



## Tools for Creating Calm in Times of Distress: Part 2

November 21, 2024



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

## Mathew R Roosa, LCSW-R

### CONSULTANT & FOUNDING MEMBER OF NIATX CHANGE LEADER ACADEMY

Mathew is a consultant who provides training, coaching, technical assistance and planning support to universities, research studies, governments and health and human service provider organizations.

Focusing on behavioral health, Mathew's experience also includes psychotherapy for mental health and substance use in agencies and private practice, teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels in human services and social work, agency administration, and governmental planning.

Current areas of focus include evidence-based practice implementation, process/quality improvement (founding member of NIATx), staff and team development, and a wide array of training topics including coaching, mentoring, contingency management, stimulants, CLAS, wellness, motivational interviewing systems implementation, and the NIATx Change Leader Academy.



# Learning Objectives:

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- Develop greater empathy and understanding related to distress.
- Gain insight into personal reactions to distressed people.
- Review tools for responding to distress that will improve engagement.
- Identify risk and safety boundaries.

# Creating Calm

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## Tools



An aerial photograph showing the wake of a boat moving through the ocean. The water is a deep blue, and the wake consists of white, frothy waves trailing behind the vessel. The perspective is from directly above, looking down at the churning water.

**To fix or not to fix?**

# Compassionate presence

Don't just do something, sit there.



# Interventions

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Actions designed to create calm/reduce distress

1. Motivational Interviewing (MI)
2. Grounding
3. Questions



# Motivational Interviewing(MI): Strategies for Success



Focus on the person, not the behavior.



Try not to judge resident's behavior.



Who they are vs. what they do.



Help resident identify their strengths, hopes, and dreams.

# Motivational Interviewing (MI) is about...

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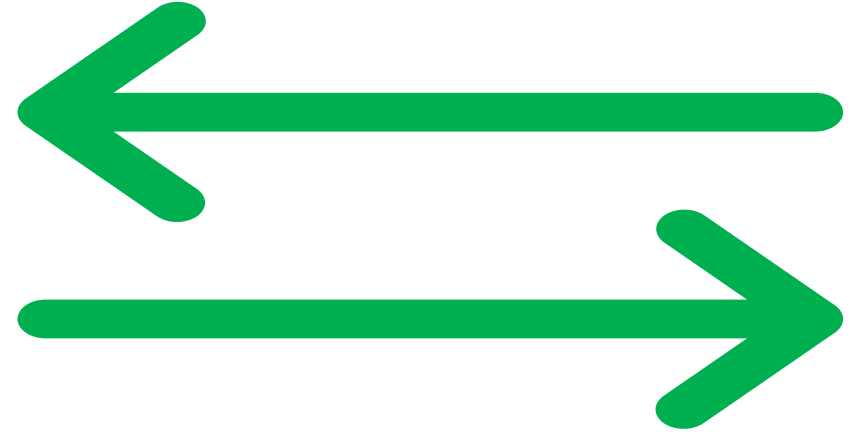
- **We are all ambivalent:** Mixed feelings about changing behaviors.
- Reflective listening
- Helping people to make their own argument for change



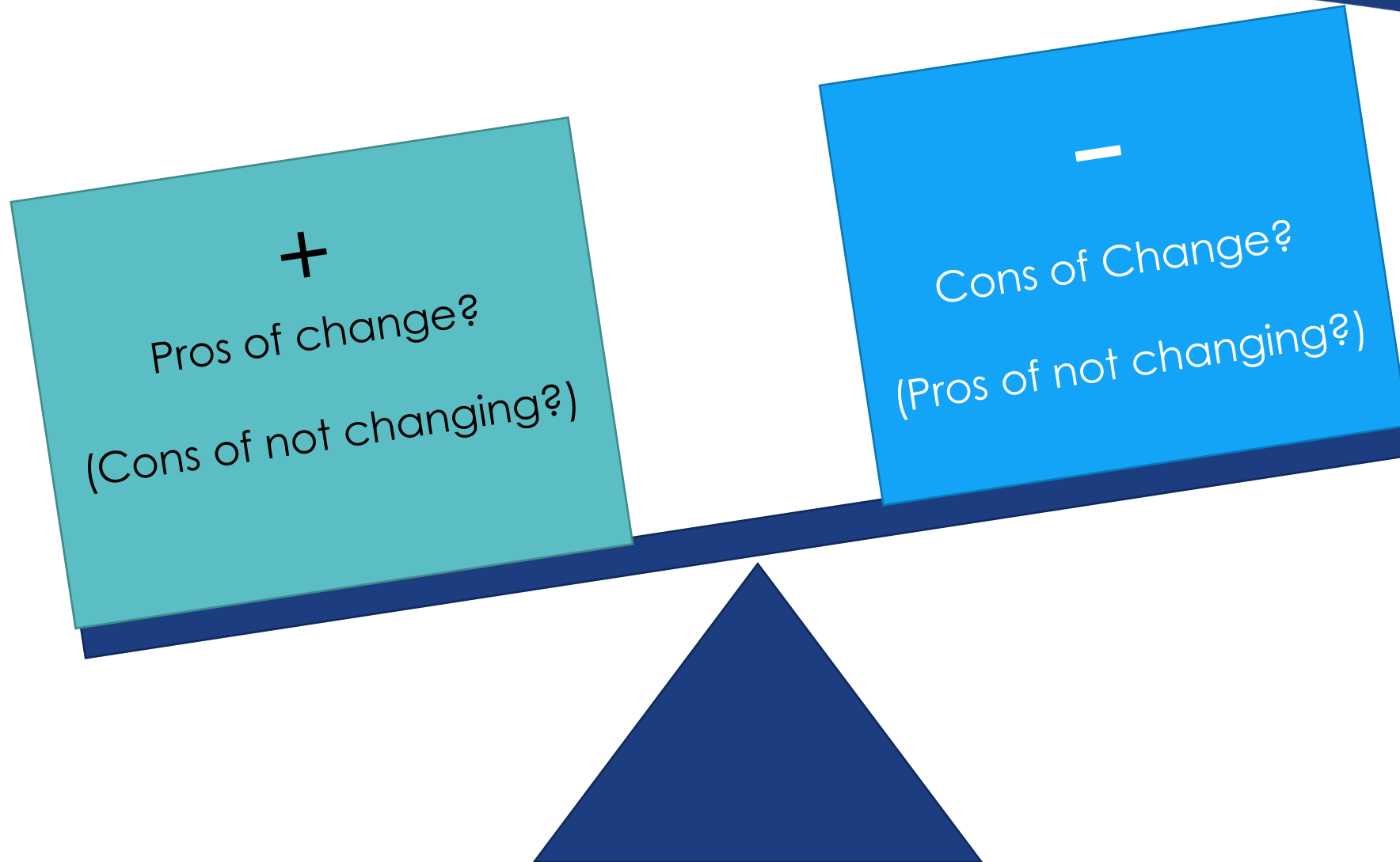
# And Motivational Interviewing (MI) is about...

