



Effective De-escalation Strategies for Nursing Facilities

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CENTER OF
EXCELLENCE
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
IN NURSING FACILITIES

Today's Event Host

Nikki Harris, MA, CBHC-BS

COE-NF TRAINING AND EDUCATION LEAD

Nikki serves as the training and education lead for the Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health in Nursing Facilities (COE-NF). For the past 20 years, Nikki has provided program implementation, development, management, external and internal trainings, policy development, quality assurance, and managed training coordination and technical support throughout the southeast region.

Previously, she served as the program manager for the Division of Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services within the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

She has a B.A. in psychology from the University of South Carolina, a M.A. in counseling from Webster University and is a certified behavioral specialist.



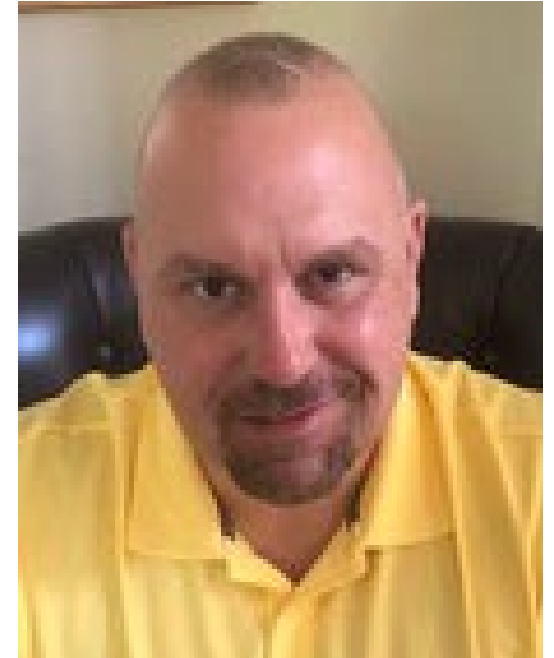
Today's Presenter

JOSEPH MADONIA, LCSW-R, CASAC

CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Joseph Madonia is a clinical associate professor at the New York University Silver School of Social Work where he lectures on graduate and post-graduate courses. He is also the 2019 recipient of the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Emerald Award for Leadership and Innovation in the field of social work. In early 2022, Joseph was appointed to serve as the director of the NYU Post-Masters certificate program in addictions.

Joseph spent 16 years as the director of the Brooklyn Treatment Court where he was responsible for the implementation of policy and planning for judicial diversion courts including Brooklyn Diversion, Veterans, and DWI courts. In this role, he managed oversight of clinical operations, management of federal grants, and supervision of staff. He hosted numerous site visits to the court by international dignitaries and local and national visitors and was the chairperson for Brooklyn Treatment Court's Clinical Advisory Board and the Brooklyn Veterans Stakeholder Board.



Email - jrm213@nyu.edu

Website - <http://josephmadonia.com/>

Our Focus Today: Effective De-escalation Strategies for Nursing Facilities

- **Description:** This training will provide a trauma informed overview of effective de-escalation strategies within the nursing facility. Participants will learn practical techniques to effectively manage and de-escalate crisis situations.
- **Learning Objectives:**
 1. To educate nursing facility staff about de-escalation strategies to effectively manage challenging behaviors among residents.
 2. To provide nursing facility staff with the knowledge and skills of trauma-informed care principles when delivering care and implementing de-escalation interventions.
 3. To equip nursing facility staff with practical skills to effectively implement de-escalation techniques when encountering escalated situations with residents, fostering a safe and supportive environment.
 4. To assist nursing facility staff in enhancing their communication and engagement skills, including active listening, empathy, and non-verbal communication, to effectively interact with residents and prevent escalation of behaviors.

De-escalation through a Trauma Informed Lens



How Do We Define Trauma?

Trauma is the psychological response to events when they are experienced as physically / emotionally harmful or threatening and have lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

- SAMHSA

Different Types of Trauma

Community Violence

Complex Trauma
(War – Military)

Domestic
Violence/Intimate
Partner Violence

Natural Disasters

Pandemic – Covid

Abuse

Grief

Reactions to traumatic events

- There is no one "standard" pattern of reaction.
- Some people respond immediately, others have delayed reactions — sometimes months or even years later.
- Some have adverse effects for a long period of time, while others recover rather quickly.

American Psychological Association - 2013

People who experience trauma are...

