

De-escalating behaviour incidents

and working to reduce the
frequency

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<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/epservice/>

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/epspractitioners/>

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Aims

promote understanding and practical application of conflict resolution and de-escalation strategies to be used in the school context.

1. practical knowledge for understanding behaviour
2. broadened and extended their knowledge ASD and AD/HD

- ▶ To introduce de-escalation principles
- ▶ To outline approaches and interventions at all stages of a behaviour incident
- ▶ To reflect on and share good practice
- ▶ To consider conflict resolution and how to promote it
- ▶ To think about next steps

Outline

Today	3 ½ hours
Introduction and pre-requisites	30 min
Pre-incidents preparation	20
Task	15
During incidents	30
Task	15
Post incidents	20
Task	15
Conflict resolution	20
Task	15

What for?

- ▶ Sometimes children are rude, unruly, annoying and badly behaved.
- ▶ This can be very stressful
- ▶ The situation can escalate very easily
- ▶ The outcomes are worse
 - ▶ Children - get into much more trouble
 - ▶ Adults - get more stressed.
- ▶ Sometimes these behaviours are repeated between two people

What is de-escalation?

- ▶ A way of trying to reduce the stress in a difficult situation so that it doesn't get worse

What is conflict resolution?

- ▶ General approach to help children sort out their own conflicts

De-escalation pack

- ▶ Developed in Fife by primary & secondary Behaviour Support teachers, EIS reps, EOs, & psychological service.
- ▶ Aim: To develop training materials designed to further improving school staff's skills and school procedures so that pupils presenting potentially challenging behaviour are dealt with positively by means of a range of de-escalation approaches.

Background: Social Context

- ▶ Changes in the structure of families and communities
- ▶ The effects of social exclusion and disaffection
- ▶ The progressive emancipation of young people
- ▶ Peer group effects
- ▶ The effects of drugs and alcohol abuse on some families and communities
- ▶ The impact of increased identification of dyslexia, ADHD and autistic spectrum disorders etc

Pre-requisites

- ▶ Ethos, culture and practices in school

Helpful initiatives and creating the right ethos

- ▶ Effective teaching (awareness of different teaching and learning styles)
- ▶ Model the behaviour and attitude you want to see. Use non-confrontational practices.
- ▶ Nurture Approaches
- ▶ Being Cool in School
- ▶ Self-regulation principles and approaches
- ▶ Buddying systems (peer support)
- ▶ Early intervention
- ▶ Restorative approaches
- ▶ School policy and practice, such as discipline, anti-bullying, rights respecting school

Teach good behaviour – don't just expect it.

- ▶ School rules and routines are different from outside school, so need to be taught
- ▶ Say what you want, not what you don't want
- ▶ Have realistic expectations
- ▶ Build positive relationships, initiate conversations

At a school level: What makes effective interventions

- ▶ Effective and positive relationships between pupils & staff, staff & staff, school and parents etc are present.
- ▶ They are targeted at the whole class/department/school not just the individual pupil
- ▶ They build on existing strengths in school
- ▶ They seek to develop staff competencies
- ▶ The school environment is well planned and organised
- ▶ Activities match the strengths and needs of individual pupils
- ▶ Staff are enthusiastic and flexible in their teaching techniques
- ▶ Effective school assessment record keeping procedures exist

At a school level: Barriers to effective interventions

- ▶ Inconsistency of staff responses
- ▶ Punitive staff attitudes
- ▶ Fear and avoidance
- ▶ Low levels of interaction between staff and pupils
- ▶ Low staff morale – focus on control and restrictive responses
- ▶ Lack of / poor training
- ▶ Absence of vision/practice models/policies etc
- ▶ Lack of planning for individuals
- ▶ Lack of OR the subversion of plans & risk assessments
- ▶ Problems with multi-disciplinary working

Task

- ▶ Consider pupils' needs and circumstances and the impact they may have had.
- ▶ What might be physiological and psychological factors which impact on behaviour?
- ▶ Behaviour comes from: anxiety, tiredness, hunger, embarrassment, stress, shame, fear, confusion, prior learning, impulsivity, lack of flexibility of thought, current / prior experiences, poor regulation of emotions...

