

Deescalating Potentially Dangerous Situations

Alabama

We work with and sell a highly valued product. YOU are much more important and valuable than any cannabis or cash we may have in our licensed facility.

If you **feel unsafe or threatened**, remove yourself from the situation. If possible, **reach out to a manager and/or call the police**. Being **aware and proactive** are imperative to recognizing potentially dangerous situations.

Be **attentive to verbal and non-verbal signs** of potential violence and pay attention to your “gut instinct.” Your intuition can be a great support to you. This “gut feeling” may show up in our body as increased heart rate, perspiration, nausea, feeling indecisive and hair rising on the back of your neck.

Some *verbal* warning signs of a potentially dangerous situation:

- Threats: direct or veiled
- Threats: conditional
- Boasts of prior violence or of losing control
- Confused thinking
- An increase in pitch when speaking – indicates throat is tightening
- Repetitive word use, parroting and or echoing
- Forced or strained speech
- A nervous laugh or laughing at inappropriate times (Laughing may be a way for a body to shed emotions.)
- Yelling or screaming
- Non-stop profanity

Some *non-verbal* signs of a potentially dangerous situation:

- Personal space violation
- Standing toe to toe
- Finger pointing
- Making fists
- Staring through you
- Face flushing
- Heavy breathing and/ or flaring nostrils
- Person refuses any eye contact
- Someone blocks egress

Verbal do's:

Use the person's name
Ask “May I help you?”
Speak calmly & slowly
Use restatement for clarification
Ask to take notes
Paraphrase
Ask clarifying questions
Allow time for reflection
Give options
Ask for their idea or solution
Use simple words
Maintain 65-percent eye contact
Use “I” and “we” language

Verbal don'ts:

Don't allow long waits
Don't fake attention
Don't roll your eyes
Don't make false promises
Don't use jargon
Don't cut people off
Don't get in a power struggle
Don't raise your voice
Don't fail to document
Don't lose temper
Don't argue
Don't say “calm down”
Avoid accusatory “you” language