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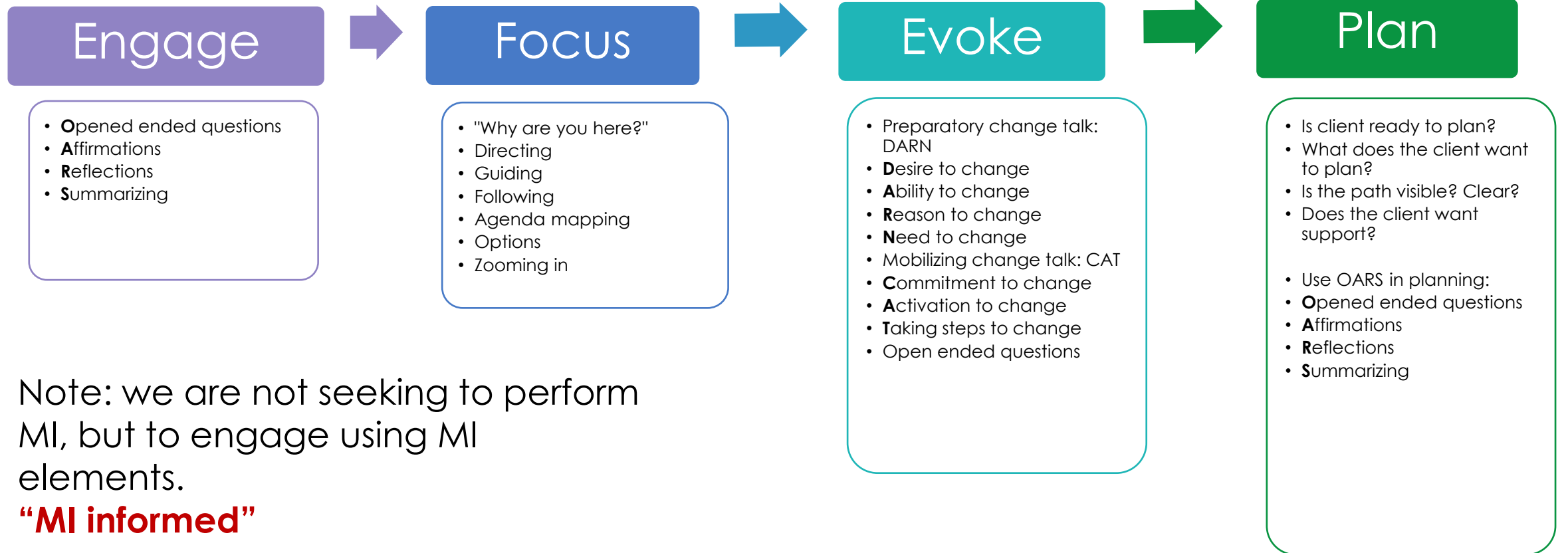
- Pushing/pulling against resistance increases it
- A “mindset/heartset” of collaboration
- Empathy: looking at the world through the eyes of the person and working to find out what they need.



# MI Decision Balance



# Four MI Processes



Note: we are not seeking to perform MI, but to engage using MI elements.