3 times more likely
to have serious
employment
problems

3 times more likely
to use
antidepressants

4 times more likely
to become
dependent on
alcohol

4 times more likely
to engage in IV
drug use.

15 times more
likely to attempt
suicide

Language is Important

Remember -

- “What happened to you?” instead of “What’s wrong with you?”
- Symptoms = Adaptations
- A painful past can mean a painful present
- Addressing trauma is essential to providing effective care
- Trauma does not have an expiration date.

What is a trauma-informed approach?

A trauma-informed approach to services or intervention acknowledges the prevalence and impact of trauma and attempts to create a sense of safety for all residents whether they have a trauma-related diagnosis.

The goal is to fully engage residents by minimizing perceived threats, avoiding re-traumatization, and supporting recovery.

There is often little, or no cost involved in implementing trauma-informed principles, policies, and practices.

- (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)


The 4R's of Trauma-Informed Care

Realize

Recognize

Respond

Resist

 **Apply the 4Rs to Create a Trauma-Informed Approach in Nursing Facilities**

Nursing facilities that Realize, Recognize, Respond to, and Resist Re-Traumatization are better equipped to provide care, safety and well-being for residents with a history of trauma.

Use these 4 key assumptions to develop a trauma-informed approach.

REALIZE the widespread impact of trauma

- **Realize Trauma** - Anyone can be impacted by trauma. Staff at all levels should have a basic understanding of trauma and be aware of residents with a history of trauma.
- **Awareness** - Understand the impact that trauma can have on a resident's thoughts and behaviors.

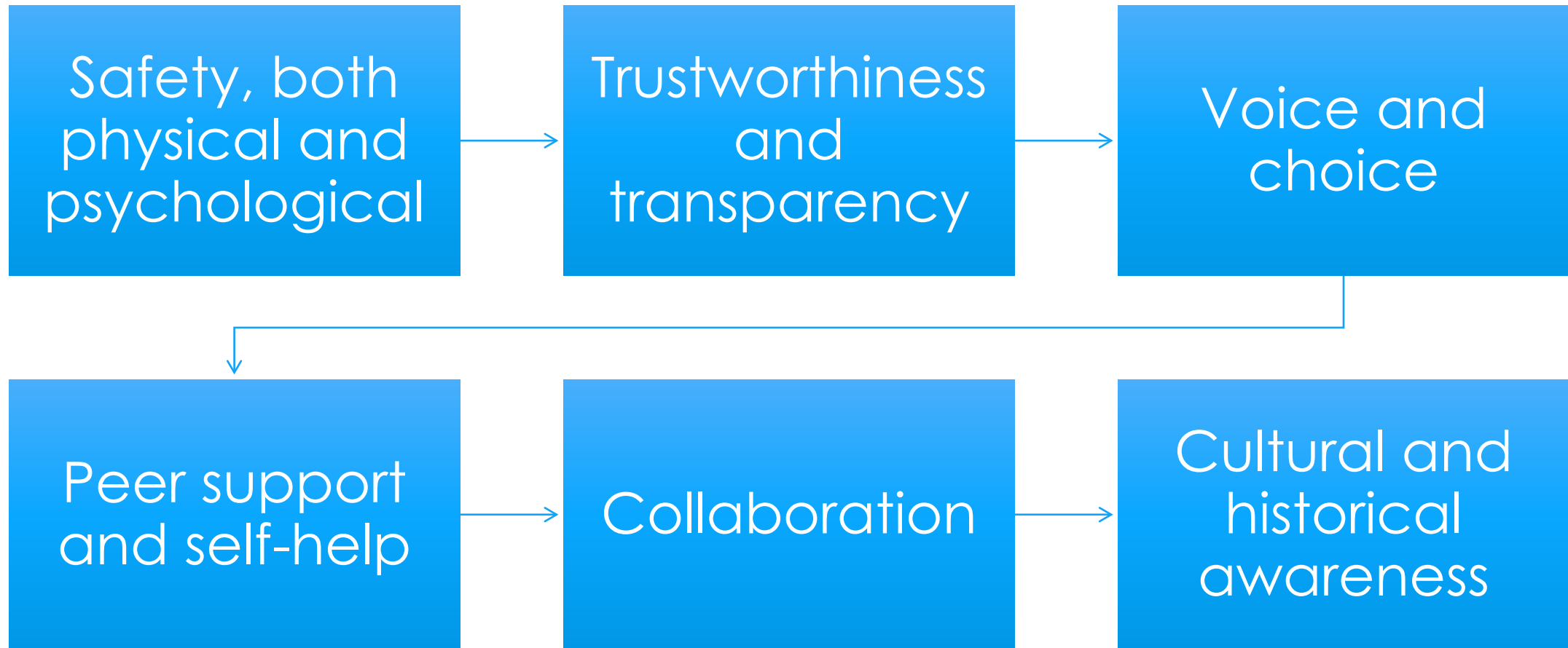
RECOGNIZE the signs and symptoms of trauma

