Crisis Moments

Crisis moments occur when students lose physical and rational control over their behavior. These crisis moments do not sprout into being without roots; there are almost always warning signs that let you know an individual’s behavior is escalating. By using the tips listed in this brochure, you can often intervene before the crisis becomes dangerous.

10 Tips For Crisis Prevention

CPI is the standard-setting provider of behavior management training that equips employees to have an immediate, tangible, and lasting positive impact on the people and organizations they serve. Over six million professionals from across the globe have participated in CPI’s Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® training program, which teaches proven techniques to manage disruptive and assaultive behavior.

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1. **Be empathic.**
   
   Try not to judge or discount the feelings of others. Whether or not you think the feelings are justified, those feelings are real to the other person. Pay attention to them.

2. **Clarify messages.**
   
   Listen for the student's real message. What are the feelings behind the facts? Ask reflective questions and use both silence and restatements.

3. **Respect personal space.**
   
   Stand at least 1.5 to three feet from an escalating student. Invading personal space tends to increase the individual's anxiety and may lead to acting-out behavior.

4. **Be aware of your body position.**
   
   Standing eye-to-eye and toe-to-toe with a student sends a challenging message. Standing one leg-length away and at an angle off to the side is less likely to escalate the individual.

5. **Ignore challenging questions.**
   
   When a student challenges your authority or a school policy, redirect the individual's attention to the issue at hand. Answering challenging questions often results in a power struggle.

6. **Permit verbal venting when possible.**
   
   Allow the student to release as much energy as possible by venting verbally. If you cannot allow this, state directives and reasonable limits during lulls in the venting process.

7. **Set and enforce reasonable limits.**
   
   If a student becomes belligerent, defensive, or disruptive, state limits and directives clearly and concisely. When setting limits, offer choices and consequences to the acting-out individual.

8. **Keep your nonverbal cues nontoxic.**
   
   The more a student loses control, the less that individual listens to your actual words. More attention is paid to your nonverbal communication. Be aware of your gestures, facial expressions, movements, and tone of voice.

9. **Avoid overreacting.**
   
   Remain calm, rational, and professional. Your response will directly affect the student's behavior.

10. **Use physical techniques only as a last resort.**
    
    Use the least restrictive method of intervention possible. Physical techniques should be used only when students are a danger to themselves or others. Physical interventions should be used only by competent/trained staff. Any physical intervention may be dangerous.