



# Crisis Prevention & De-escalation

Creating Safety and Calm:

A Shift in Perspective

# Learning Goals for Today

2

## 01

Identify factors that encourage calm

- In your work
- Within yourself
- For others

## 02

Identify – and avoid! – factors that contribute to dysregulation

- What not to do

## 03

Better understand the mechanics of a crisis

# Who we are

- ▶ Patti Abelson
  - ▶ Supporting staff to provide Person-Centered, Trauma Informed and Strength Based Care, and to practice self-care for multiple decades
- ▶ Eric Severance
  - ▶ From overnight Residential Counselor to managing a Crisis Residence, has made a lot of mistakes and learned from a few
- ▶ Luis Fagundes
  - ▶ Leading staff and providing direct client care for over 20 years in a variety of program settings

- ▶ “We’re building barriers and walls around apartment buildings and public spaces to keep out the diversity of people and uses that comprise urban life... *what is hostile to some is defensive to others.*”

- ▶ Jon Ritter, Architectural Historian at NYU



# Diana Nyad on Speaking on NPR



# Trauma

6

SHNNY Crisis Prevention 6.27.2023



What it is and why it matters



Universal precaution



How it impacts our tenants

Worldview

Dysregulation

Exaggerated response

# Overlapping Principles of Trauma Informed Care & Crisis Prevention



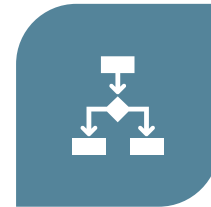
SAFETY



TRUSTWORTHINESS



BOUNDARIES



CHOICE



COLLABORATION



EMPOWERMENT

Maintain Boundaries to Help Maintain Calm

# Professional Boundaries



A WAY TO  
MAINTAIN A  
SAFE AND  
THERAPEUTIC  
ENVIRONMENT



GUIDED BY  
AGENCY  
STANDARDS  
AND  
PROFESSION  
AL ETHICS



INTERNAL  
AND  
EXTERNAL  
LIMITS SET BY  
CARE  
PROVIDERS



A WAY TO  
PROVIDE  
CLARITY  
ABOUT  
ROLES



CLARITY ABOUT  
RESPONSIBILITIES



CLARITY  
ABOUT  
RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH PEOPLE  
IN CARE



AND  
RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH EACH  
OTHER



# Think about...

*Roles, Purpose, and Responsibilities*

- ▶ What are your roles
- ▶ Are there gray areas
- ▶ How are you supported to navigate uncertainty



## *Emotional Dysregulation*

What we may see –

- ▶ A threat
- ▶ Hostility
- ▶ Yelling, screaming
- ▶ Self injury
- ▶ Verbal threats
- ▶ Inappropriate sexual conduct
- ▶ Frozen in place

At its worst – It confirms negative expectations – what do you expect from an intoxicated and/or mentally ill person