**“MI informed”**

# Grounding



# Grounding Short Cuts

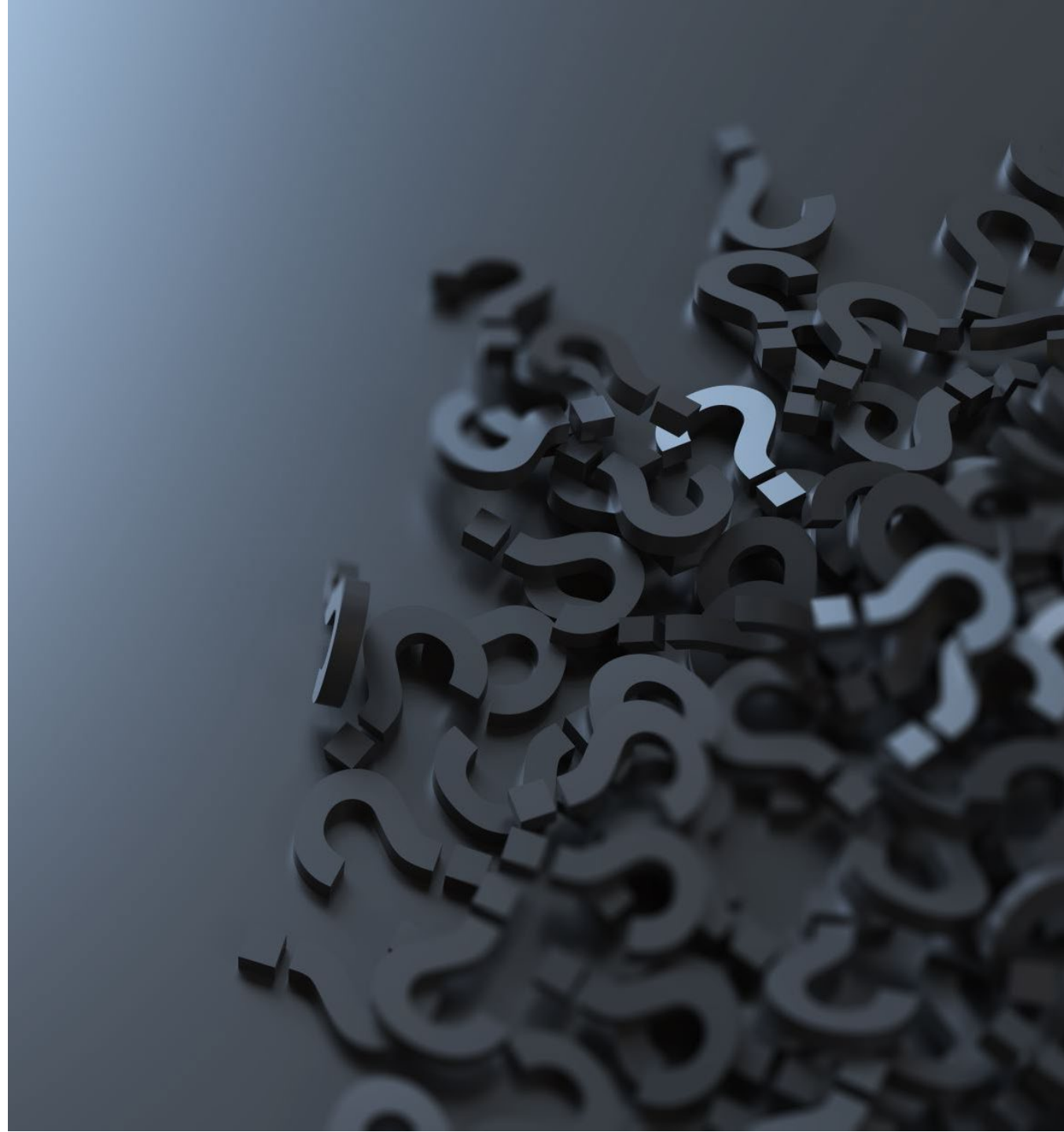
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- May not be appropriate to do a full grounding, but you can create some detachment from emotions through distracting/encouraging outward focus.
- Be mindful of empathy when people are distressed.
  - *I like your hat.*
  - *Some weather we're having.*
  - *Are you warm enough?*
  - *Is that chair comfortable?*