Expectations

- ▶ Is it realistic to think you will never need to deal with challenging behaviour?
- ▶ Be prepared - accept and expect that incidents happen
- ▶ Behaviour tells us something

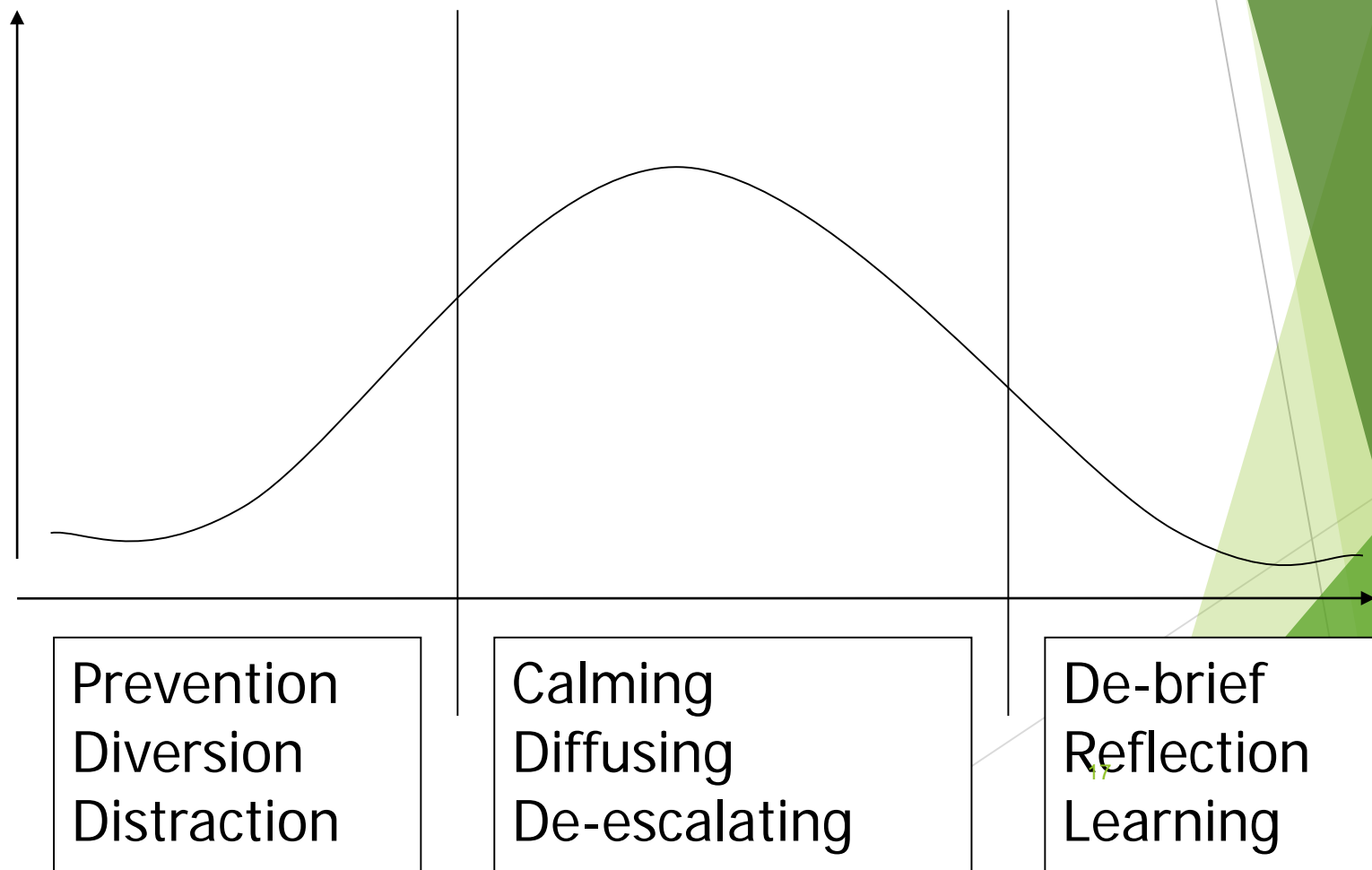
When managing behaviour, remember...

