

7 TIPS FOR DE-ESCALATING EMOTIONS & BEHAVIOR



Although a student's behavior may be directed at you, it is likely not about you. By not taking student behaviors personally, we are better able to remain calm, consistent, and caring in our approach.

TIP 1:

Keep everyone safe. This is your first priority. In extreme cases, you may have to use a physical barrier between the student and the rest of the class or even relocate the other students to a different room. Make a plan.

TIP 2:

Remain calm. Use consistent, caring, non-judgmental language while you listen and acknowledge the students' feelings. Our students need to feel like they matter. Consider calmly validating their emotions and experience, such as "I hear what you're saying..." or "Can you tell me more..."

TIP 3:

Maintain neutral body language. Make eye contact or sit next to the student, but avoid pointing your finger, rolling your eyes, raising your hands, or making angry facial expressions. Your emotions may be swirling inside, but appear neutral on the outside.

TIP 4:

Avoid a power struggle. "Don't pick up the rope." There are times when you may not wish to address provocative student behavior. We avoid a verbal "tug of war" that would distract us from a greater goal in mind, such as work completion.

TIP 5:

Set boundaries. It's okay to set emotional and physical boundaries with students. For example, calmly let them know it is not okay to shout at you or ask if it is okay that you come closer.

TIP 6:

Offer choices. Giving students choices can help them feel more in control. Have a plan. Options work best when the student is familiar with the choices (such as spending time in a Calming Center or seeing a counselor) before the incident occurs.

TIP 7:

DO NOT address the issue while the student's behavior is escalated. The student is unable to process information and instructions while emotions are heightened. Reflection, repair, and restorative practices come later.