

Ram Training Professional Development Ltd

## Conflict Resolution

Our mission is to support, educate and prepare the workforce to operate safely in a challenging environment.

*ICM QUALITY AWARD CENTRE  
QAC: 20199*

## *Ram Training Ltd*

### **ABOUT US**

Ram Training Ltd is a specialist provider of Conflict Resolution (CR) and breakaway techniques. We listen to our clients concerns and develop packages to suit their needs. We are passionate about changing the culture of training. Offering training that is fast paced, dynamic and prepares the work force for the challenges they face. We pride ourselves on professional discussion and work hard to develop confidence and team work. The aim of Ram Training Ltd from the start is to prepare and present bespoke personal safety training based around tried and tested methods. All instructors have an operational background using the techniques that they instruct on, as we believe this is the only way an instructor can have complete belief in the techniques they are instructing on. We have consciously turned our back on power point presentation and summative assessment. We acknowledge that time is short and delegates should walk away feeling enabled and confident to face the future.

The Conflict Resolution (CR) training package that you will be participating in is made up of the following sections:

#### A – Introduction.

- Introduction to Conflict Resolution.
- Importance of managing violence & aggression.
- Definitions of violence & aggression – different types of V&A.
- The importance of reporting procedures.
- Duty of care as relevant to employer & employee. – Risk assessments.
- Post incident de-brief.

#### B – Theory of personal safety & de-escalation.

- Trigger factors – how behaviour escalates in to Violence.
- Communications skills – verbal & non-verbal.
- De-escalation Techniques.
- Role Play.

### **Conflict Resolution Part 1:**

What is conflict resolution? The term means different things to different people depending a lot on the environment that they find themselves dealing with conflict in.

Definitions of Conflict Resolution again vary but as a general guideline in your sector:

Conflict Resolution is the ending of a disagreement between 2 or more parties in a controlled manner that is fair and reasonable for all parties concerned (including you and another. Dealing with Challenging Behaviour makes up part of the subject, when you are dealing with conflict and aggressive or challenging behaviour that is brought about by working with an individual or group of people who due to an illness or condition act in an aggressive and or a challenging manner. When working with this group you need to be aware that some techniques will be of little use, in this situation you need to concentrate on the techniques that are appropriate to the individual / group setting that you are working with.

Conflict Management is the way in which we identify and handle conflict in a controlled, sensible, fair, safe and efficient manner. As above the way that we handle and deal with the conflict / challenging behaviour is going to vary with the issues of the individual. It can also be about you knowing when to avoid a situation that you feel you cannot deal with safely. The importance of managing conflict is paramount to de-escalate situations before they escalate into violence and aggression for numerous reasons:

- Safety of staff
- Staff confidence eroded when incidents happen
- Impact on the working environment

### **Definitions & types of violence / aggression:**

**The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Defines violence to staff as: -**

“Any incident in which an employee is abused threatened or assaulted by a member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment”.

### **Definition of Assault:**

**Common assault, contrary to section 39 Criminal Justice Act 1988.**

An offence of common assault is committed when a person either assaults another person or commits a battery.

**An assault is committed when a person intentionally or recklessly causes another to apprehend the immediate infliction of unlawful force.**

**A battery is committed when a person intentionally or recklessly applies unlawful force to another.**

In law the only factors that distinguish common assault from assault occasioning actual bodily harm (contrary to section 47 of the offences against the person act 1861) are the degree of injury that results and the sentence available to the court.

### **Reporting procedures**

Following an incident it is of paramount importance that it is reported through your reporting system. This allows for information to be collated, safety protocols to be put in place and other staff and service users to be protected.

- Report the incident through your incident reporting system.
- Let your line manager know immediately if any assault has occurred or you have had to use any sort of breakaway technique or Physical Intervention.
- Document all details of the incident so that there is a written record.

Remember if the incident is not recorded it did not happen, making it very difficult if there is any issues that come from it, either to you or the other person involved.

### **The Safety Incident Action Guide (SIAG)**

See appendix 1 SIAG Ringway Eurovia Flow Chart.

The SIAG clearly explains mandatory actions to be taken following a safety incident or act of violence in the work place. When a breakaway technique has been used then the local police service must be informed.

We have an obligation to report acts of violence, firstly the police need to follow up on an assault secondly it may happen again and lastly using the SIAG will highlight trends.

