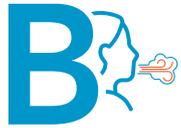


# MANAGING AGGRESSIVE INTERACTIONS: THE BREATHE FRAMEWORK



## Breathe

- Take one or two deep, slow breaths.
- Identify how you are feeling and what might be contributing to this.



## Respond and respect

- Slow your speech and ensure you're speaking clearly.
- Keep your personal space, consider natural obstacles, plan an escape path if needed.
- Understand your own reaction, try to separate yourself from the situation and not take their comments or behaviour personally.

**DO NOT:** Isolate yourself with the aggressor.



## Encouraging and realistic self-talk

- Examples - 'I can do this', 'I've done harder things before', 'I am safe', 'If things get scary, I can escalate for help', 'This is not personal'.

## Actively listen, acknowledge and assert

- Use active listening skills (undivided attention, nodding, eye contact) and encouragers ('Mm-hmm'), but avoid inflamers ('I understand').
- Acknowledge their emotions about the situation to show empathy.
- If they are behaving aggressively:
  - Provide reassurance, such as 'That sounds frustrating, I'm hearing you'.
  - Assertively ask them to cease any aggressive behaviours, and re-state your eagerness to help (this may involve speaking in a firmer, clearer and louder manner).



## Think

Is this working? Are they changing their behaviour? Are they becoming less aggressive or less distressed?

### YES

#### How do we sort this out?

- Explore solutions: ask open questions to surface needs and concerns. Avoid 'why?'
- Develop an action plan: who will do what by when?

#### End with

- Re-state and check action plan.
- Debrief with colleagues/team leader.
- Report the incident.
- Prioritise post-incident self-care.

### NO

#### Help

- Use the safety position and assertively state 'Excuse me, please stop. This is unacceptable behaviour'.
- Dial 000 for emergency services.

#### Exit strategy

- Retreat to a safe location.

#### End with

- Debrief with colleagues/team leader.
- Report the incident.
- Prioritise post-incident self-care.