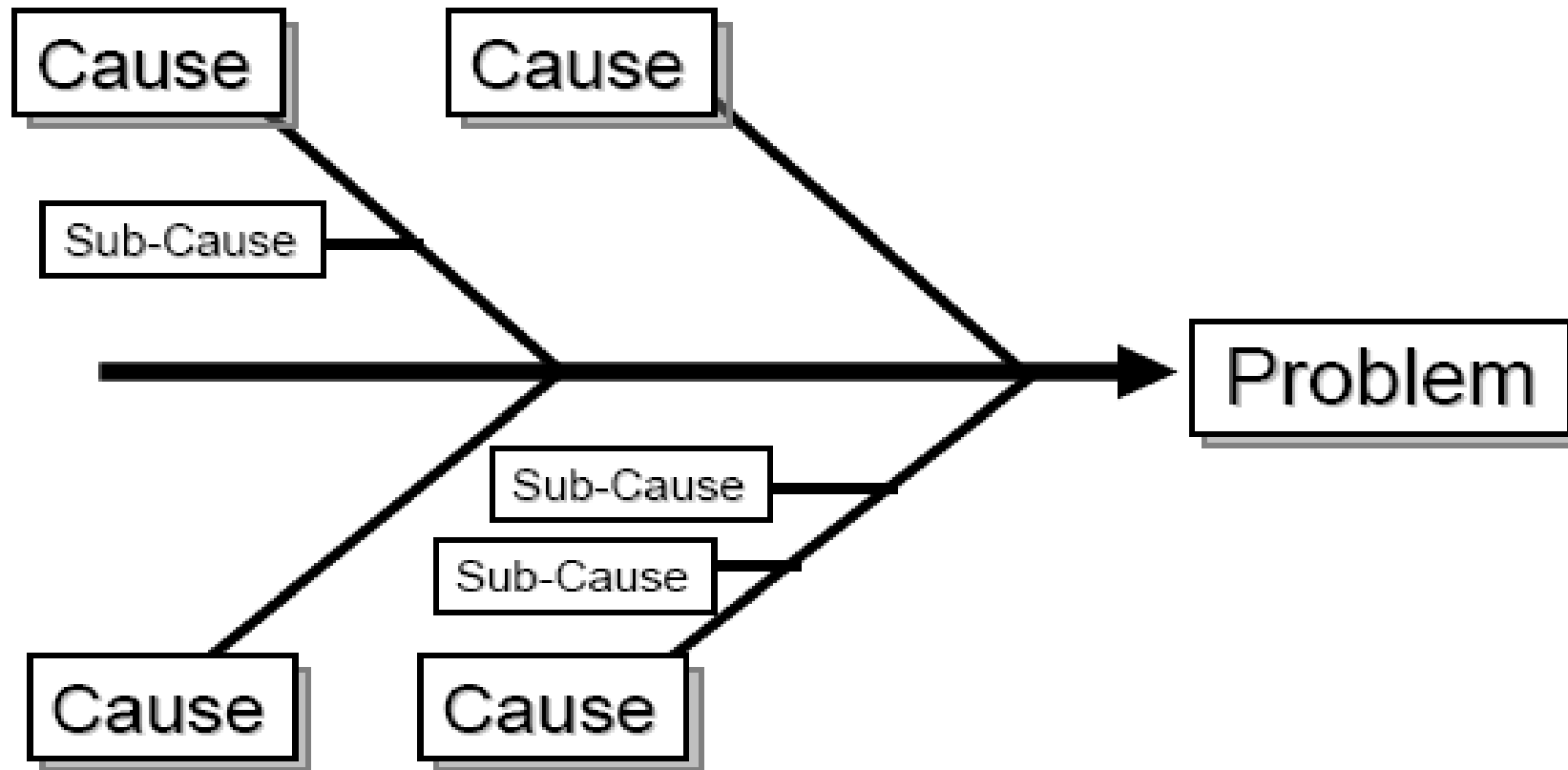
# Asking Questions

- More questions, fewer assertions
- Open-ended questions
- (Why, How, Tell me more)
- Questions lead to ideas
- Ideas lead to solutions



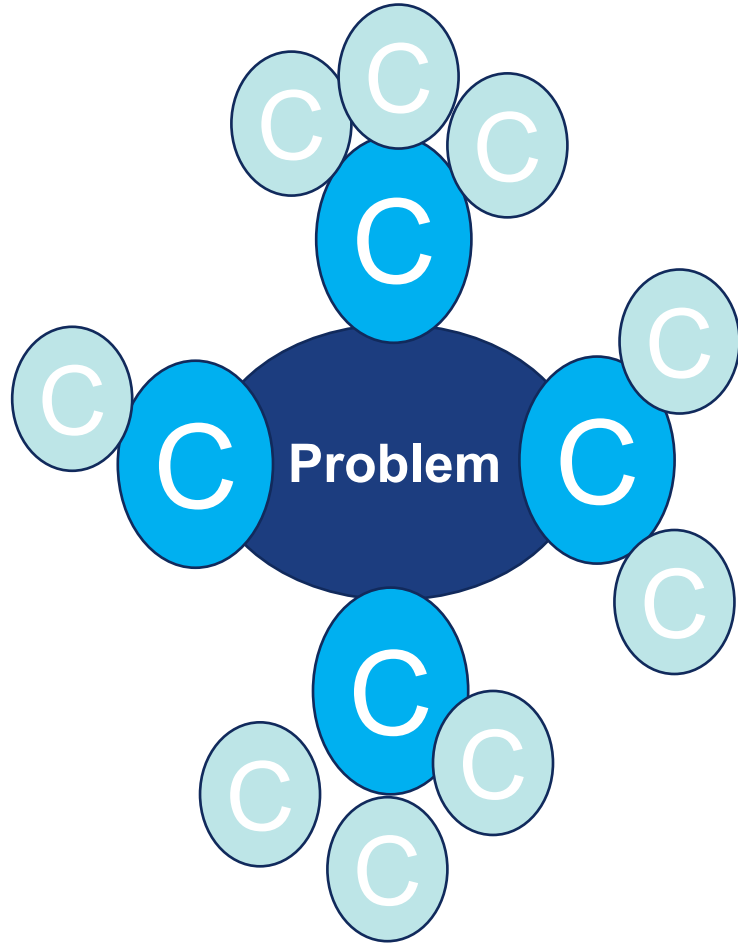
# Cause and Effect Diagram

Finding the root causes of distress



# Keep Asking:

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**“Why does that happen?”**

**Big problems have multiple causes.**

**Search for the root causes.**

# Creating Calm

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## Risk and Safety



# Which areas of risk do you encounter?

Where do you need support/skills/tools?

- Distrust /paranoia
- Anger/rage
- Poor boundaries
- Depression/suicidality
- Anxiety/panic
- Disclosures of dangerous behaviors
- Other risks?

# #1 rule for addressing risk and safety issues:

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Get Help

Regardless of  
your  
experience  
level

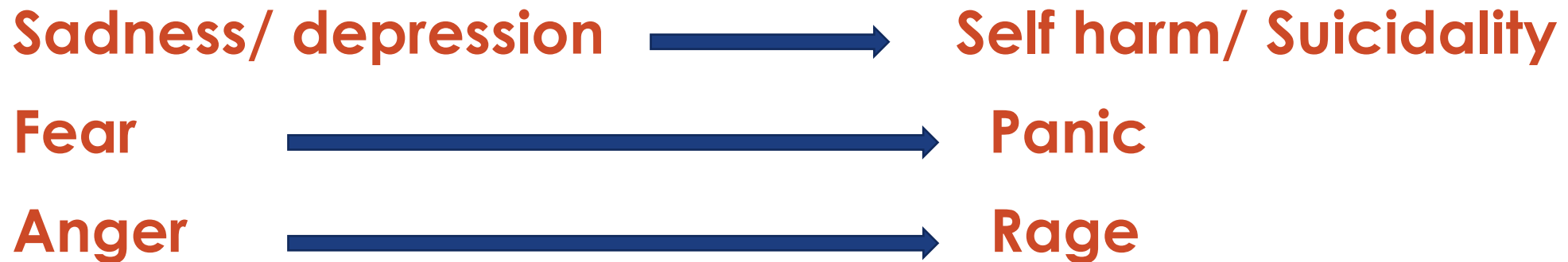
It requires a  
team

# How do you respond to strong emotional expressions?

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Happiness-Sadness-Fear-Disgust-Anger-Surprise