- ▶ Nothing works all the time
- ▶ It's a learning process

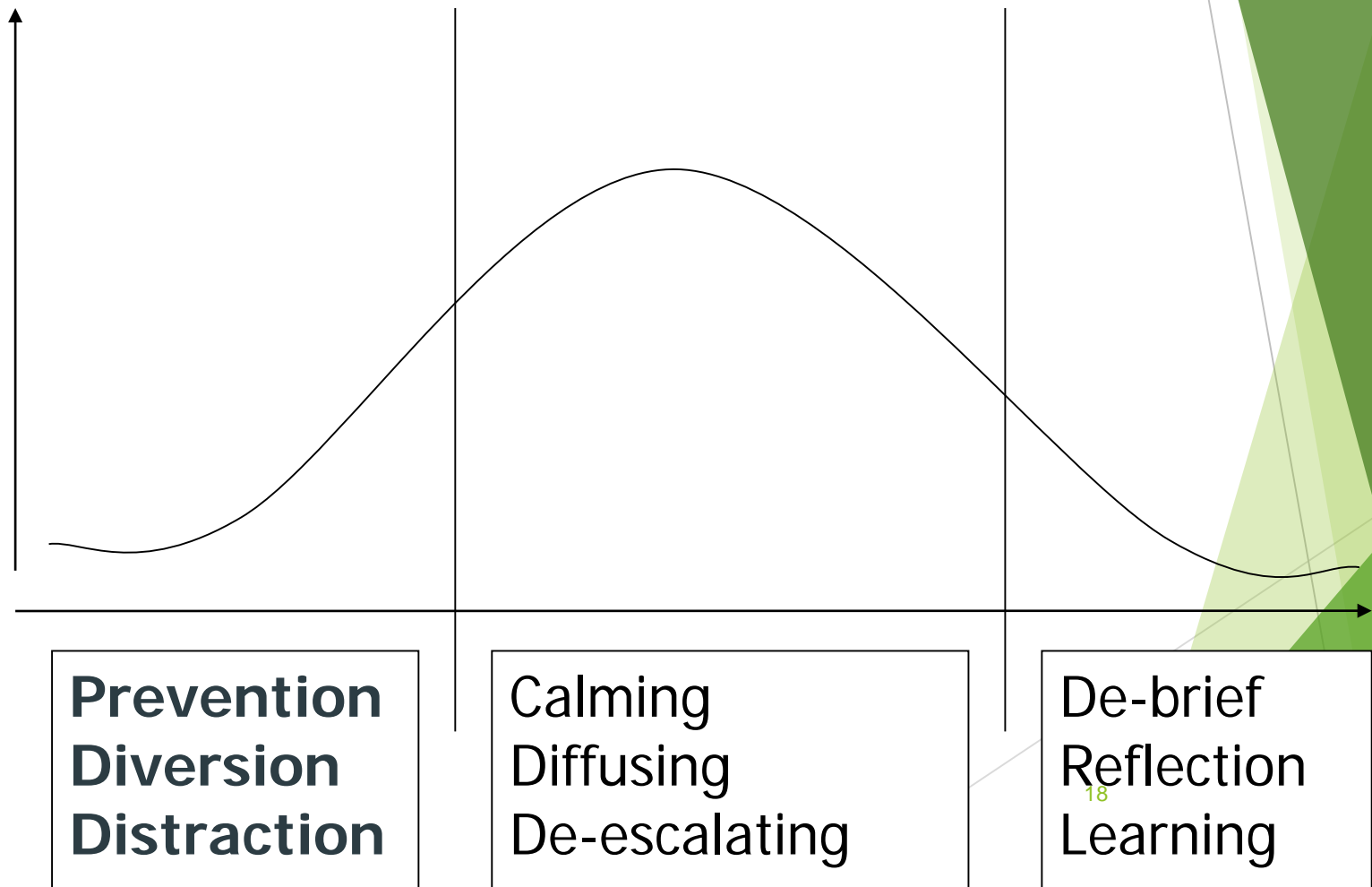
But...

- ▶ De-escalation principles will help us to deal better with incidents
- ▶ Aims:
- ▶ Avoid incidents happening
- ▶ Reduce the frequency and severity
- ▶ Nick Balchin © 2018 Falkirk Educational Psychology Service Feel more confident to manage incidents

The course of behaviour incidents: What to do & when



Stage 1: Prevention, Diversion and Distraction



Preventing incidents: Helpful classroom organisation

- ▶ Setting clear agendas
- ▶ Holding high expectations
- ▶ Being consistent
- ▶ Displays of work
- ▶ Seating plans
- ▶ Classroom routines
- ▶ Keep directions short and simple

Avoid incidents escalating:

General strategies

- ▶ Aim to influence not control behaviour
- ▶ Refocusing
- ▶ Assertive not hostile or weak responses
- ▶ Teach good behaviour and make expectations explicit *"We listen when someone is talking"*
- ▶ Model what you want pupils to see
- ▶ Rule reminders
- ▶ Use praise - Catch them being good
- ▶ Tactical ignoring
- ▶ Treat pupils with respect

Knowing your pupils

- ▶ Every pupil is different
- ▶ Avoid making judgements and assumptions
- ▶ Avoid labelling
- ▶ Try to see things through their eyes
- ▶ Share knowledge and experiences of successful strategies

Task

- Identify strategies you have successfully used to **divert** a situation or to **distract** a pupil who is becoming agitated

Planned Ignoring

Humour

Routine / mundane / predictable task ie sorting - can calm

Chat calmly about something else.

