

Aurora **safety** Solutions

Staff safety When Dealing With CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

“Help, help. The BSP isn’t working and I don’t know what to do.” Ever have that feeling? Ever feel compelled to make a decision and hope it works to fix the situation at hand? That certainly is a natural instinct as you do not want the consumer or others to get hurt. But let’s break this down a bit and see if we can use common sense to help guide us. Behavior Support Plans are good programs meant to describe behavioral situations, give us good ideas on preventative or proactive measures so hopefully we do not have to address an escalated situation and then of course the interventions if something does become intense. Sometimes the situation goes beyond what is covered in the program. Sometimes you implement the interventions and that is still not enough. What do you do?

First, be calm. Take a deep breath and assess the situation. What is the immediate threat? Are other consumers at risk? If so, remove others from the immediate area. Do this calmly and naturally. Do not give out the vibe that you are scared or upset. Good, others are safe. Now what? This person looks to be pretty upset with you...

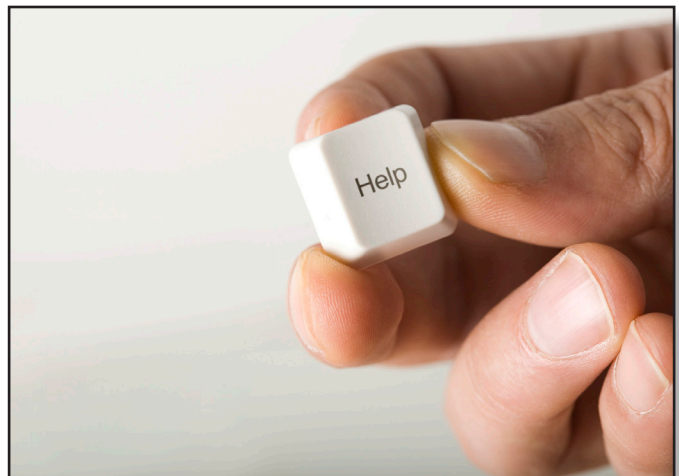
Remove yourself from the situation. Perhaps you should be in the bedroom with one of the consumers. That way you know both the consumer and you are safe. Well that seemed to have backfired. No one around the consumer in crisis to target and you hear things start to break and be thrown around the house.

Remain calm. Panic only breeds panic and communication is over 90% body language, so you need to show that you have control of your emotions. This is where you might feel compelled to “fix” the

situation, as things are being destroyed. Don’t put yourself in harm’s way. A lamp, chair, table, picture, television can all be replaced. Your eye can’t, or perhaps you may get significantly injured. Property can be replaced and it isn’t worth you getting injured over. Please, let’s all remember that.

What are your resources? Is there another staff working? (which just by change of face, can help reduce the anxiety and emotion of the person in distress) Can you get to a phone where you can call the program director, office or call center? They may be able to help you brainstorm and get you additional resources.

“Keep on Keepin’ on and do what you feel is right. The tough parts won’t last forever. I promise.”



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