**Which emotions may result in crisis/risk?**

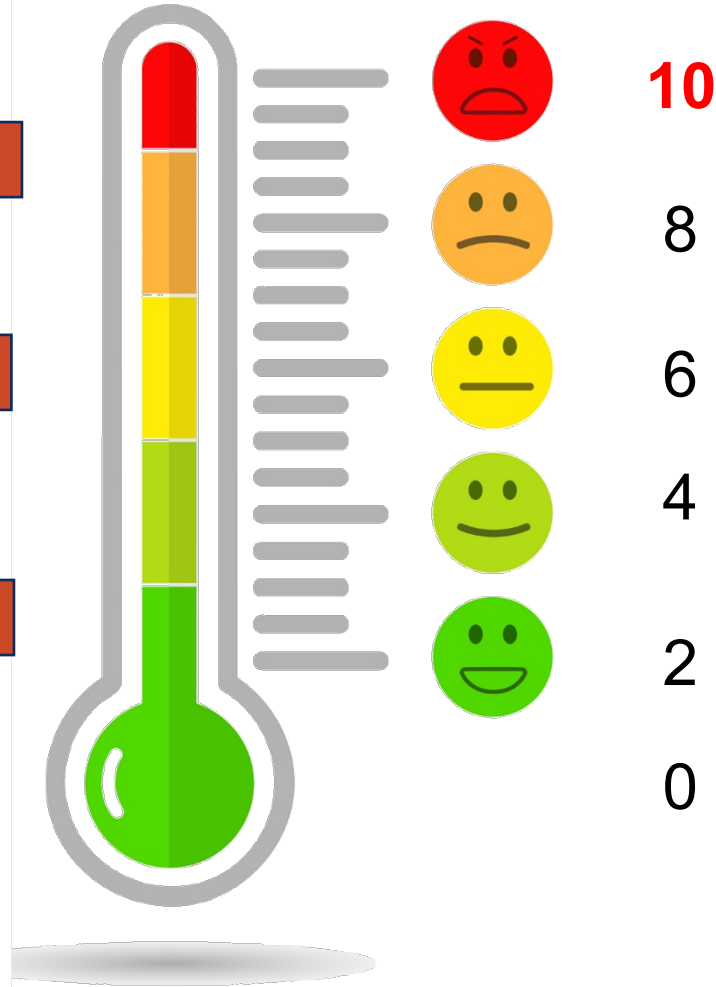


# Empathy is not risk tolerance.

Empathic action to ensure safety. ←

Empathic action to manage risk. ←

Empathic action to engage and support. ←



# Is Everybody Safe?

- Me
- Them
- Other people
- Stress experienced by others
- Space considerations: furniture, egress, access to support
  - (live, phone, buzzer, etc...) privacy vs. safety
- Danger to self/other
- Longer term:
  - Secondary trauma, empathy fatigue, burnout

# Crisis Strategies (adapted from DBT)

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**Pay attention to  
client's affect rather  
than content**



