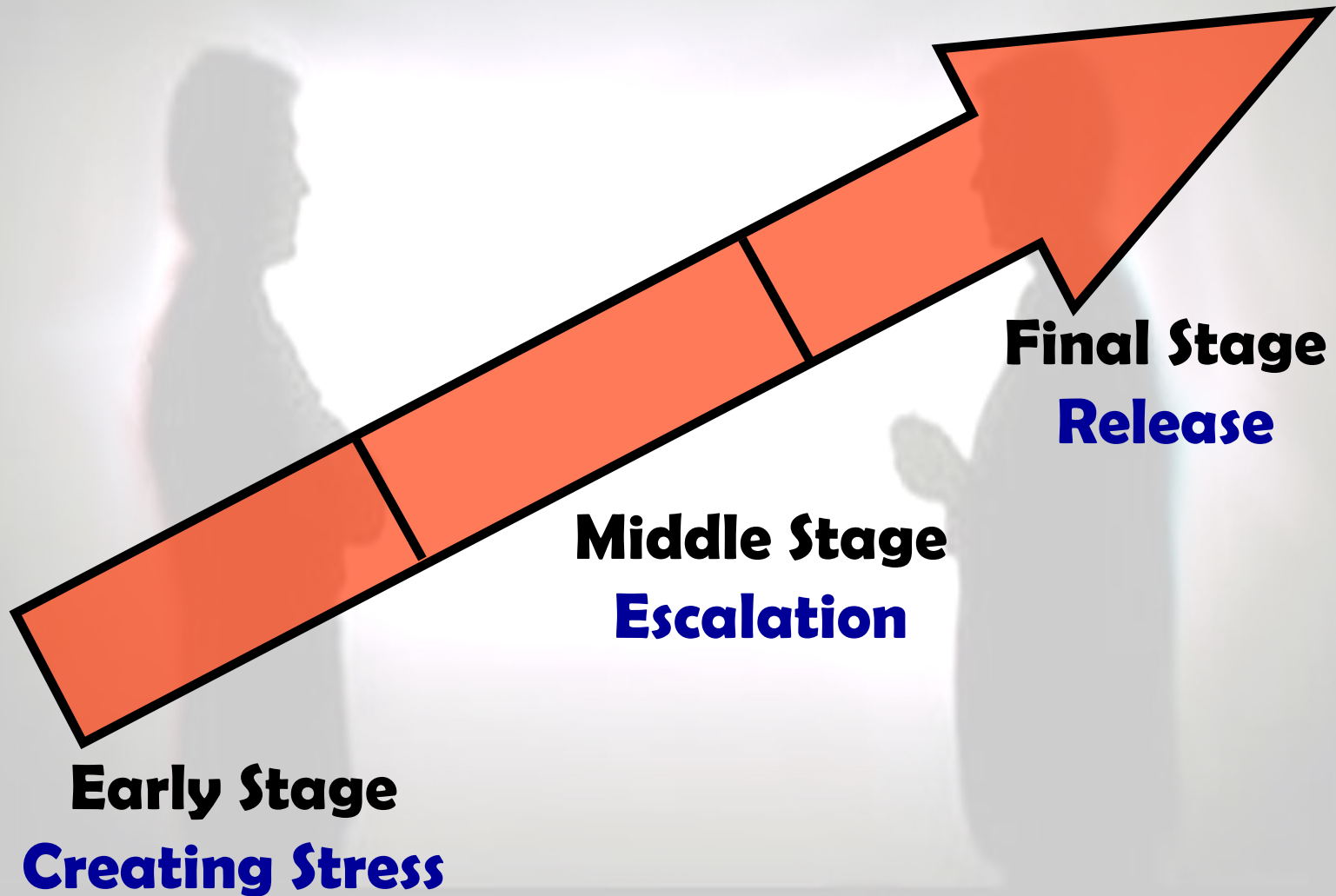




Verbal De-escalation

Defensive Tactics Academy

3 Stages of Crisis



Early Stage – Creating Stress

Internal Event

- Anxiety
- Fear
- Drug Induced
- Mental Illness

External Event

- Aggressive behavior by others
- Unexpected visit by PO
- Arguments with family members

Subject will first experience autonomic responses such as an increasing heart rate, sweating, and heavier breathing.

As anxiety increases, the subject shows more noticeable physical signs such as exaggerated body language and gestures.