Child-proofing the Environment

Broken Record Technique

Remove Audience

Active Listening

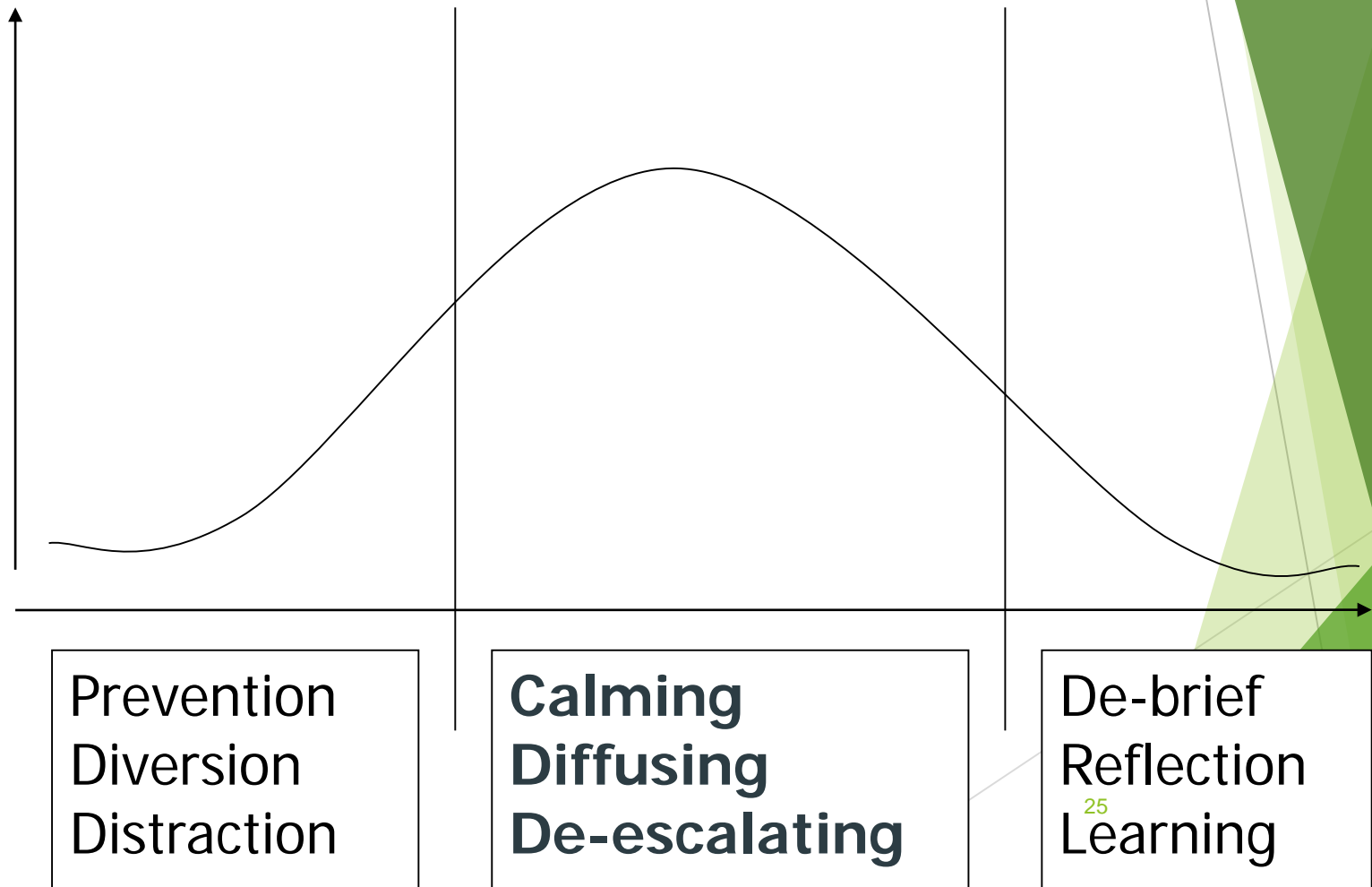
Knowing yourself

- ▶ What pushes your buttons?
 - ▶ Be aware of these
 - ▶ Work on controlling your emotions & thoughts so that responses are reasoned and consistent
- ▶ How do you change your responses when you are tired, stressed or annoyed?
 - ▶ Think about how can you avoid this and ensure effective responses on all days
 - ▶ Use of scripts, established strategies & routines