- **Recognize Triggers** - Residents with a trauma history can be impacted by sights, sounds, smells or thoughts that remind them of a past traumatic experience. Recognize that triggers will differ for each resident based on their experience of trauma.
- **Facilitate Effective Responses** - Person-centered interventions should be a part of the resident's care plan that identify effective strategies that nursing facility staff can use when triggers occur.



https://bit.ly/Applythe4Rs_COENF

Six Key Principles of Trauma-informed Care



What is De-escalation ?

- De-escalation in a nursing facility setting involves techniques and strategies used to prevent or reduce the intensity of a potentially volatile situation, ensuring the safety and well-being of both patients and staff.
- De-escalation is particularly important in nursing facilities due to the vulnerable populations served, which often include elderly individuals with cognitive impairments, dementia, or other conditions that might lead to aggressive or agitated behavior.



Utilizing De-escalation Strategies In Nursing Facilities

In a nursing facility, de-escalation strategies are crucial for managing crises and maintaining a safe environment for both residents and staff.

Define de-escalation.

Here are 15 common strategies.



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Observable Indicators of an Escalating Situation with Residents

Verbal Signs:

1. Hostile Language
2. Blaming
3. Refusal to Communicate

Emotional Signs:

1. Irritability
2. Impulsivity
3. Overreaction



Observable Signs of an Escalating Situations with Residents

Physical Signs

1. Increased Physical Tension
2. Changes in Breathing
3. Facial Expressions
4. Restlessness
5. Raised Voice
6. Sudden Movements



Behavioral Expressions

The impact of trauma can create high levels of fear, stress, and anxiety that can cause a wide range of behaviors.

Agitation

Demands

Threats

Profanity

Physical Aggression



Observable Indicators of an Escalating Situation with Residents

Situational Triggers

1. Perceived Threats
2. Frustration
3. Provocation
4. Substance Abuse

Contextual Factors

1. Environmental Stressors
2. Personal Relationships



Nursing Home Scenario

Residents were gathered in the activity room to watch the July 4th fireworks on television. One of the residents is a veteran with a known history of PTSD. When the show began, the resident became tearful and frightened when he heard the sound of the fireworks which resembled the sound of gun shots. The facility staff noticed that the resident was tearful and appeared frightened. When asked what was wrong, the resident shared that he was having flashbacks from the war. The staff member rubbed the resident's back and said, "It will be okay, the show is only 30 minutes long." The resident remained in the activity room for the duration of the fireworks and continued to be tearful. In the following weeks, the resident decreased his attendance at activities that he previously enjoyed.

Based on today's presentation-

1. How can staff view this from a trauma informed lens?
2. Could staff have approached this situation differently?
3. What de-escalation skills could have been applied?
4. Which of the following are not de-escalation strategies?
5. Which of the following is not one of the four Rs of trauma-informed care?

Utilizing De-escalation Strategies In Nursing Facilities

15 Effective de-escalation strategies commonly used.

- Remain Calm:
- Use Active Listening:
- Practice Empathy:
- Demonstrate Respect:
- Use Verbal Communication:.
- Offer Choices:
- Acknowledge Feelings:
- Assess Triggers:



Williams, R. L., & Toch, H. (2017). *De-Escalation Techniques in Crisis Situations*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Utilizing De-escalation Strategies In Nursing Facilities - continued



- Provide Space
- Involve Family or Friends:
- Utilize Non-Verbal Cues
- Offer Reassurance
- Use Team Approach
- Redirect Attention
- Use Humor (Appropriately)

Developing and Enhancing Effective Communication Skills

Enhancing both verbal and non-verbal communication and engagement skills among nursing facility staff in a setting is crucial for effectively interacting with residents and preventing the escalation of behavioral expressions.

