. Eg. "Saftey for all".
- Remind them of the consequences, and that it is not too late to end the altercation and address the issue respectfully.
- Use very few words but be clear. "Walk away!"
- Avoid becoming involved physically, but attempt to get in between the youth and separate those fighting if other means do not work.



## Restoration

### Calm Down

Each child/youth go with a leader, or two if possible, to a quiet place to calm down (maintain safety rules - in a space that is public but allows for talking without being overheard)

Use a calm, controlled and soothing voice

Offer them water

Let them move around, walk, pace stretch, push the wall, etc to regulate their emotions

Breathe deeply and they will likely mirror your behavior

Sit shoulder to shoulder, do not sit or stand above them

### Process

Invite them to share their perspective of what happened

Validate their feelings, not the behaviors

Reflect their feelings back to them to clarify and connect

Ask them if they could think of a way they could have handled it differently or better, they can do that next time

You might ask them if getting angry or "losing it" is something they struggle with, do they want help to learn how to manage that?

### Restate Expectations

Restate the rules and expectations for participation in the church programs. Eg. "Saftey for all", "Making safe choices"

Reinforce your heartfelt desire for them to continue to be a part of the programs

Ask them if they can commit to doing their best to meet the expectations, and if they want you or someone to help them make a plan for that

If there are established consequences, implement those coupled with the desire that they be restored to full participation as soon as possible/they are ready

### Restoration

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently."  
Galations 6:1a

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." 1 Peter 5:10

Reiterate your love for them and your desire for them to continue to be a vital part of the church program/group

Demonstrate God's extravagant love for His children through the gospel