Psychological preparation

- ▶ Accept incidents happen & expect them
- ▶ Believe that it's not personal
- ▶ It's ok to be upset - use people to support you in and out of school
- ▶ Relax - make time and identify what helps you
- ▶ Understand physiological responses - stress, anxiety and fear
- ▶ Talk about how you feel
- ▶ Be aware of how you feel on a particular day
- ▶ Know limitations of what you can do - have realistic expectations of what you can achieve
- ▶ Be confident that all practical preparation has occurred

Stage 2: Calming, Diffusing and De-escalating



Key principles of de-escalation

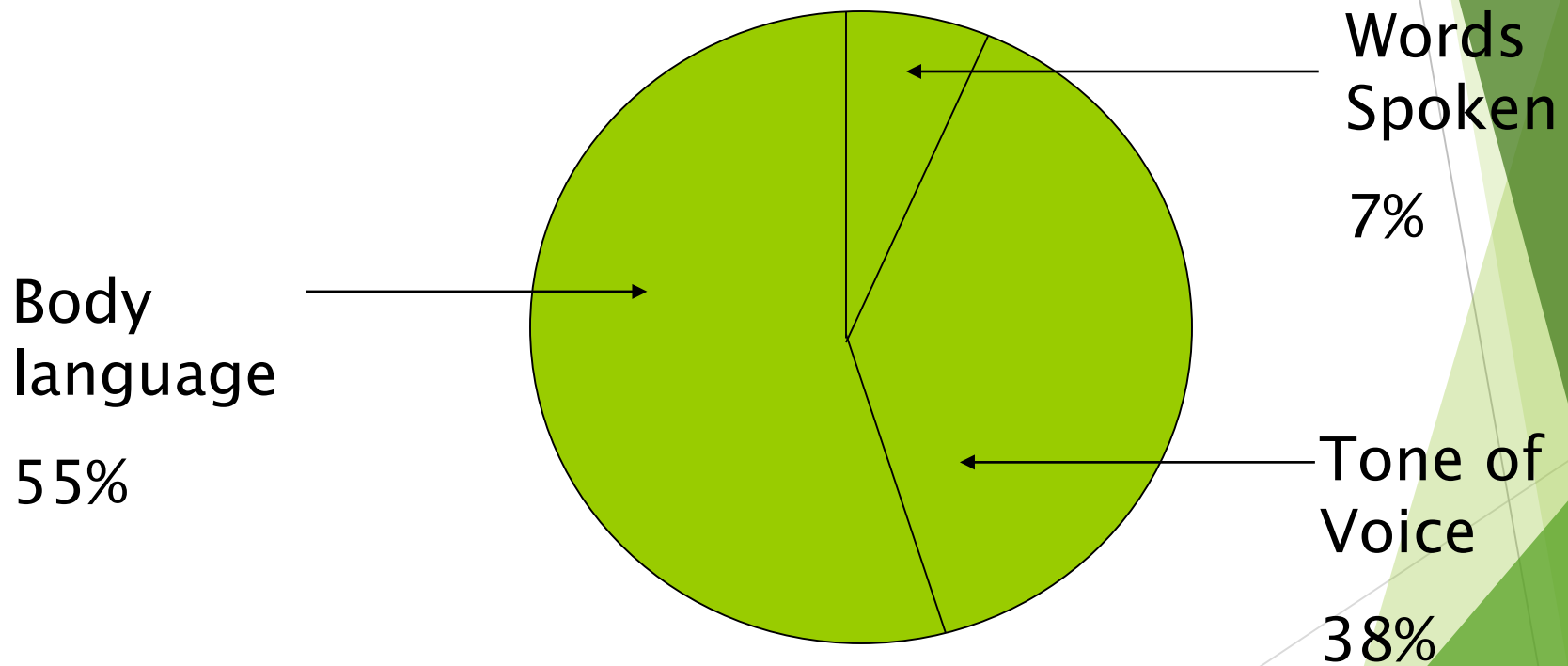
- ▶ **Avoid contributing** to the incident with your own behaviour
- ▶ **Stay calm** be aware of your thoughts and feelings
- ▶ **Look for effective outcomes**
- ▶ **Avoid confrontation & conflict**
- ▶ **Give the person the power to make choices**
- ▶ **Use time effectively**

If you don't want
to have a tug of
war, don't pick
up your end of
the rope.

