De-escalation: What Does That Mean Anyway?

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De-Escalation

What Does that Mean Anyway?

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Why focus on De-Escalation

• “Law enforcement agency policies for training on use of force should emphasize de-escalation and alternatives to arrest or summons in situations where appropriate”
  • 2.2.1 Action Item
  • *The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing*
Why focus on De-Escalation

• “Relying on hospital security more familiar with the health care clientele and staff, with an emphasis on de-escalation, will make the environment safer”

  • Dr. Jon Pryor, CEO of Hennepin Healthcare
  • Star Tribune, December 14, 2018
No wonder it is not clear

• Basic de-escalation skills training, such as that included in the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training curriculum, is a law enforcement training experience designed to equip police officers with knowledge and skills that enable them to initiate specific actions to de-escalate a crisis situation.
The sample

• 52 submissions
• Juniors
• 60 credits
• Professional Peace Officer Education Program
• Law Enforcement Mindset Class
On the right track

• 8 out of 52 submissions
• Most common terms
  • Calm
  • Communication
  • Reasonable
  • Bring Down
  • Multiple Tools
On the right track

• “Turning a situation or conversation from very high energy or tense, to a calmer and less tense”
• “It is the ability to resolve conflict through words rather than the use of force”
• “Stopping the situation from escalating further”
• “The process of bringing the level of agitation down through the use of many tools but primary ones voice and mind”
In the Middle

- 31 out of 52 submissions
- Most Common Themes
  - Mindset (Obnoxious, Out of Control)
  - Peaceful
  - Stress Level (hyped up, upset)
  - Talking
In the Middle

• “Someone’s mindset is out of control and they can’t get back to normal by themselves. Someone else has to step in and control the situation”
• “To bring the level of threat of force down”
• “When a situation goes from hot to cold usually de-escalation happens when good communication is used and less force.”
• “Trying to transition something that is obnoxious and making it better”
We have a lot of work to do

• 13 out of 52 submissions
• Most Common Themes
  • Normal
  • Out of Control
  • Violence/Danger
  • Tension
We have a lot of work to do

• “Bring down the stakes of what is going on and to decrease the amount of perceived crazyness [sic]”
• “Stopping the person before it gets bigger or he or she gets out of hand.”
• “To make an issue less of an issue. If there is a problem deescalating it would make it less of a problem, almost like calming down.”
• “The process of a situation returning back to normal operations.”
Implications

• Cannot assume students know what de-escalation is
• Need to expand definition
  • Communication
  • Time
  • Distance
  • Cover
Future Research

• Change in understanding of definition after class
• Understanding of variety of techniques
• Current LEO understanding of definition.
References

