

Techniques for Dealing with Anger and Hostility

The purpose of the Techniques for Dealing with Anger and Hostility document is to provide State Training Coordinators (STC) and preceptors a resource for how to deal with anger and hostility safely and effectively.

The following techniques may be useful in dealing with anger and hostility:

- Always employ non-defensive communication skills. Give calm and direct instructions.
- Speak in a firm, well-modulated voice. In your voice tone and content, deliver a message of empathy, caring, and approachability.
- Avoid embarrassing or patronizing the other person.
- Avoid quoting state or Federal regulations or State Survey Agency policy in a threatening manner.
- Avoid touching or moving into the hostile person's "personal space." Stay out of reach of an angry person.
- Avoid touching an angry person.
- Never use deception as a protective device.

Call the Police when:

- A weapon is used or displayed in your presence.
- Threats are made to the resident or to you.
- Violent acts occur in your presence.

Other difficult situations:

- The person is very emotional and cries after each question is asked.
Response: Remain calm and allow the person to regain composure.
- The person is very nervous and continues to ask what will happen to the person(s) implicated in the complaint if he or she talks.
Response: Never promise the person anything.
- The person's psychosis interferes with the interview.
Response: Try to rephrase your questions. If that does not work, try to interview the person at a later time.
- The interviewee makes sarcastic remarks and uses profanity toward you.
Response: Ask the person to calm down, but do not become defensive. If this is not effective, terminate the interview. You may wish to try again another time, with another person present to act as a witness.