Don't just do
something, stand
there.

Non verbal communication

The actual message heard is picked up from:



Body language



- ▶ Keep personal space
- ▶ Position yourself at 45 degree angle
- ▶ Leave an exit - do not block or corner the pupil
- ▶ Sit down if appropriate
- ▶ Use open handed gestures
- ▶ Use appropriate eye contact - show you're attentive but use limited or fleeting eye contact
- ▶ Maintain neutral facial expressions
- ▶ Ensure relaxed body language

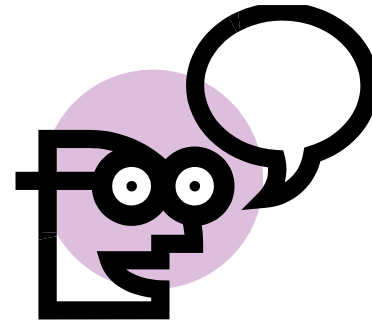


Verbal responses

- ▶ Keep your voice calm and steady
- ▶ Keep the volume low
- ▶ Don't interrupt
- ▶ Leave pauses
- ▶ Use a reassuring tone
- ▶ Say little and give clear instructions
- ▶ Speak slowly
- ▶ Talk about an unrelated topic



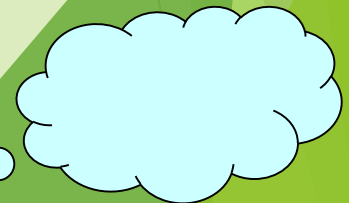
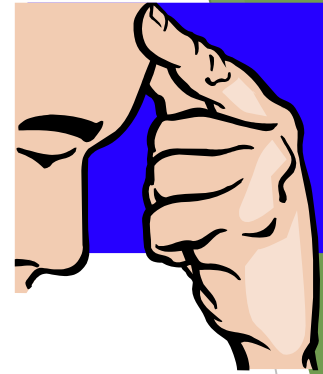
What to say



- ▶ Use 'We' not 'You'
- ▶ Clarify and summarise what's been said *"You've told me you're feeling angry at John, is that right?"*
- ▶ Give acknowledgement *"I hear what you're saying"*
- ▶ Focus on the situation and not the person - externalise *"It's best if chairs are kept on the ground"*
- ▶ Reassuring talk *"We can both take a few minutes and have a rest. There's no need to go anywhere just now"*

Thoughts

- ▶ I am calm, I will remain calm
- ▶ I can manage this situation
- ▶ I'm not a threat to them
- ▶ I'm in control of myself - I can work with them
- ▶ We can sort this out
- ▶ We have time - there's no rush here
- ▶ Other people can support me if I need them



Think about a time you responded well to challenging behaviour

- ▶ What were you thinking?
- ▶ How were you feeling?
- ▶ What did you do?
 - ▶ What you said
 - ▶ Tone of voice
 - ▶ Body language / position
- ▶ What was the outcome? - short term/long term
 - ▶ For you
 - ▶ For the pupil

Stages during an incident

- ▶ **Calming** - bring pupil's arousal level down
- ▶ **Reaching** - try to engage them
- ▶ **Controlling** - make suggestions to try to end the incident
- ▶ Remember: Take time, give them power, seek an effective outcome, remain calm

Re-focussing

- ▶ Steer pupils back to being successful
- ▶ Use of 'thank you' rather than 'please'
- ▶ Private conversations - acknowledge difficulties, feelings
- ▶ Questions to re-focus
- ▶ Privately repeated directions
- ▶ Allow time to respond

What you might say 2

▶Rule reminders

- ▶ Class ownership of rules
- ▶ Agreed consequences
- ▶ Maintain a consistent approach

Use the language of choice

- ▶ Give consequences as a choice
- ▶ give pupils responsibility for their own behaviour
- ▶ Praise good choices

Avoid confrontational practices

- ▶ Avoid direct arguments
- ▶ Avoid being drawn into secondary arguments
- ▶ Ignore secondary behaviours if possible
- ▶ Avoid what/how/why questions
- ▶ Avoid blocking exits