**Explore the  
current problem**



**Focus on  
problem solving**

Perhaps a solvable  
portion of problem  
Plan of action

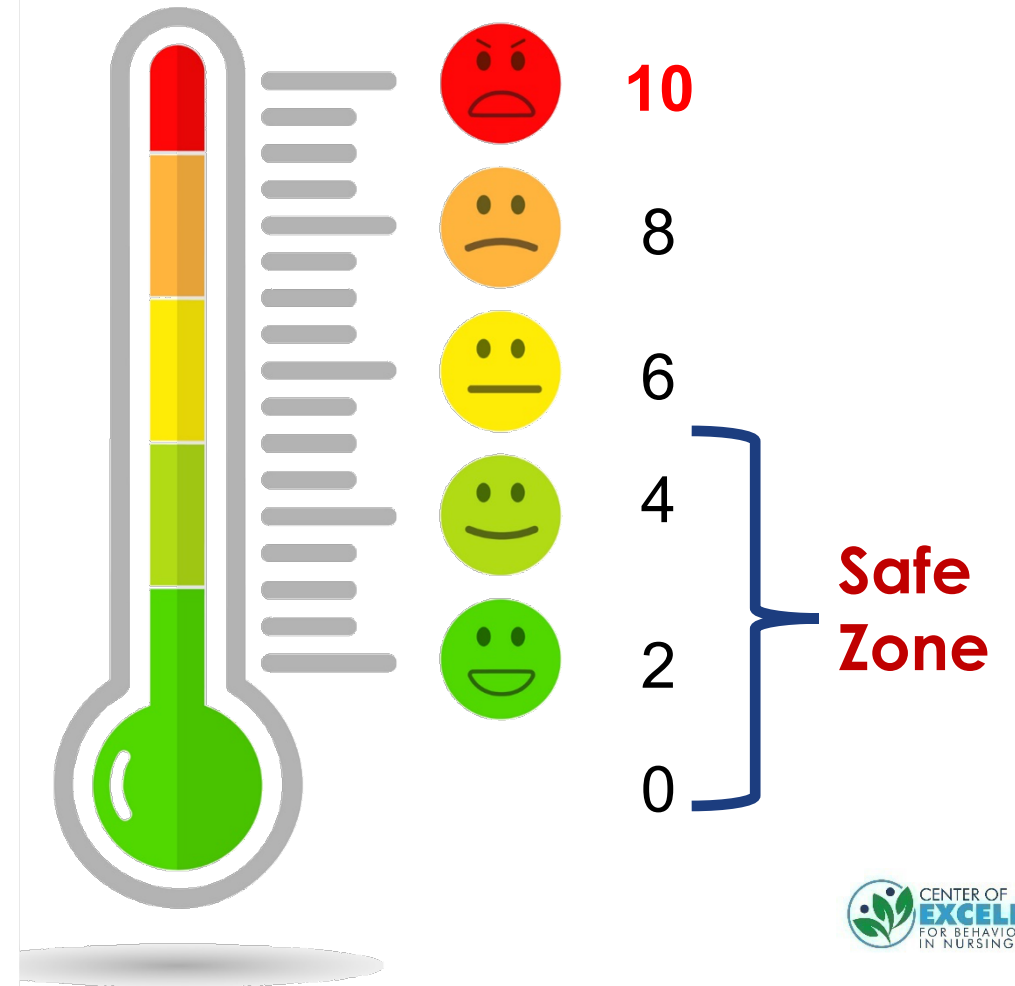


**Commitment to  
act on plan**

# Anger Management/De-escalation

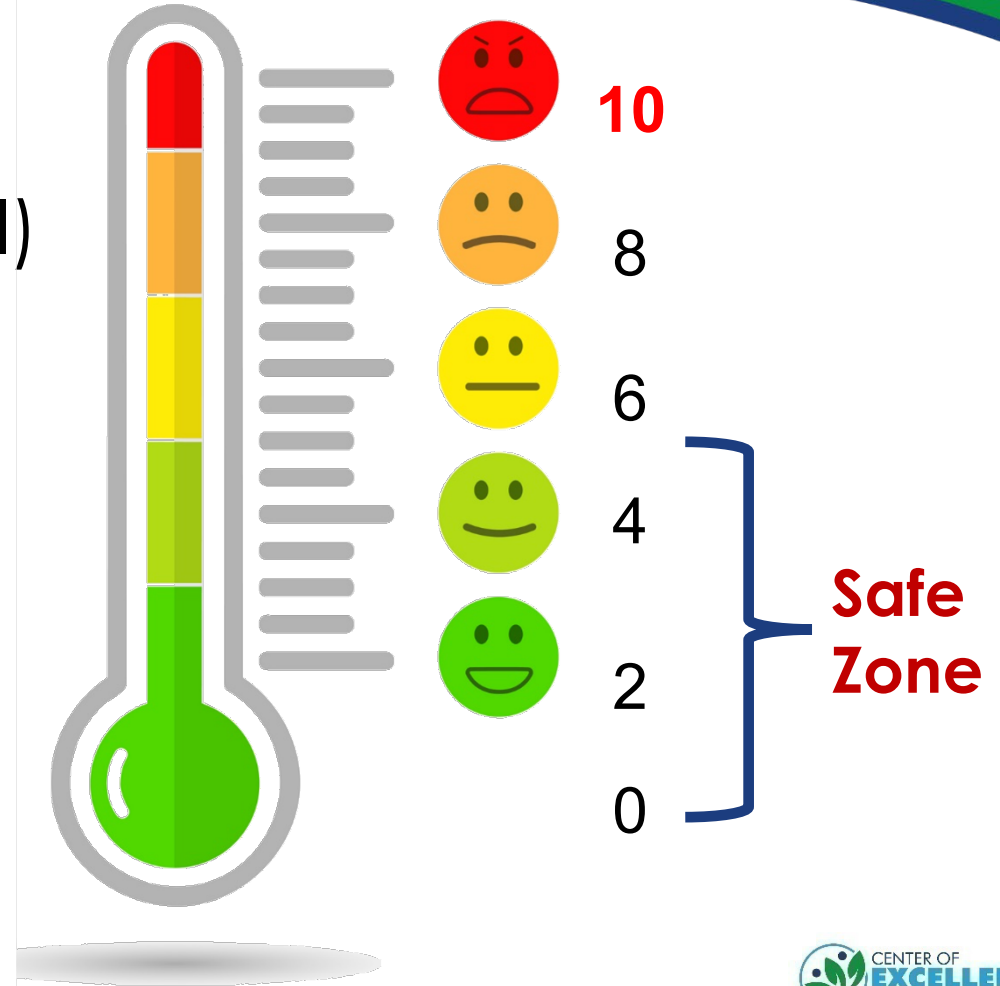
Keep it in the safe zone: 0-5

1. **Time out**: delay action until anger is back under 5 (20-30 min)
2. **Soothing activities**: music, meditation, relaxation, praying, grounding, etc.
3. **Calm** voice, calm response
4. **Listen**, avoid logic, arguing
5. **Show support** and concern



# Anger Management/De-escalation (cont.)

6. Limit stimulation and eye contact
7. Offer options (avoid taking control)
8. Give space
9. Move slowly
10. Announce action before doing