Developing and Enhancing Effective Communication Skills

1. Training and education
2. Active listening
3. Empathy and validation
4. Clear and simple communication
5. Consistent and calm approach



Developing and Enhancing Effective Communication Skills

6. Personalized care plan
7. Positive reinforcement
8. De-escalation techniques
9. Team collaboration
10. Self-care and stress management



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Developing and Enhancing Effective Communication Skills

Non-Verbal Communication

1. Body language
2. Facial expressions
3. Eye contact
4. Proximity and personal space
5. Tone of voice



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Developing and Enhancing Effective Communication Skills

Non-Verbal- Communication

6. Active Listening

7. Breathing

8. Facial and Body Relaxation

9. Positioning

10. Mirroring



Nursing Home Scenario

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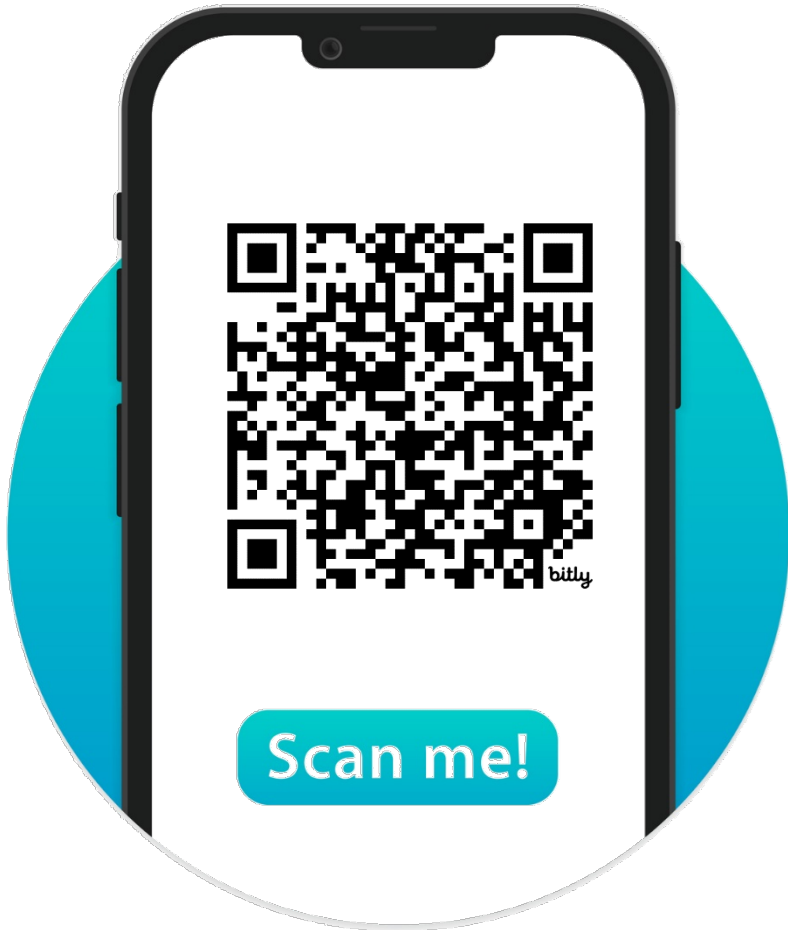
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RECAP: 15 Effective de-escalation strategies commonly used.

- Provide Space
- Involve Family or Friends
- Utilize Non-Verbal Cues
- Offer Reassurance
- Use Team Approach
- Redirect Attention
- Use Humor (Appropriately)
- Remain Calm
- Use Active Listening
- Practice Empathy
- Demonstrate Respect
- Use Verbal Communication
- Offer Choices
- Acknowledge Feelings
- Assess Triggers

What You Can Do Tomorrow



- Administer trauma informed care screening during intake.
- Include the COE-NF's Trauma Informed Care and the De-Escalation Bite-sized learning within staff in-service training.
- Utilize the COE-NF's De-Escalation Toolkit to train staff during weekly huddles.
- Create a Team approach to learn and apply key skills to safely de-escalate challenging behaviors.
- Ensure overall Team awareness of resident's escalated incidents during team meetings.
- **Request technical assistance** from the Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health in Nursing Facilities to assist with your TIC training needs.

https://bit.ly/RequestAssistance_COENF



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Questions?