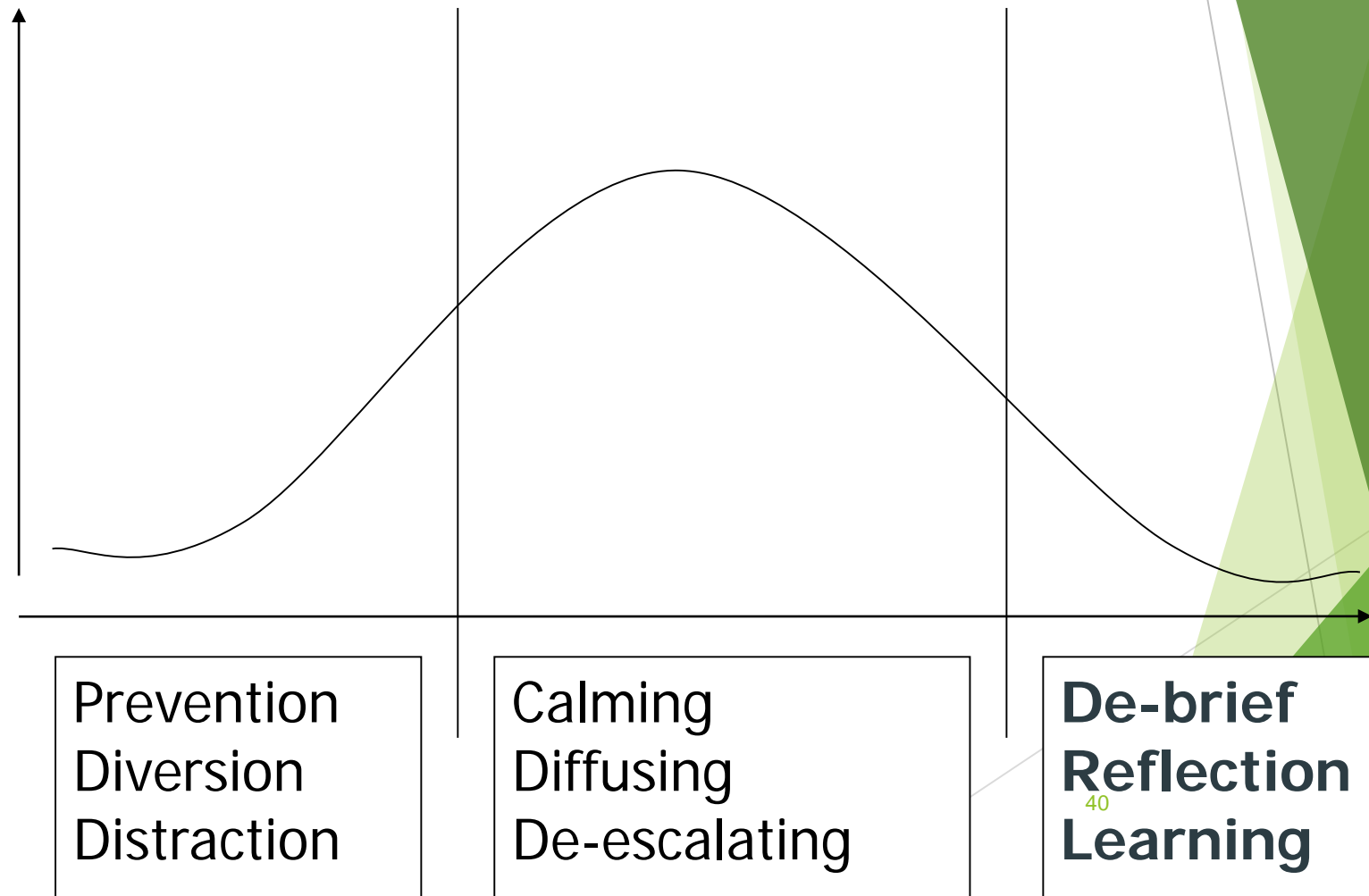
Defusing techniques

- ▶ Diverting
- ▶ Planned Ignoring
- ▶ Proximity
- ▶ Humour
- ▶ Child-proofing the Environment
- ▶ Broken Record Technique
- ▶ Remove Audience
- ▶ Use of Space
- ▶ Use of Silence
- ▶ Active Listening

Case study – Task

- ▶ A playground disagreement has been brought into class. The pupils look very angry and upset. You've tried your usual techniques to divert and distract them but they don't seem to be working. One pupil starts shouting and swearing at the other. They lift a chair as if to throw it.
- ▶ What do you do? First? Next? What's your body language like? Where do you stand?
- ▶ How do you make sure you are calm?
- ▶ What do you say? Useful scripts?
- ▶ What do you use to make judgements about the situation? How do you know the arousal level is decreasing?