# Suicidality / Self harm Quick Screen: **SLAP**

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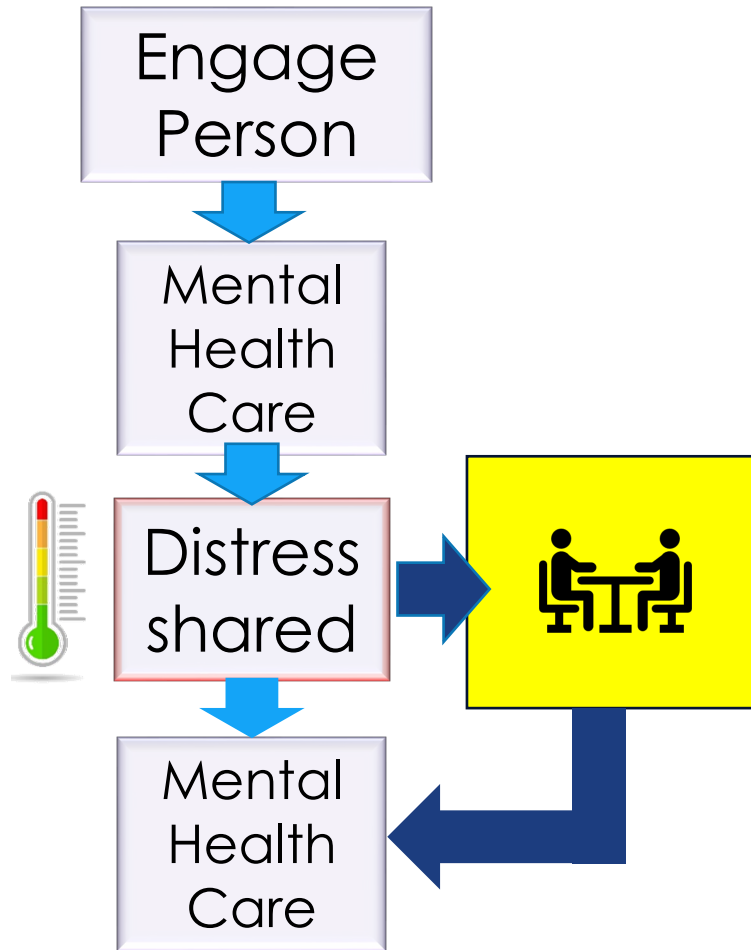
- **S**—Severity of the ideation
- **L**—Lethality of chosen means
- **A**—Access to chosen means
- **P**—Proximity of support

# Suicide Intervention

## Four Basic Steps

- Show you care
- Be genuine
- Ask about suicide
- Get help

# Responding to Distress: The Pivot



You have **Tools.**

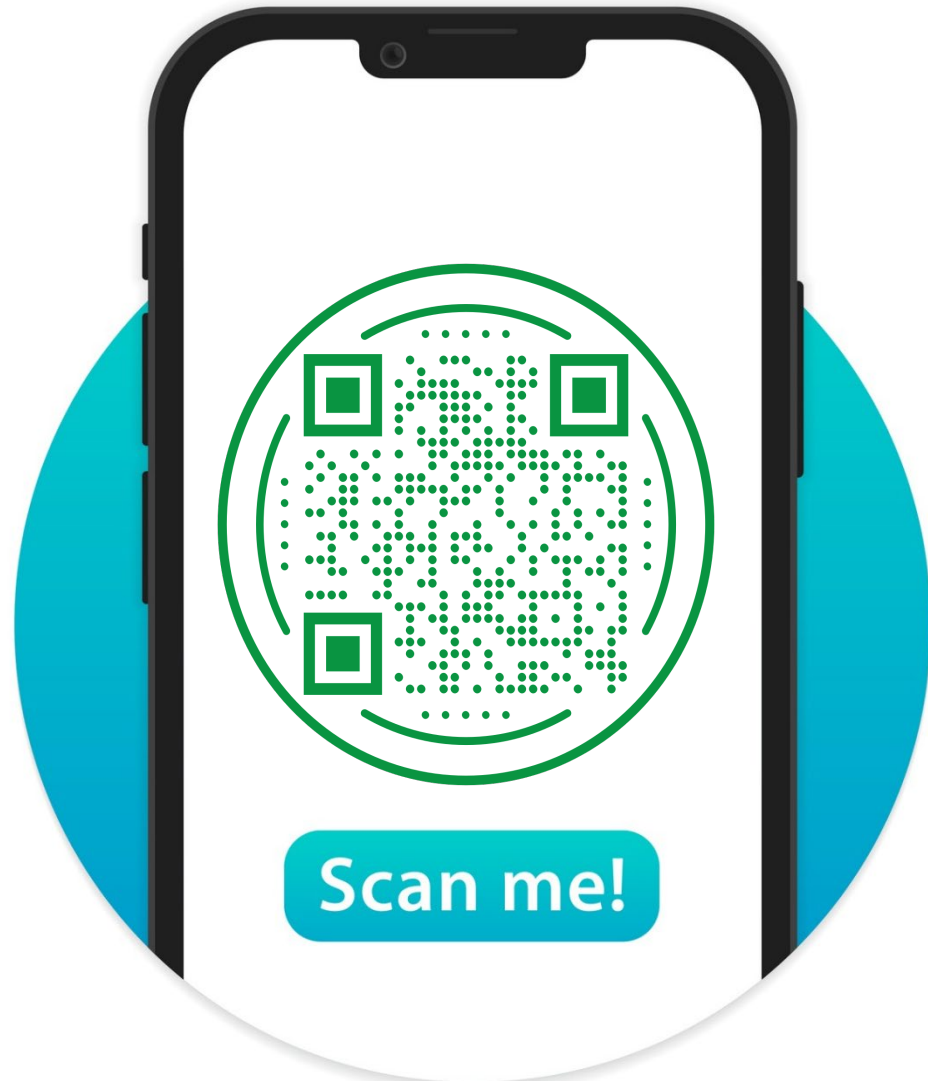
They will save **Time.**

They will help you to complete your **Tasks.**

# Questions?



# Request Assistance



**To submit a request for assistance, scan the QR code.**

**We look forward to assisting you!**

**Contact us:**

For more information or to request assistance, we can be reached by phone at **1-844-314-1433** or by email at [coeinfo@allianthealth.org](mailto:coeinfo@allianthealth.org).