At its best –

An opportunity to help heal

# Understanding Dysregulation and Helping from a Trauma Informed Perspective

11



## The experience of emotional dysregulation

Emotions escalate quickly and are hard to control

Behavior gets out of hand and is difficult for the person to manage



## How to help

Connection and communication

Self awareness and emotional labor



## Promoting safety

The importance of Trauma Informed Care

# Resonance



EMPATHY



VALIDATION



SELF-  
AWARENESS

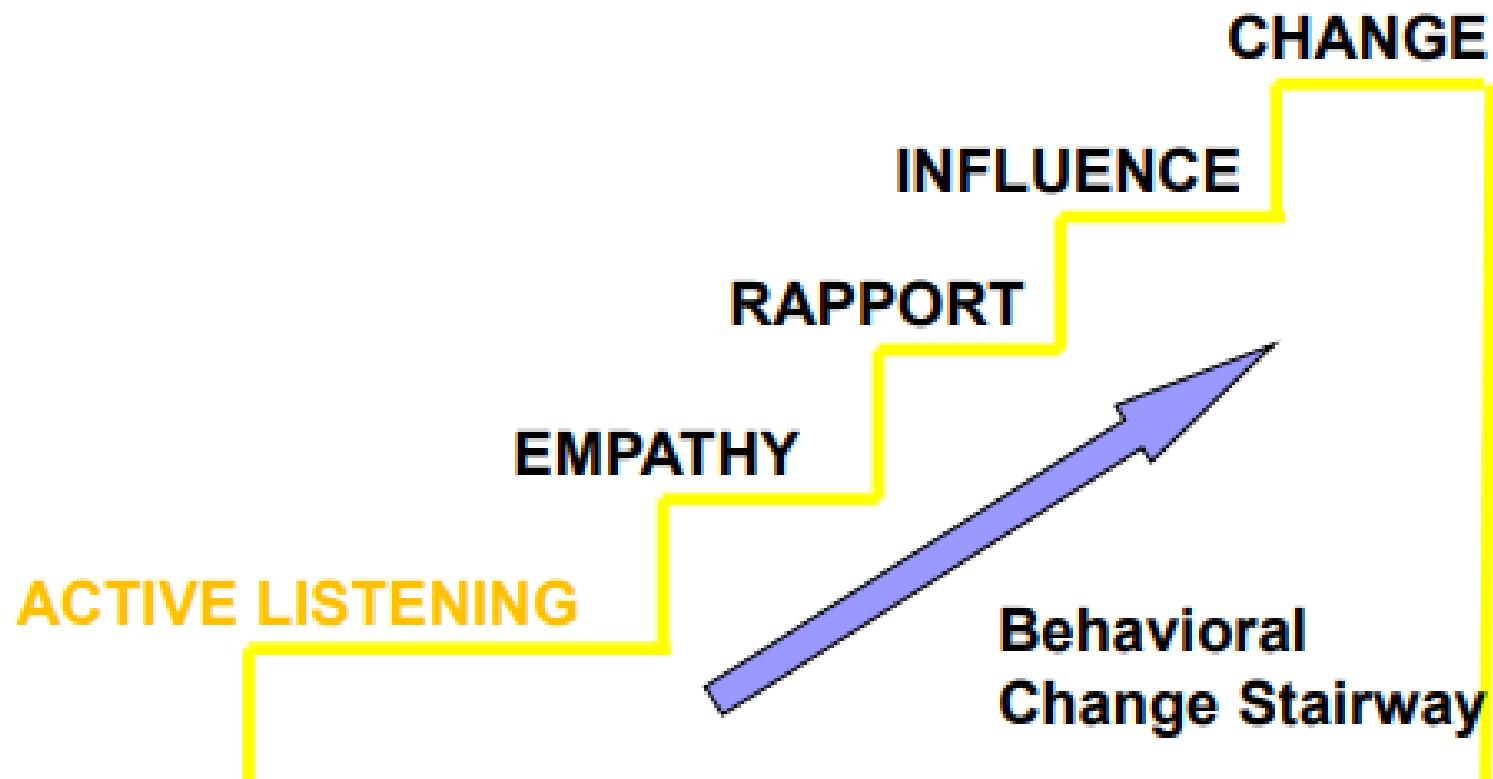


# De-escalation starts with you

It is not what we do to or for a person – it is something we do with a person

- ▶ Self awareness and self control
  - ▶ Recognize your triggers and your response to stress
  - ▶ Acknowledge and breath
  - ▶ Manage feelings, thoughts, fears, negative judgments and expectations
  - ▶ Act do not react

# Influencing Behavioral Change



# Self Awareness

## -What are you communicating and how?

- ▶ Demonstrate with body language that:
  - ▶ You will not harm the tenant
  - ▶ You want to listen
  - ▶ You want everyone to be safe
- ▶ Respect Personal Space
  - ▶ Your safety
  - ▶ Tenant's safety
  - ▶ Trauma triggers
  - ▶ Both should be able to leave the room without feeling blocked in
  - ▶ Maintain 2 arms length distance
  - ▶ Property is personal

# Mind body connection



Relax posture



Breathe



Open hands



Half smile



# The first principle: **Listen!**

17

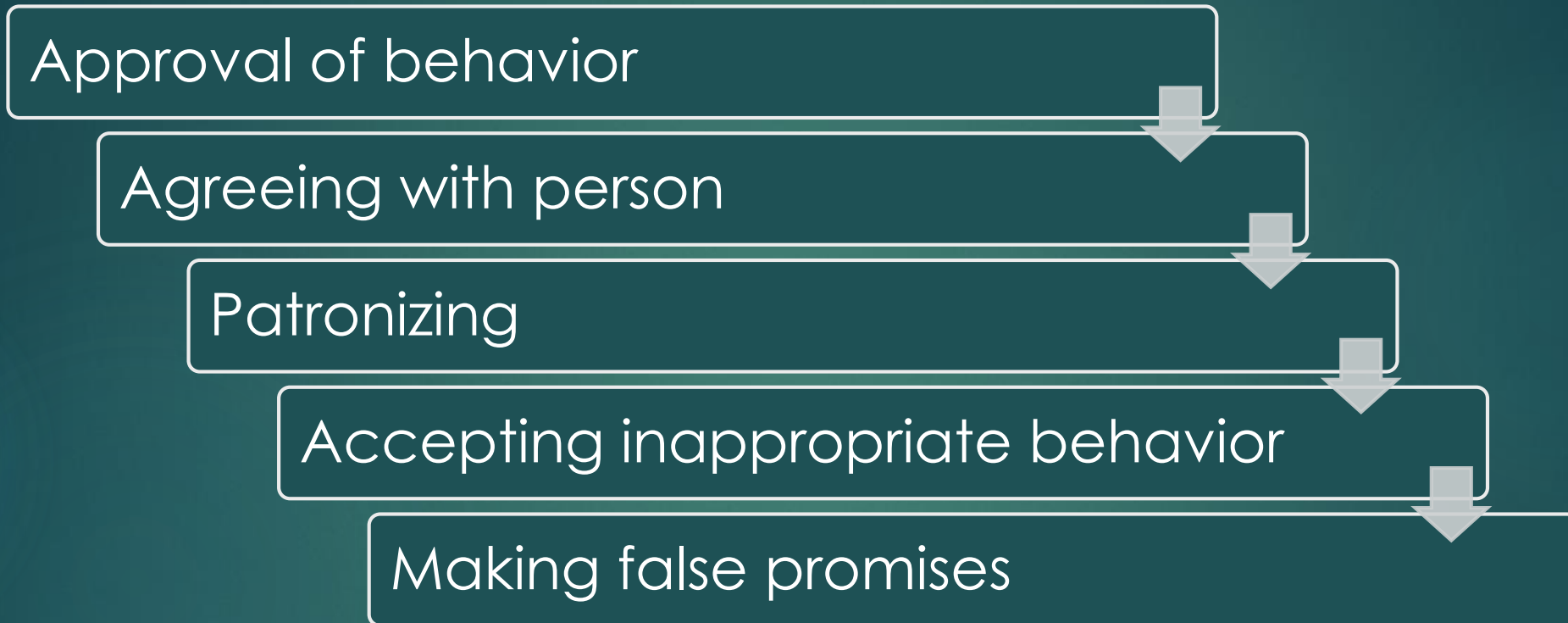
Active Listening is the most effective prevention and de-escalation technique.

