

## Seven Principles for Effective Verbal Intervention

- 1. Remain calm.** Remember the verbally escalating person is beginning to lose control. If the person you are intervening with senses you are losing control, the situation will escalate. Try to keep your cool, even when challenged, insulted or threatened.
- 2. Isolate the individual.** Onlookers, especially those who are the peers of the verbally escalating person tend to fuel the fire. They often become cheerleaders, encouraging the individual. Isolate the person you are verbally intervening with. You will be more effective one-on-one.
- 3. Keep it simple.** Be clear and direct in your message. Avoid jargon and complex options.
- 4. Watch your body language.** Be aware of your space, posture, and gestures. Make sure your nonverbal behavior is consistent with your verbal message.
- 5. Use silence.** Ironically, silence is one of the most effective verbal intervention techniques. Silence on your part allows the individual to clarify and restate. This often leads to a clearer understanding of the true source of the individual's conflict.
- 6. Use reflective questioning.** Paraphrase and restate comments. By repeating or reflecting the person's statement in the form of a question, you'll help the individual gain valuable insight.
- 7. Watch your paraverbals.** Any two identical statements can have completely opposite meanings. Depending on how the tone, volume and cadence of your voice are altered. Make sure the words you use are consistent with voice inflection to avoid a double message.