**Visit the website:**

[nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org](http://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org)

# 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	Comfort	Entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> Stress ball <input type="checkbox"/> Hand massage <input type="checkbox"/> Visit from chaplain <input type="checkbox"/> Reading visit <input type="checkbox"/> Talking visit <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxing music <input type="checkbox"/> Soft background sounds/sound machine <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery Therapy: helping you imagine positive and relaxing things <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet/uninterrupted time <input type="checkbox"/> Pet therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Essential oils <input type="checkbox"/> Darkness <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/ Change of Scenery	<input type="checkbox"/> Warm pack <input type="checkbox"/> Cold pack <input type="checkbox"/> Ice <input type="checkbox"/> Warm blanket(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Warm washcloth <input type="checkbox"/> Cool washcloth <input type="checkbox"/> Extra pillow(s) - (neck, knees, ankles, lumbar) <input type="checkbox"/> Humidification for your oxygen source <input type="checkbox"/> Saline nose spray <input type="checkbox"/> Fan <input type="checkbox"/> Repositioning <input type="checkbox"/> Warm bath or shower <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle stretching <input type="checkbox"/> Food or beverage <input type="checkbox"/> Temperature adjustment	<input type="checkbox"/> Book (audio, large print) <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine <input type="checkbox"/> Movie <input type="checkbox"/> Wi-Fi for your personal laptop or tablet <input type="checkbox"/> Deck of cards <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzle book (crossword puzzles, word searches, Sudoku) <input type="checkbox"/> Notepad and pen <input type="checkbox"/> Coloring book <input type="checkbox"/> Board games <input type="checkbox"/> Arts & crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Favorite music <input type="checkbox"/> Television <input type="checkbox"/> Handheld electronic game <input type="checkbox"/> Activity apron/blanket
Feel Better	Sleep	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm <input type="checkbox"/> Wash face/brush teeth <input type="checkbox"/> Comb or brush hair <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo/conditioner <input type="checkbox"/> Scalp massage <input type="checkbox"/> Robe <input type="checkbox"/> Hair band <input type="checkbox"/> Mouth swab/mouth wash <input type="checkbox"/> Lotion	<input type="checkbox"/> Ear plugs <input type="checkbox"/> Night light <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet <input type="checkbox"/> Lollipop/Lozenges <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolates <input type="checkbox"/> Sunshine <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Pet visit <input type="checkbox"/> Put on favorite clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Pedicure/Manicure	<input type="checkbox"/> Eye shield/mask <input type="checkbox"/> Television/Music/Sound machine <input type="checkbox"/> Weighted blanket <input type="checkbox"/> Uninterrupted sleep time
<h3>Use this space to list other ideas</h3> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

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



[https://bit.ly/comfortmenu\\_COENF](https://bit.ly/comfortmenu_COENF)

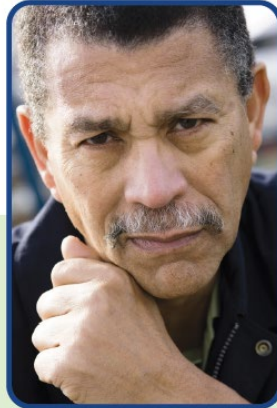
# COE-NF Resources



## Tips to Manage Challenging Situations

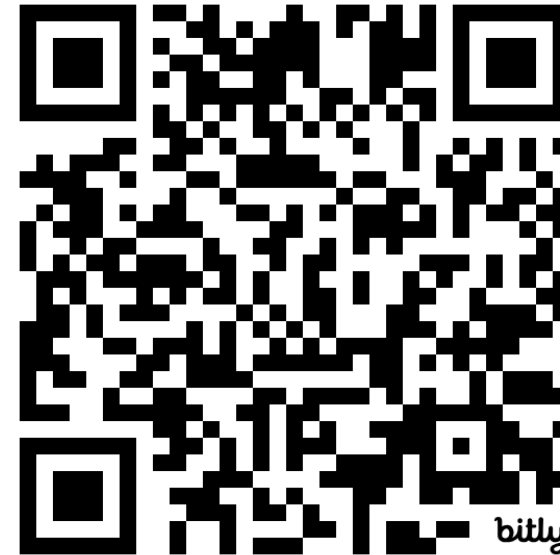
When residents are experiencing a high level of fear and anxiety, staff may notice a wide range of emotions and behaviors, such as increased anxiety levels, crying spells, crying out, fear, aggression and agitation. Here are some tips that will help staff provide the best possible care and safety when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

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



[https://bit.ly/deescalationtoolkit\\_COENF](https://bit.ly/deescalationtoolkit_COENF)

# COE-NF Resources: Bite-Sized Learning



[https://bit.ly/BSL\\_DeescalationStrategies](https://bit.ly/BSL_DeescalationStrategies)

Thank You!



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