

Facilitator/Trainers Note Three - HASSLE LINES

The aim of this exercise is to encourage people to think how they can respond to negative behaviour, which is potentially violent. Using the nine basic responses to de-escalating violence, go through scenarios practising the different styles.

This exercise can be dis-empowering if people are not clearly aware of what they are trying to do. Both participants need to be aware of their gut responses to the interaction.

It can be useful if people do not continually work with one other person – especially if one of the people is a “spoiler” or overplays their roles.

Setting Up:

- a. Create two lines of people facing each other
- b. Have a pre-prepared list of scenarios for both sides (on separate pieces of paper).
- c. Two different facilitators hold the paper for one of the rows.
- d. Allow three minutes for each small role-play.
- e. Systematically use the 9-Basic Responses, ensuring that one side does not practice all the useful responses.
- f. Ensure after each role play of three minutes they debrief each other, come out of role by saying their name and go through a check list.
- g. Check List:
 - In your role how did you feel?
 - How did you react towards the other person?
 - What behaviours changed the situation for the better/worse

Alternative Option

One way to get people to practice the different de-escalation techniques is to ask one side to practice two during each role-play. During feedback ask them did they use two techniques. Then ask the person on the receiving end what techniques were being used by the person on the other side of the hassle line. Then check back to the first person. This is a way to get people to consciously practice a chosen style of de-escalation.

Make sure they attempt as many different techniques as possible.

- h. People sometimes try and rush this part but this is where the learning is held.
- i. 9 scenarios will take a lot of time. You can possibly use 3 or 4 but use other scenarios as a reference.
- j. Make sure the hassle line is suitable for the specific people and topic you are training towards.

Alternatively the feedback can be done as a whole group especially as each pair have the same role-play. Encourage wide participation by suggesting that people who have not had a chance to comment on an exercise take the opportunity now.

Scenarios to be practised

Don't act frightened

Don't behave like a victim; demonstrate respect for yourself.
Be gentle, but firm. Pleading induces more cruelty.

- You are in a large crowd of protesters who are shouting in a very aggressive and confrontational way about the G8 towards a group of police. You are being challenged about why you are not joining in.

Connect humanities

Speak to the assailant as a person of dignity.
Become a person to the assailant.
Humanise self and them (say "I"). Ask Questions.
If the victim is violent in return, the attacker feels justified.

- You are being arrested at the Faslane protest challenging the G8 by the police in an inappropriate way and they are holding you uncomfortably.

Remain calm

Breathe deeply. Keep your voice low.
Silence can disarm.

- Someone has just started to throw things. You want them to stop. You go to stand beside them to discourage them. You accompany them continuing to use arguments why violence will not resolve the situation.

Listen, listen, listen

Show the person you have heard what they are saying.
Do not rush into faster and faster speech.
Only interrupt if person personally abusive.
Hearing does not mean agreeing.

- Parent: I don't want you hanging out with these aggressive and destructive anti-globalisation protesters and going to the G8.

Watch body language – your own and assailant's

Avoid sudden moves. Use slow, gentle hand movements.
Use non-threatening eye contact.

- Large woman in pub is shouting at you because you are wearing an anti-G8 badge. Use body language and non-threatening eye contact.

Use the unexpected to create wonder and surprise

Use humour, distraction, introduce yourself to the person
Shake hands.

Interrupt the process somehow – possibly by trying to sit down, offering coffee etc.

- Obnoxious person in smart suit is patronising and dismissive of any need to change things through protesting at G8

Empathise

Remember the assailant has all the fear that you have.

- Angry policeman is pushing you away from an entrance. You are part of a large crowd.

Know that the assailant is a human being capable of love

Pay attention to the need to be loved.

Trust that the person wants to act positively.

- British National Party person is speaking aggressively to you in a racist way about the fact that it is good that the G8 is largely made up of rich countries of the north.

Allow a way out

Both physically, as in a door, and 'saving face'.

- A good friend does not want to accompany you to the G8 protest after having said she would. You believe she has been got at and want very much for her to come with you.