

HANDLE WITH CARE:
Verbal De-escalation
Techniques

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Handle With Care (HWC) Verbal Program

- ▶ HWC Philosophy
- ▶ Tension-Tension Reduction Cycle (T/TRC)
- ▶ Solid Object Relationship Model (SORM)
- ▶ Levels of Intervention

HWC Philosophy

- ▶ Dedicated to the reduction of violence through recreating universal perception of physical and psychological safety in the workplace environment
 - ▶ Both physical and psychological

HWC Assumptions

- ▶ There is no dignity in allowing a child or adult to hurt him/herself or someone else
- ▶ Staff safety and client safety are equally important
- ▶ Clients need to be protected from the physical and emotional consequences for their behavior
- ▶ Staff need to be protected from the physical and emotional consequences of client's behaviors.

HWC Assumptions



In order to act in the client's best interest, we need to be in control of our own feelings



The out of the control client is generally aware at some level that she/he is out of control



The clients expects staff to help bring them under control of safety

Tension/Tension Reduction Cycle

- ▶ **Purpose/ Goal:**

- ▶ Understanding the dynamics of escalation and de-escalation tension

Stages of Tension

Stage 1: Early

- ▶ **Signs:**
 - ▶ Autonomic responses: adrenaline-produced psychological response to stress including increased heart rate and sweating
 - ▶ Motor Activity: pacing, agitated, withdrawn
- ▶ **Response by staff:**
 - ▶ Provide support

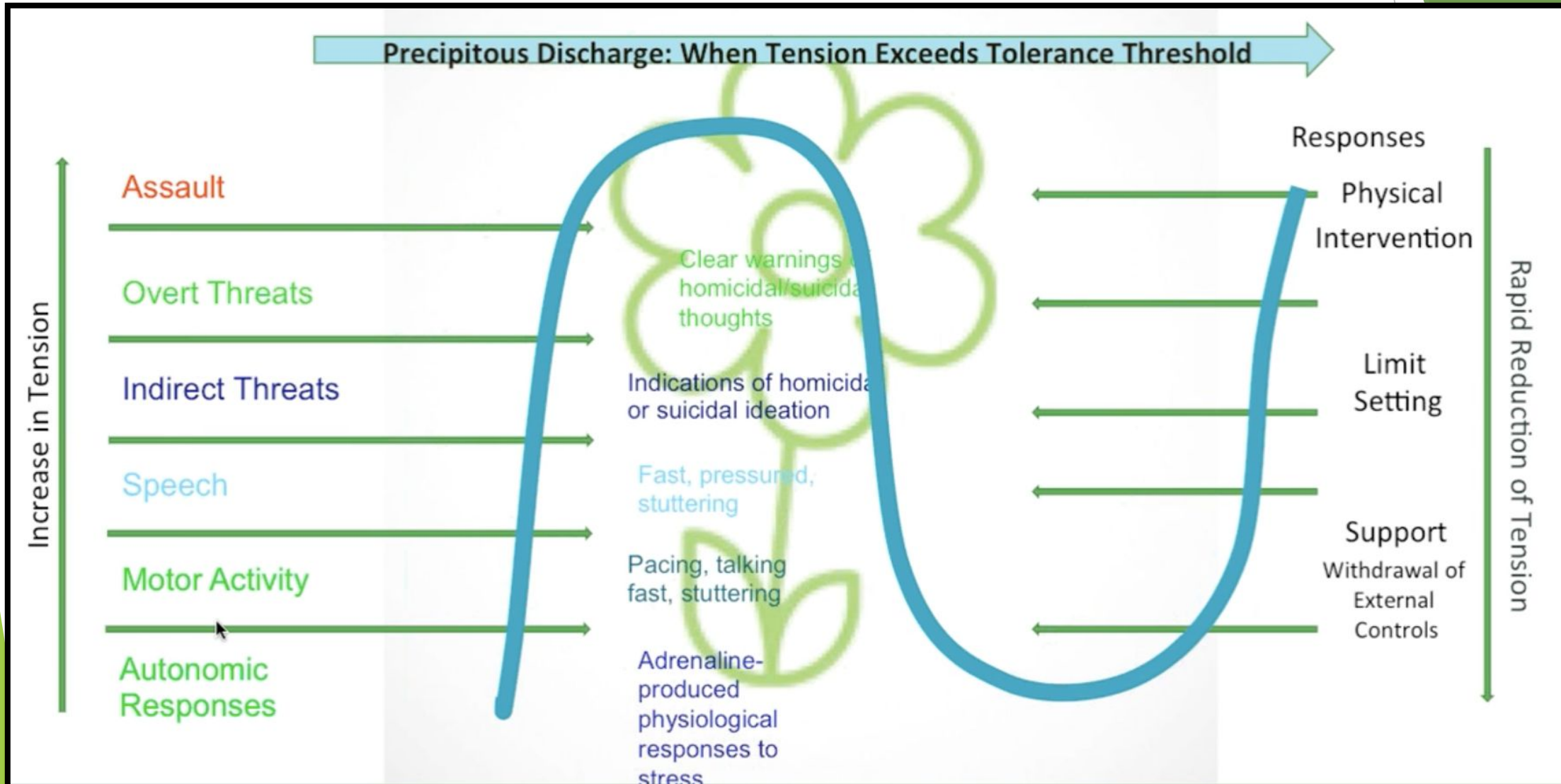
Stage 2: Middle

- ▶ **Signs:**
 - ▶ Redirection tension towards inappropriate problem-solving behavior
 - ▶ Indirectly threatening behavior: Verbal or non-verbal homicidal and/or suicidal intent
 - ▶ Overly Threatening behavior: Clear warning of impending homicidal and/or suicidal intent
- ▶ **Response by staff:**
 - ▶ Remove potentially dangerous items & establish limits

