

River Valleys Continuum of Care  
De-escalation and Motivational Interviewing Training  
Wednesday, August 18, 2010  
Rochester RPU  
400 East River Road NE, Rochester, MN

Hearth Connection

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Outline of presentation

Discussion topic: Using Motivational Interviewing as a de-escalation tool

A recent study published in a noted medical journal found that telling people to “calm down and be reasonable” was effective only 8% of the time. Just kidding. Seriously though, last time someone told you to “calm down!”, did you? What about, “Take a deep breath!”, or “Take it easy”?

To de-escalate an angry person we must return the angry person to his/her rational mind. Imposing solutions to people’s problems by telling them what to do tends to do the opposite and usually increases the energy of emotions and anger behaviors. Is there a different approach? With practice it is possible to engage with an escalating person by making a concerted effort to see the world from their point of view and validate their feelings even though they may be acting unreasonably, or even violently. This is not easy to do because it forces a new habit upon us, one of trying to understand the angry person’s point of view rather than defending our own position. The main task is to engage in reflective listening to develop an alliance with the person, rather than treating them like an enemy. This approach mirrors the spirit of Motivational Interviewing as described by Miller and Rollnick and is a powerful tool for de-escalating potentially violent situations.

**Russell K. Turner, MA, MS**

***Training Manager, People Incorporated Mental Health Services***

Master’s degrees in Public Administration and Information Technology; teacher/trainer in US, Japan, Czech Republic and England for the last 15 years; developed curriculum of mental health related trainings including mental illness, crisis de-escalation, motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, and ethics; accredited instructor with *American Heart Association* and *Crisis Prevention Institute*.