### **The Accident Triangle**

See appendix 2 Ringway Eurovia Flow Diagram

The accident triangle illustrates the relationship between reported incidents. Statistically speaking:

600 near misses = 30 work related incidents = 10 lost time incidents = 1 serious or fatal incident.

### **Duty of care**

Staff should consider themselves to be part of a team by definition they have a duty of care to the organisation, themselves and other staff members. Managers and staff should always consider the following:

- Keep yourself & other staff members as safe as possible.

- Do not put yourself in any avoidable dangerous situations.
- Carry out planned & dynamic risk assessments.
- Be aware of the environment you are in and what impact factors are in that environment.
- Use de-escalation to talk down the situation.
- Do not ignore difficult situations and if you feel out of your depth get help from other staff.
- Know your own limitations.

### **Risk Assessments.**

Risk assessments are something that we all undertake all of the time whether it is to judge whether you can park your car in a space, or can you cross the road before the pedestrian lights change, your brain is carrying out a risk assessment it's just that we are so used to taking these decisions that we don't have to think about carrying out the risk assessment. When we talk about our own personal safety or conflict situations in general there are very few people on a daily basis that believe they have to think about carrying out risk assessments.

Risk Assessments are split into 2 categories:

1. Planned Risk Assessment
2. Dynamic Risk Assessment

A Planned Risk Assessment is a risk assessment that is carried out for a pre planned task or working environment (some changing environmental issues will come under Dynamic risk assessment). A planned Risk Assessment means that you should know your own working environment.

- Be aware of the location and environmental issues, equipment etc.
- What is your escape route, if needed?
- Is there a history of aggression with the person you are dealing with?
- What other staff are in the location?

These are some of the points that you would take into consideration when carrying out a planned risk assessment.

A Dynamic Risk Assessment is an on going risk assessment that could change in a second. Your planned risk assessment has already been carried out, but when things change your risk level may well change. This is where you decide if you are still safe and happy to carry on with the task or your safety is compromised to a level you need to get out of the situation.

1. The person starts getting agitated over something that is said.
2. The person starts to get aggressive.
3. There are environmental changes that you had not for seen that impact on your safety.

### **Post incident de-brief**

Remember that good communication between staff is a vital part of dealing with any sort of challenging or aggressive behaviour, if there has been an incident, sit down and talk about what went well, and what could have been handled better. Very rarely will a situation go 100% to plan. If you have been dealing with an individual who has been aggressive / challenging think about the following and pass on to other staff:

- What triggered the behaviour?
- What do you feel was the underlying reason for the behaviour, was the behaviour to achieve an aim?
- What de-escalated the situation?
- What level was the behaviour at from minor agitation to a full physical assault?
- Should the risk assessment of the individual change?
- Are individual members of staff better suited to deal with the individual than others?
  
- Where there problems caused by the location or environment of the incident?

## Conflict Resolution Part 2:

### Reasons for challenging behaviour / aggression – Trigger factors

What triggers aggressive behaviour in your work surroundings? Challenging behaviour can be as a result of the environmental situation or it can be caused by some ones intentional challenging behaviour for instance when under the influence of drink or drugs

- Psychological issues – This can be anything from someone with learning difficulties to someone who is dealing with some sort of emotional issue.
- Environmental situations.
- Reaction to medication – Medication that people are taking or not taking when they should be.
- Visual / hearing impairment.
- Pain – severe pain can make the person act in an aggressive manner.
- Learning difficulties.
- Anger – at the situation they find themselves in or even anger at an outside issue.
- Medical conditions, illness – Outside of psychological issues there are numerous condition, infections and illnesses which will cause a person to act in an aggressive, challenging and unpredictable nature.
- Fear is one of the biggest causes of someone lashing out and acting aggressively. Try and see issues not from your own perspective but from that of the person you are dealing with.
  
- Someone who feels threatened by you – as above, you may not feel that your behaviour is threatening but it may be seen as threatening to the person you are dealing with. Their perception of you or the situation is the important factor.
- Frustration – is a major cause of aggression, if a person feels that the only way that their frustrations get listened to is to act in an aggressive manner or the frustration may be due to one of the other factors i.e. lack of communication skills.
- People who feel that aggression is a way to achieve their aims – as above when a person feels that the only way that they will get what they want is to act in a challenging or aggressive manner.
- Attention seeking – if a person knows that the more challenging their behaviour is the more attention they get, it may be used as a means to an end, this can be a difficult situation to deal with and again we need to look at the causes of this problem.
- Lack of communication skills by either or both parties – If a situation is handled correctly at the beginning it may not get to this stage. This is not always the case but it is in some situations. There could also be an issue with your resident that makes it difficult to verbalise what they want to communicate to you.
- Criminal behaviour – Including issues with alcohol and drugs.