Stage 3: Violence

- ▶ **Signs:**
 - ▶ Obvious. This is the point in which tension is about to exceed tolerance threshold
- ▶ **Response by staff:**
 - ▶ Physical intervention/Restraint may be necessary
 - ▶ Least restrictive yet effective intervention necessary to maintain safety of client & staff

Tension/Tension Reduction Cycle



Emotions that Create Tension



Fear



Anger



These emotions can be the result of both internally and externally produced conflicts

Internally & Externally produced conflicts



Internally

Response to an event not experienced by others and is only happening within themselves

- Examples: delusions, hallucinations, something happened earlier in the day and has carried it throughout the day



Externally

Direct and clear response to an event that happened

- Examples: removal of something preferred, waiting for something, no access to something



Tension Released Inwardly

- ▶ Social withdrawal marked by a decrease in motor activity, talking/conversing with others, quiet, withdrawn, moody, repeating thoughts of self-harm or violent themes

Tension Released Outwardly

- ▶ Acceleration is more rapid
- ▶ Destruction or abuse of property and/or physical assaults
- ▶ It is clear this person's tension is rising





Solid Object Relationship Model

- ▶ Bringing crisis into balance

Qualities of a Solid Object

- ▶ Centered
- ▶ Calm
- ▶ Unafraid
- ▶ Neutral
- ▶ Balanced
- ▶ Empathetic
- ▶ Understanding
- ▶ Able to listen
- ▶ Verbally reassuring
- ▶ NON-THREATENING



Range of reactions to a threat

Under reaction

- Failure to protect the safety of the individual through neglecting to do so
- Example: not setting limits or verbal restraints because of fear or because you don't like the individual so you "don't care"

Overreaction

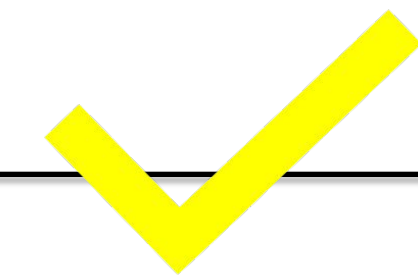
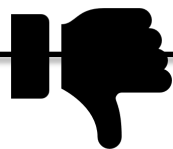
- Emotional verbal or other response that creates a damaging experience for the individual
- Example: a physical response where the individual is deliberately injured



Where do
we want to
be?

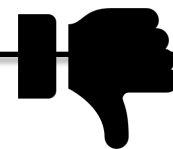


Under reaction



BALANCE

Over reaction



Being the solid object

- ▶ Avoid responding emotionally... remember, it's not personal.
- ▶ What you say is not as important as HOW you say it
 - ▶ Non-verbal communication
- ▶ Continue to assess whether your approach is working to calm the individual down or is escalating them (if escalating, change approaches)
 - ▶ Example, if talking to the individual is escalating them. Try giving them space and a break □ “I can see you are getting upset. I am going to go over here and let you take some time to yourself. Let me know when you're ready to talk”

Level of intervention

Support

Limit setting

Physical intervention



Level 1: support

- ▶ Help your individual articulate their feelings and try to redirect his or her rising tension to come out in an appropriate behavior
 - ▶ Listen
 - ▶ Accept
 - ▶ Focus
 - ▶ Encourage
 - ▶ Offer
 - ▶ contract



Level 2: Limit setting

- ▶ Three main elements
 - ▶ Limits **MUST** be clear
 - ▶ Limits must be Consistent
 - ▶ Limits must be Attainable

Level 3: physical intervention

- ▶ ONLY appropriate when it is a last resort and only when all other possibilities to maintain the safety of the individual or staff member has been tried and has not been proven effective
 - ▶ Continue to utilize verbal de-escalation techniques and limit setting even when in a restraint



15 MINUTE BREAK

Up next:

Escape techniques

Escape Techniques

- ▶ Same side wrist grab
- ▶ Two hands on one wrist grab
- ▶ Cross hand grab
- ▶ Front choke grab
- ▶ Two hand rear choke
- ▶ Hair pull release
- ▶ Bite release
- ▶ Arm bar choke/head lock

Blocking Techniques

- ▶ Straight punch/shoving or other straight-line attack
- ▶ Hook punch/blunt weapon attack
- ▶ Kick
- ▶ Thrown objects
 - ▶ Big vs small appropriate reactions

Primary Restraint Technique and Takedown

- ▶ Solo PRT
- ▶ Two-person PRT
 - ▶ **the second person should **ONLY** be another staff member that is trained in HWC**