Early Stage – Creating Stress

Warning Signs

Physical warning signs of agitation may include:

- **Placing hands on hips**
- **Running hands through hair**
- **Pacing**
- **Shuffling feet**
- **Strumming fingers**
- **Handling objects**
- **Increasing eye movement**
- **Acting withdrawn**

Early Stage – Creating Stress

Intervention = Support

Provide Support

- Allow subject to express him/herself
- Accept feelings as being genuine
- Help subject to focus on the issue at hand
- Encourage expression
- Offer and clarify choices
- Agree on course of action and
- Expect follow-through

Keep in mind that when you are in the field you have less control of the situation and may be at a disadvantage.

Middle Stage – Escalation

Warning Signs

Physical Signs may include:

- **Growling or Screaming**
- **Clenching teeth**
- **Whispering to self**
- **Wiping hands over eyes and face**
- **Glancing quickly around the room**
- **Waving hands wildly**
- **Pointing**

As the crisis continues to escalate, the subject will exhibit verbal and physical cues that may indicate more of a threat to self and others.

Middle Stage – Escalation

Intervention = Direction

Directive (Set Limits)

At this stage, the officer has to take control of the situation by setting clear limits.

For limits to be effective they have to adhere to the following three elements:

- **They must be clear**
- **They must be consistent and reasonable**
- **They must be enforceable**

Final Stage – Verbal Release

Warning Signs

Subject's speech will increase in tempo, volume, pitch and tone.

Responding to Verbal Release

You can counter this response by:

- **Lowering your voice**
- **Asking questions and waiting for a response**
- **Using active listening skills**
- **Focusing on facts – common**
- **Avoiding the use of “you”, instead use I, we, and us**

Final Stage – Verbal Release

Intervention = Verbal Commands

There are two predominant reasons to give verbal commands:

- **So our subject understands what it is that we need him or her to do**
- **To manage our audience**

Keep it short and simple for example, “Get back”, as opposed to, “I feel as if you are invading my space so please step back.”

Final Stage – Physical Release

Warning Signs

A physical confrontation where there is a risk of harm may occur quickly. The subject can quickly become aggressive towards the officer and exhibit such behaviors:

- **Closing fists**
- **Staring straight ahead**
- **Squaring his/her stance**
- **Backing into corner**
- **Scanning the room for a weapon or an escape route**
- **Grabbing an object**
- **Coming towards the officer, decreasing distance between self and others**

Final Stage – Physical Release

Intervention = Defensive Tactics

Despite your attempts to de-escalate a situation, the subject may become physically aggressive and attempt to harm you or someone else.

When the subject displays signals of physical aggression; your options may be to either leave the scene or to use force to defend yourself.

Physical Composure

Each and every action of the officer contributes to the escalation or de-escalation of the situation

- **Maintain personal space – at least two arms length apart**
- **Do not take the situation personally**
- **Be nonjudgmental**
- **Remain calm**
- **Maintain self control**



Active Listening

4 requirements of Active Listening:

- 1) You really want to hear what the subject has to say**
- 2) You believe that what the subject has to say is important to him/her and you want to help with whatever problem he/she has**
- 3) You genuinely accept his/her feelings, whatever they are**
- 4) You have confidence in the subject's capacity to eventually find a solution.**

Active Listening

Components

Active listening is verbal communication in which both the "sender" and "receiver" are involved. In order to practice active listening, you need to:

- **Listen with a purpose**
- **Listen with all your senses**
- **Allow the subject to carry the conversational ball**
- **Use minimal encouragements**
- **Accept emotion**
- **Checking perceptions**
- **Show understanding**
- **Use paraphrasing**

Para-Verbal Communication

Para-Verbal communication is voice pitch, range, timbre, resonance, speed and speech difficulties.

Three major Para-Verbals are:

- **Tone:**
pleading, questioning, sarcastic, judgmental, overbearing, aggressive
- **Volume:**
overall, emphasis on key words, rising inflection at the end of sentences suggesting a question.
- **Cadence/pace:**
may be culturally influenced, hesitation suggesting uncertainty, interruptions

Tone + Volume + Cadence = 38% of the messages we send

Body Language

People are very sensitive to the messages being given off by body language

- **Facial Expressions**
- **Eye Contact**
- **Body Posture**

Body Language = 55% of the messages we send

Your words account for only 7% of the messages we send

Conclusion/Review

You learned about the three Stages of a Crisis and how to appropriately react in order to verbally de-escalate the situation:

Early Stage



Support

Middle Stage



Directive (Setting Limits)

Final Stage



Verbal Commands

Questions/Comments





Verbal De-escalation

Defensive Tactics Academy