



AWARE

Training Component and Community of Practice of AWARE

What could/should I (or my colleagues) do as a non-experienced professional/volunteer?

The Aware Website and Manual

- **AWARE Training Material**
- **Resources**
- **Community of Practice**
- **Lesson Plans**
 - **Suicide Prevention**
 - **Handling Stress**
 - **More . . .**



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An Example for our consideration today
What could/should I (or my colleagues) do as a non-experienced professional/volunteer?



Managing anger and agitated and/or aggressive behavior

What could/should I (or my colleagues) do as a non-experienced professional/volunteer?

Managing anger and agitated and/or aggressive behavior

- According to the World Health Organization Mental Health Gap Action Program
 - It is normal for people to become angry; anger can be positive as well as negative
 - People become angry for different reasons and show anger in different ways, e.g. one person might sulk and go quiet, while others might become agitated and aggressive
 - Anger can dissipate or escalate

The first step of the management of aggression and agitation is assessing the person for the underlying causes of agitation and/or aggression

Some possible causes of agitated and/or aggressive behaviour:

- Unmet needs,
- Feeling like you are not being listened to or not understood,
- Feeling unsafe or uncomfortable,
- Not having enough information.
- Fear.
- A symptom of a mental health condition such as psychosis and bipolar disorder.
- Physical health conditions may also cause agitation and aggression, low blood glucose, lack of sleep, headache

Remain calm and encourage the person to talk about their concerns

- For example, take a deep breath before speaking to keep yourself calm. If the person is shouting, you could calmly say, “I want to help you but I cannot understand you when you shout at me, maybe we could go somewhere quiet and you can tell me what is troubling you.”
- Encourage the person to talk about their problems, let them express their anger as long as it is safe.
- Use a calm voice and try to address the concerns if possible.
- Use a calm, soft and gentle tone. Use sensitive language and, if relevant and appropriate, use humour.
- Be aware of your body language, your posture, movements etc



DEAL WITH THE ISSUES

**ATTACK THE CAUSE OF
THE ANGER**

NOT THE INDIVIDUAL

Listen attentively and actively

- Focus on the person and do not get distracted by other issues/people.
- Use active listening skills to listen to the person, be empathetic with the person and try to understand why the person is agitated and/or aggressive.
- Use active listening skills to let the person know that they are being listened to.
- Never laugh at the person – be non-judgemental.
- Do not be aggressive.
- Remaining calm is key to de-escalating agitation and aggression. By remaining calm, you can make the person feel safe.
- Focus on their anger and aggression rather than your own feelings.

What do these two words have in common



LISTEN
AWAWARE
SILENT

Try to find the source of the problem and solutions for the person

- By using active listening skills and remaining calm you can help the person manage their own aggression, understand the source of the problems and work with them to find some alternative solutions (solutions that do not involve aggression).
- **Involve social work and other staff members.** Involve staff but be aware that involving too many people could be interpreted as a “show of force” and make the person feel more unsafe, thus escalating the anger.
- **Remove anyone from the situation who may be a trigger for the aggression.** Try and take the person into a quiet room, separated from people who may trigger more aggression and make the situation worse

Remember A S A P

LISTEN – REALLY LISTEN

- **APOLOGIZE** – you are the Institution/organization
“I am sorry this happened to you” – “I am sorry the situation made you feel this way”
- **SYMPATHIZE** – simple and sincere statement AND match your voice to your words
“I understand how upsetting this is for you”
- **ACCEPT** – responsibility – let the person know you intend to do what you can to make things right
“Part of my job is to help you and I will follow up on this”
- **PREPARE** to take action – tell the person exactly what you intend to do and when
“I will personally check with the medical department and let you know what I find out”



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**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS:
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