Remember, a demand is an expression of need. People escalate when they feel misunderstood, alone, ignored, and not listened to.

# Validation: Beneath a demand is a need

- ▶ Listening empathically to the person for understanding
  - ▶ Cannot listen when stressed or when you feel threatened
  - ▶ Listen not just to words but to body language and other verbal cues
  - ▶ Do not argue
  - ▶ Communicate verbally and nonverbally that you want to understand
  - ▶ Check in “I think you are saying \_\_\_\_\_. Do I have that right?”

# Validation is not



# ABC's of Verbal De-escalation:

20

## Don't

- ▶ Fake attention
  - ▶ Roll your eyes, raise your voice, point your finger, sigh, lose your temper, etc.
  - ▶ Make false promises
  - ▶ Cut people off
  - ▶ Argue
- 
- ▶ Get in a power struggle or make threats
  - ▶ Use jargon
  - ▶ Say, "Calm down."
  - ▶ Take it personally
  - ▶ Be judgmental

# ABC's of Verbal De-escalation:

## Do

- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Use the person's name
- ▶ Ask, "How may I help you?"
- ▶ Speak slowly / role model calm
- ▶ Use restatement/paraphrase for clarification
- ▶ Validate their feelings
- ▶ Explain next steps (now I am going to call....)
- ▶ Give options whenever possible, but no more than 2 or 3 choices
- ▶ Allow time for reflection, feedback and input
- ▶ Ask for their idea or solution (partner/collaborate)
- ▶ Use simple, clear language
- ▶ Use a Team Member/Supervisor for Support

# The Crisis Cycle

## Phases

1. Triggering
2. Escalation
3. Crisis
4. Recovery
5. Post-Crisis



## Early intervention

---

When does crisis begin? Watch video in reverse – what were indicators - in client's behavior or change in risk factors

---

There are almost always early indicators that a person is becoming upset

---

Crisis cycle – when initially triggered there is best chance of partnering with a tenant whose brain is not yet overwhelmed by stress hormones

# Avoid power struggles

## ▶ **Tug of War**

- ▶ You want to achieve something – the person wants the opposite and digs in heels

## ▶ **Impasse**

- ▶ You feel you have tried every possible solution to solve a problem

## ▶ **Failure to agree**

- ▶ Holding very different opinions

***Use validation, collaborative problem solving, exercise mindful self-awareness throughout***

## **Techniques**

Name the power struggle

Explore outcomes

Remove yourself and try again



# Post Crisis Phase

## ▶ Safety Plan with Tenant

- ▶ What were early warning signs?
- ▶ What were the triggers?
- ▶ What are strategies for the future?
- ▶ Rehearse plan for coping; help tenant step outside habitual response, for example, hitting back or lying. Construct a realistic alternative and practice!
- ▶ Revise Safety and Treatment Plan as needed

## ▶ Revisit Crisis with Team

- ▶ What were the early warning signs?
- ▶ Were/are other providers aware?
- ▶ Were there opportunities to intervene earlier?
- ▶ Did you feel supported by your team?
- ▶ If changes are in order, are you making them?

# Do not give up – stakes are high for us and for clients

26



**Obstacles are common**



**Label behavior – never the person**



**Expect the same process again and again. Celebrate small successes.**



**Consistency**



**Optimism**



**Own hopelessness – it is a feeling that will pass**



**Pay attention to the physical and interpersonal environment, to the tenant & course, to yourself.**