### Examples of challenging behaviour or violence:

#### **Non Physical**

- Bullying
- Agitation
- Harassment
- Name calling / Insults
- Wandering & pacing
- Physical intimidation without physical contact (body positioning)
- Intimidation silence
- Innuendoes
- Threatening language including offensive, racist or sexist speech

#### **Physical**

- Grabbing
- Punching
- Kicking
- Biting
- Scratching
- Throwing or hitting with objects

### States in build up of aggression

- **Calm** – A normal state of mind – there is no agitation or aggression.
- **Verbally & physically agitated** – The first signs that someone is getting angry / wound up with a situation is when they start getting agitated both in their verbal communications and by their body language signs. Can also include obstructive behaviour, facial expressions, increased breathing, louder / no speech, staring and pacing.
- **Verbally aggressive** – following on from being agitated they start to get verbally aggressive. Using a more aggressive tone and words.
- **Verbally Threatening** – going beyond general verbal aggression being verbally threatening is aimed at you or threatening a course of action that the individual is going to carry out.
- **Physically Threatening** – can be purely body language how someone stands, looks at you, and any behaviour that makes you feel threatened. Remember somebody does not have to speak to come across as being a threat to you.
- **Physical aggression / Violent Behaviour** – lastly and the most serious heading is when physical aggression is shown towards you. Afterwards you need to ask yourself why the situation got to this stage. Could it have been diffused in the earlier stages?

Signs that aggression is building:



- Breathing accelerates & facial colour may redden signs that adrenaline, heart rate and blood pressure is rising.
- Tone of voice changes.
- Aggressive stance – upright, hand and finger movement, head back.
- Direct unnatural eye contact or rapid eye movement.
- Stop / start movements (pacing).

Signs that violent behaviour is imminent:

- Clenching and unclenching fists.
- Facial colour draining.
- Staring – more pronounced eye contact directly at the person that are confronting.
- Clenched teeth, lips tight over teeth.
- Complete lack of movement – sudden tensing.
- Tensing of neck – head pulled back – shoulder drops.

### **Communication Skills**

Communication skills are split into 2 categories verbal & non verbal communications, these 2 categories are then split into the following sub headings:

VERBAL            7%        what you say, part of verbal communications?

TONE                    38%        how you say it, second part of verbal comms.

NON – VERBAL 55%        your body language.

The percentage after each part is the percentage of effect it has in a situation, these figures may surprise some people who always believe that their verbal communication skills are going to be the most important when in fact although still very important, it is the least important element of all. Your non-verbal (Body language) is by far the most important and will give a clear message as soon as a person sees you. Your communication skills will often deescalate a potentially aggressive situation straight away.

You should be aiming to de-escalate the situation not inflame it in any way. To allow this you need to follow certain communication skills some of which will come naturally and others that will not, especially if you feel threatened or insecure in the position you find yourself in. As you go through the training and your confidence increases you will find it easier and easier to use the correct communication methods.

### **Non-Verbal Communications. (Body Language).**

Remember Non-Verbal communications are the most important element of communication; Non verbal signs are picked up by other people before either party has spoken. Non verbal skills are even more important when you are working with a service user who finds it difficult to verbalise their wishes, aims etc and you need to try and read the non verbal signs that will give you possible clues to what is going on in the mind of the service user that they

are trying to communicate. You may also be working with a service user who cannot understand your verbal communications and this is where you need to use your non verbal communications skills to communicate your objectives, aims etc.

Non verbal communications are made up of: -

- Posture
- Look
- Position
- Rapid movement
- Noise & Disturbance

You must always remember how your body language is perceived by others.