COE-NF Resources: Bite-Sized Learning



Trauma-informed Care Bite-Sized Learning



De-escalation Strategies



https://bit.ly/BSL_TraumaInformedCare

https://bit.ly/BSL_DeescalationStrategies

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De-Escalation Toolkit

Scan the QR code or
visit the link below to view this resource.



https://bit.ly/deescalationtoolkit_COENF

COE-NF Resources



Six Guiding Principles to Create a Trauma-Informed Approach Within a Nursing Facility

Trauma-informed care starts with learning and understanding as much as we can about a resident's lived experiences. Each circle represents a principle of trauma-informed care.

Use these six principles to support a trauma-informed care environment that improves the care, safety and well-being of residents in your facility.



Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view this resource.



https://bit.ly/SixGuidingPrinciples_COE

COE-NF Resources

Comfort Menu

Use the comfort menu with residents to identify ways to reduce anxiety, discomfort and pain without using medications.

Check items below that you are interested in trying...

Relaxation

- Stress ball
- Hand massage
- Visit from chaplain
- Reading visit
- Talking visit
- Relaxing music
- Soft background sounds/sound machine
- Guided Imagery Therapy: helping you imagine positive and relaxing things
- Quiet/uninterrupted time
- Pet therapy
- Essential oils
- Darkness
- Walking/ Change of Scenery

Comfort

- Warm pack
- Cold pack
- Ice
- Warm blanket(s)
- Warm washcloth
- Cool washcloth
- Extra pillow(s) - (neck, knees, ankles, lumbar)
- Humidification for your oxygen source
- Saline nose spray
- Fan
- Repositioning
- Warm bath or shower
- Gentle stretching
- Food or beverage
- Temperature adjustment

Entertainment

- Book (audio, large print)
- Magazine
- Movie
- Wi-Fi for your personal laptop or tablet
- Deck of cards
- Puzzle book (crossword puzzles, word searches, Sudoku)
- Notepad and pen
- Coloring book
- Board games
- Arts & crafts
- Favorite music
- Television
- Handheld electronic game
- Activity apron/blanket

Feel Better

- Lip balm
- Wash face/brush teeth
- Comb or brush hair
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Scalp massage
- Robe
- Hair band
- Mouth swab/mouth wash
- Lotion
- Lollipop/Lozenges
- Chocolates
- Sunshine
- Prayer
- Pet visit
- Put on favorite clothes
- Pedicure/Manicure

Sleep

- Ear plugs
- Eye shield/mask
- Weighted blanket
- Night light
- Television/Music/Sound machine
- Uninterrupted sleep time
- Quiet

Use this space to list other ideas

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view this resource.



https://bit.ly/comfortmenu_COENF

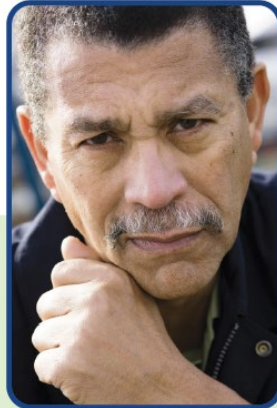
COE-NF Resources



Tips to Manage Challenging Situations

When residents are experiencing a high level of fear and anxiety, staff may notice a wide range of emotions and behaviors, such as increased anxiety levels, crying spells, crying out, fear, aggression and agitation. Here are some tips that will help staff provide the best possible care and safety when intervening in these situations:

1. Ask about and listen to the concern(s).
2. Remain calm and speak in a monotone voice.
3. Answer questions the resident may have about the situation; be concise and honest.
4. Offer reassurance that everything that can be done, is being done.
5. Politely tell the resident what you would like him/her to do.
6. Offer choices. Ask, "What can I do to make you feel better?" Follow through if it is within your control. For requests outside of staff control, share the need with management.
7. Do not become involved in a power struggle or escalate the situation. Know when it is time to step away and allow a colleague to engage.
8. Be mindful of nonverbal body language: facial expressions, hand movement, posture and gestures.
9. Do not take the interaction personally.
10. If you are unfamiliar with the resident, consider involving a staff member who is familiar with the resident.
11. Staff should report any changes in behaviors to the charge nurse.



The Center of Excellence's **Comfort Menu** offers many helpful options to help residents reduce anxiety and discomfort.

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view this resource.



<https://bit.ly/3Obm8qL>

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Thank You!

