

De-escalating Volatile Situations in the Field



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Utility and security expert with aid, reconstruction,
& security assignments in 38 countries and conflict
zones. *Theater Ops Mgr., Afghanistan 7 years*



*Security training including -
US Defense Security Service
United Nations Dept of Safety & Security
Center for Homeland Defense and Security*

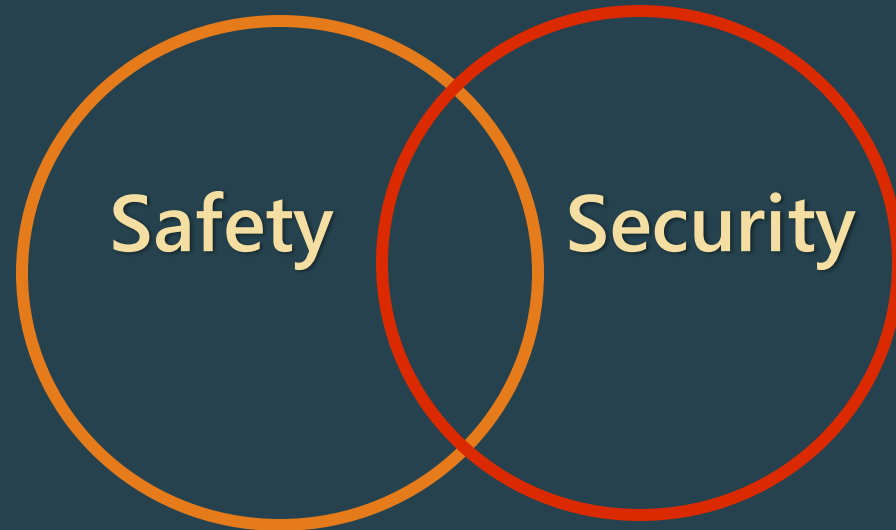
Developed *ASSIST*, a proprietary active shooter & violence prevention training series

*Security in the field requires
a different mindset*



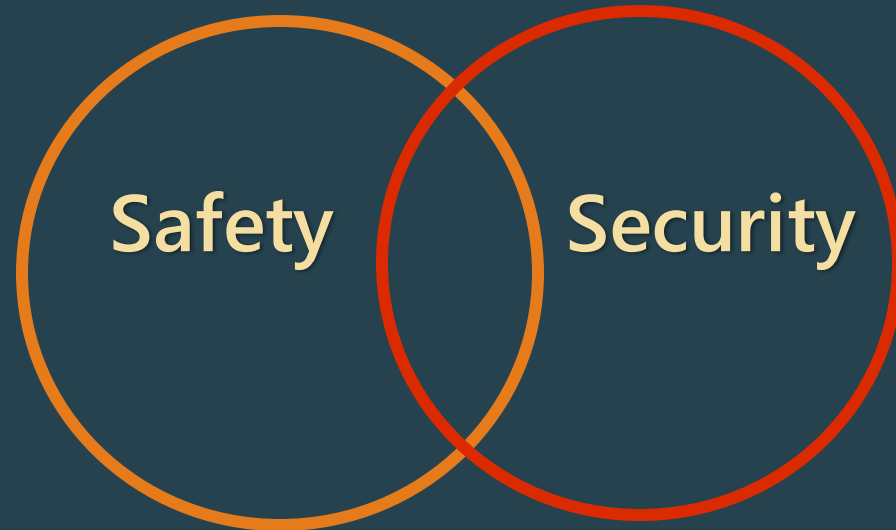
Safety & Security

Interconnected



Safety & Security

But not the same



Safety

Is hazard avoidance that focuses on our own actions and their consequences.

i.e., dangers of circumstance

Safety

Procedure Driven

Basically, you follow the rules,
you stay safe



Security

is threat-response that focuses on the
unpredictable nature of other people.

i.e., dangers of intent

Security

Approach Driven

to account for the unknown variable –
the other person

Who are we dealing with?

*25% of Americans exhibit symptoms of a
violence related antisocial related
disorder*



*In other words, 1 in 4
people tend to overreact*

American Psychiatric Association

(APA)

COVID pandemic

over 230 Million (72%) Americans
are suffering prolonged and
complex stress and anxiety

KFF Health Tracking Poll



A close-up photograph of a lit matchstick. The matchstick is positioned vertically in the center of the frame. The flame is bright and intense, with a core of yellow and orange. The background is dark, making the flame stand out. The matchstick itself is light-colored and appears to be made of wood.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