- Use open hand and body gestures, to signal non aggression.
- Always approach from the front never suddenly from behind – if someone can see that you are approaching them they are less likely to act in an aggressive manner than if they are surprised by your approach from the rear where they cannot see you before you have either spoken to them or touched them.
- Keep your movements to a minimum – if you are moving fast or in an erratic manner, this can make the situation worse.
- Do not Stand very close to the aggressive person – let them have their personal space if someone feels that you are invading their space this is likely to increase their aggressive attitude.
- Good Eye Contact, do not stare this will definitely inflame a situation apart from just being bad manners. Remember that your facial gestures may well be picked up on by the resident.
- Be Calm – if you appear to be calm it will generally calm the situation. It will also show the aggressor that their actions are not having any effect on you.
- Try to control the adrenalin rush – probably one of the hardest things about being in a conflict situation is the adrenalin rush (as we will call it) that you will feel. You must control this in order to appear calm and in control.
- Try not to fidget – again a symptom of the adrenalin rush, it will come across that you are bored and not interested.
- Use your hands to talk but not in a threatening way using your hands to talk in a normal manner is good and it will also keep your safe space, but there are bad ways. If you point at someone's face whilst talking this will only increase the aggression that will be shown towards you.
- Keep the safe gap between yourself and the aggressor – we have already said that you should allow the person their personal space but if you think someone is going to be aggressive towards you, you should also make sure that you are at a safe distance should that aggression turn to violence. If you keep at least an arms length 360 degrees around you this will allow you to react to the situation.
- Do not cross your arms when you are talking – this will just make you appear to have no interest in what is being said. From a safety point of view it will also make you slower to react to any physical attack on you.

- Do not tap your feet or look away from the person talking – If someone is talking to you and you act bored or uninterested in what is being said this will straight away cause resentment.

### Verbal Communications

- Speak calmly and evenly in a non-threatening manner – if you speak calmly and evenly without any stress showing in your voice those around you will act the same. You can be assertive without being threatening.
- Be Confident & Assertive in what you are saying without being patronising – be confident in what you are doing and saying without belittling the person you are speaking to.
- Talk to the person at their level using language that they understand. Make them aware of the consequences of their actions without turning it into a threat. Do not talk down to someone.
- Call people by their preferred name – this makes the conversation personal and makes people feel that they are not just a number.
- If someone raises their voice do not shout back, ask them to stop shouting – if someone raises their voice to you try and find out what the problem is it will only escalate the situation if you shout back. If they will not stop tell them that you can only carry on having this conversation if they stop shouting.
- If there is more than one person present only one needs to speak – if there is more than one member of staff speaking at any one time it will make the aggressive person feel more threatened and possibly make their aggression worse.
- Do not act or speak aggressively or swear – if you are aggressive to someone this is going to make them more aggressive to you and so the situation will escalate very quickly. Be assertive without being aggressive.
- Do not whisper to colleagues – if someone is upset, confused or acting in an aggressive manner thinking you are talking about them is going to inflame the situation.
- Do not shout – you can be assertive without shouting. The louder a situation gets the worse it normally becomes.

#### **REMEMBER:**

YOU'RE ATTITUDE

**Affects**

YOU'RE BEHAVIOUR

**Affects**

THEIR ATTITUDE

**Affects**

THEIR BEHAVIOUR

**Affects**

YOU'RE ATTITUDE

### De-escalation Techniques.

Signalling Non Aggression – remember your non verbal communications skills.

- Stay calm and relaxed
- Adopt the sideways on safe non confrontational stance
- Keep 2 arms length distance
- Use open hand and arm gestures
- Talk to the person at their level – both physically and intellectually

### **FIVE STEP APPEAL**

The five step appeal

**Step 1.** Ethical Appeal ask the person to carry out the action

**Step 2.** Reasoned Appeal re-enforce the rule and explain your request

**Step 3.** Personal Appeal what would your children think?

**Step 4.** The final appeal is there anything I can do that will make you do the action?

**Step 5.** Action – this is where you decide on what your course of action is going to be depending on the situation and your dynamic risk assessment.

### **L-E-A-P-S**

#### **Listen**

Always listen to what the other person is talking / complaining about, it is a surer way to increase the hostility of the person if they believe that you are not listening / paying attention to them. Remember active listening they must be able to see that you are listening.

#### **Empathise**

The person needs to see that you understand what they are saying and that you understand, but not by being patronising.

#### **Ask**

What the problem is / what they want to see put in place. Ask open questions

#### **Paraphrase**

Go over and reiterate what has been said.

#### **Summarise**

Go over the whole situation and what your intended course of action is going to be, even if you are going to speak to someone else make sure you say this.

### **Conflict Resolution Part 3 Role Play:**

Role Play is an important technique to confirm that delegates have understood the lessons taught in CR. Role Play enables delegates to practice techniques in a realistic environment and offers a forum for professional discussion.