Stage 3: De-brief, Reflection and Learning



When incidents have occurred

1. De-brief
 - ▶ Evaluate what happened (build up, responses, strategies)
2. Don't harbour resentment
 - ▶ It's ok to be upset but avoid blame.
3. Learn from the incident
 - ▶ How could it be avoided in future?
4. Work on re-establishing relationships
 - ▶ Don't avoid the situation
 - ▶ Use restorative approaches to repair harm
5. Understand the behaviour
 - ▶ Consider a functional analysis - What function did that behaviour serve for that person?

What other supports are there?

- ▶ Ongoing planning and review – what's working, what's not, what else could we try
- ▶ Involvement of other agencies in a staged intervention process – Educational Psychology Service, Inclusion and Wellbeing Service etc
- ▶ Further use of de-escalation pack?
- ▶ Risk assessment – collaborative, preventative, provides a clear plan for response

Task

- ▶ A pupil has shouted at other pupils in your class just as they were about to leave for break. You stepped forward to help sort out the situation and then he started shouting at you. The situation then de-escalated, in no small part due to your excellent approach.
- ▶ Discuss with your colleague the important elements of the debrief process you would now use.

Conflict Resolution

- conflict (noun),

A serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one.

- Resolution (noun)

The action of solving a problem or contentious matter.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>

Conflict Resolution Strategies

When and Where!

- ▶ Win-win outcome
 - ▶ Define problem
 - ▶ State what you both need from the outcome
 - ▶ Explore options available (problem solve/generate ideas)
 - ▶ Negotiate mutually acceptable solution
 - ▶ Reach an agreed decision
 - ▶ Implement decision

Seeking a win-win outcome

Define problem	Say what you think the problem you both have is
State what you both need from the outcome	Say what you want and ask what they want/need as an outcome of discussion
Explore options available	Clarify and put the options on the table and discuss pros and cons
Negotiate mutually acceptable solution	Clarify pros and cons for you and them and negotiate a common solution
Reach an agreed decision	Agree solution
Implement decision	Go away to implement.

Outcome questions


- ▶ Did you realise a mutually agreed solution?
- ▶ How easy or difficult was this?
- ▶ How long did it take and how long would it take in real life?
- ▶ How do you implement this?
 - ▶ Factors
 - ▶ Context
 - ▶ Time
- ▶ Did you get a solution?
- ▶ How easy or difficult was this?
- ▶ How long did it take and how long will it take in to do?
- ▶ How do you implement this?
 - ▶ What else might you need to make it work?
 - ▶ Where and when?
 - ▶ How long will it take until you know it works?

Coaching children

- ▶ The children cool off
- ▶ The first child (aggrieved party) states the issue
- ▶ The second child listens and paraphrases what he or she heard
- ▶ The second child states his or her point of view
- ▶ The first child listens and paraphrases what he or she heard
- ▶ The process continues until both children feel they have been fully heard
- ▶ The children come up with ideas and reach a solution.
- ▶ Adult checks in on how they are doing later
- ▶ <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/coaching-children-in-handling-everyday-conflicts/>

For children

- ▶ To learn how to resolve their own conflicts children will need:
 - ▶ Training (coaching) or specific teaching
 - ▶ Support in trying these out for the first few times
 - ▶ Practice
- ▶ What would be the role for you in this?
- ▶ Assess need/baseline
- ▶ Teach or coach?



Peer mediation
Conflict resolution
Peace building

Specific implications for AD/HD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Attachment Disorder

Pre-	Sensory needs Preparation for processes (scripts, cues) Specific pedagogy is in place
During	Silence, non-verbal communication
After	Reflection and learning may need to be more broken down into bite-size chunks
Conflict Resolution	Having seen the script of the conversation in advance Very careful mediation

Challenging behaviour training programmes

Research conclusions

- ▶ Some training programmes are associated with positive outcomes
- ▶ Many training programmes are associated with negative outcomes
- ▶ Training too often is used instead of addressing organisational culture malfunction

RCN 1998; RCN 2005; Allen 2000;
McDonnell 2005; HSE 2006 (literature meta analyses)

De-escalation: Next steps

- ▶ Where are you now?
- ▶ What do you want to change
 - ▶ What's possible for you?
- ▶ How will you go about it?
- ▶ How will it fit with current practice?
- ▶ What do you need to support it?
- ▶ Predict: success and barriers
- ▶ How will you know?
 - ▶ Evidence, impact, outcomes
- ▶ <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/epspractitioners/materials/>