Managing Aggression

Turning Aggression into Cooperation

What is aggression?
Aggression is a range of behaviors that can result in both physical and psychological harm to oneself, others or objects in the environment.

Forms of Aggression
- Inward -
  - Self-hate
  - Self-injury
  - Suicide
- Outward -
  - Physical
  - Verbal
  - Mental
  - Emotional

Purpose of Aggression
- Instrumental -
  - To assert dominance
  - To compete with others
  - To intimidate or threaten
  - To achieve a goal
  - To express possession
- Impulsive -
  - To express anger or hostility
  - A response to fear
  - A reaction to pain

Types of Aggression

Overt
- Open
- Direct
- Obvious

Covert
- Subtle
- Underhanded
- Deceptive

Contributing Factors

Physiological/Psychological:
- Executive functioning deficits –
  - Autism/ADHD
  - Brain injury
  - Intoxication (temporary)
- PTSD
- Mental Illness/Depression/Anxiety
- Addictions
- Hunger/malnutrition/health problems/sleep problems/stress
- Personality Disorders

Psychosocial:
- Social deficits
- Lack of social networks/family and social support

Emotional:
- Loss of dignity
- Feeling of powerlessness
- Frustration
- Failure
- Fear
- Hopelessness

Situational/Environmental:
- Grief due to losses –
  - Job, home, income, benefits, services
  - Independence, health, freedom
  - Important relationships
  - Death of loved one
- Victim of abuse (past or present)
- Organizational, social or systemic injustice
- Homelessness
The Physiology of Aggression

Why are angry people so irrational?

Blood flows from the prefrontal cortex (thinking portion of our brain) to the amygdala (fight or flight portion of our brain) when we become angry.

Managing Aggression

What can we do about it?

Crisis Development Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis Development Level</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxious/Agitated:</td>
<td>Supportive Approach:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Noticeable change in behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appearing restless, upset, nervous or impatient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fidgeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rocking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hand-wringing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pacing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Looking at watch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Foot tapping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sighing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Directive Approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis Development Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defensive:</td>
<td>Behavior escalating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refuses staff support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Verbal belligerence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loss of rationale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not respond to reason</td>
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Crisis Development Model

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<tr>
<td>• Set clear, simple, enforceable limits in a non-threatening manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allow choices by providing positive consequence for compliance before negative consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting Out:</td>
<td>Non-violent Crisis Intervention:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shouting</td>
<td>• Signal for help. Use duress button if available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pounding fist</td>
<td>• Stand back at an angle, out of the individual’s reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Threatening</td>
<td>Note: If individual becomes physically assaultive, follow your office emergency response plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Out of control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abusive language</td>
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Overcoming Barriers

Become a detective of your thoughts and emotions.

Identify Emotional Triggers:
- Feeling of powerlessness
- Loss of dignity
- Reminders of past traumatic events or negative experiences

Take a deep breath and count to 10!

Aggression Management Barriers

- Prejudging
- Personalizing

Positive communications –
- I find it really helpful when you...
- I want to help you.
- Please tell me more, so that I can better understand.

Defensive statements to avoid –
- You have no right to talk to me that way.
- You don’t know what you’re talking about.
Creating a Safe Environment

Employer Responsibilities -
• Acknowledge workplace aggression and take steps to stop it.
• Avoid -
  • Negligent Hiring
  • Negligent Retention
  • Negligent Supervision

Employee Responsibilities -
• Be familiar with the reporting methods outlined in Minnesota Management & Budget, HR/DR’s Respectful Workplace Policy #1432
• Promptly report workplace aggression, whether you’re experiencing it or witnessing it.

Workplace Climate

Demonstrate Awareness
• Recognize our POWER to create environments of PEACE in our workplace
• Create an atmosphere of RESPECT
• Model SINCERE and POSITIVE intentions in our communication and behavior
• Encourage employees to ACCEPT and EMBRACE differences

Respectful Workplace Model

Which would you choose?

Give respect Get respect

Civility in the Workplace

Why? Because it Matters.

1. Inspiring Workplaces: (01:20) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQoZgvGAAeA
2. Morale Booster: (01:09) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SY8qJntO4Q
3. How you say things matters: (01:05) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__EsuJlqdbg
4. Dealing with Negativity: (05:45) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYNei77mrwA