*The emotional trauma of COVID-19 will last
long after the crisis is over*

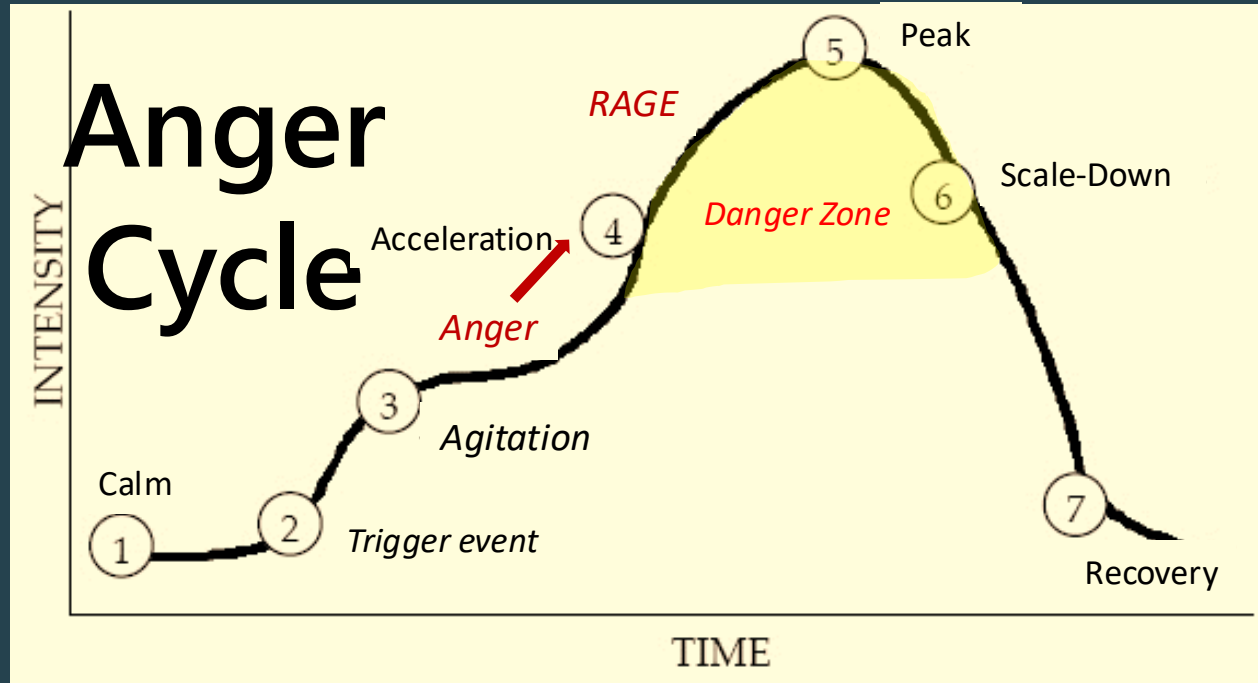
*And finally, realize that
some people are just -*



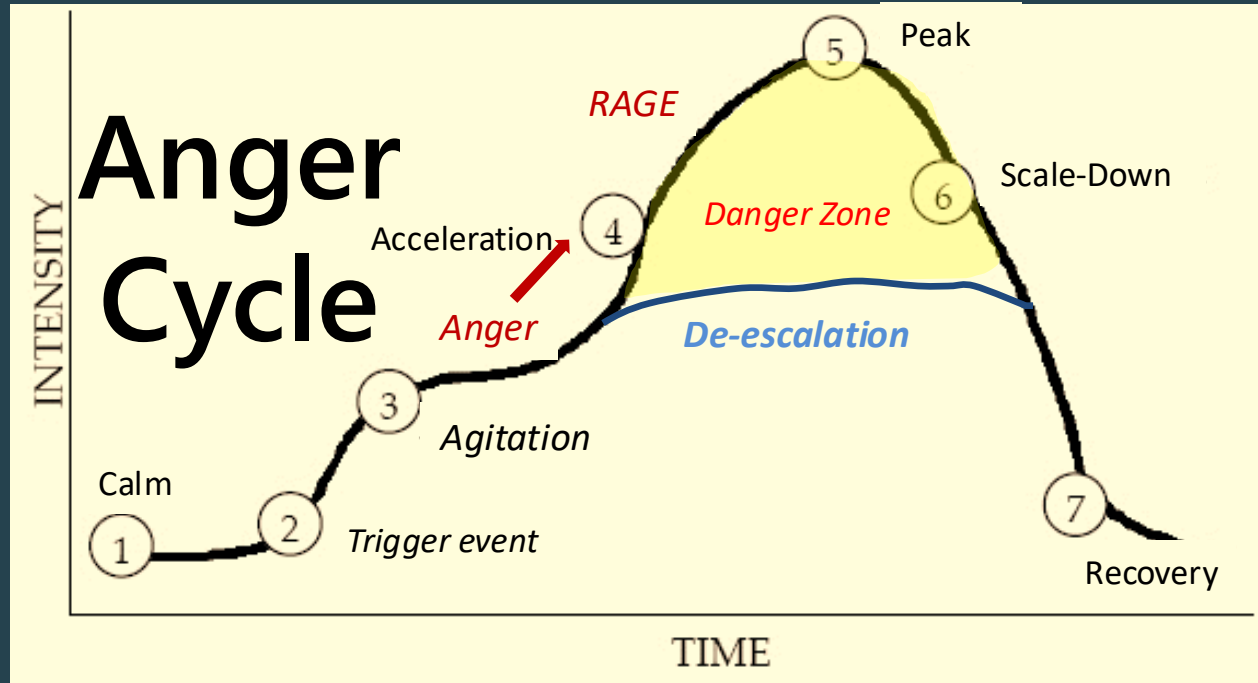
Agitation Anger Rage



The goal is not to win the argument
but to de-escalate the situation



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but to de-escalate the situation



Utility employees

face unique security challenges



Field Encounters

Employee initiated

Contact initiated



Contacts

Traditional Contact

Foreign Contact



Traditional contacts can
be anticipated



*Foreign contacts are
hard to predict*



Engagement Levels

Common

Level I – Neutral

Level II – Unfriendly

Concern

Level III – Aggressive

Dangerous

Level IV – Explosive

Level V – Violent





Take away #1

*Not every conflict
can be de-escalated*

De-escalation Potential

Level I – Neutral - *not needed*

Level II – Unfriendly - *possible*

Level III – Aggressive - *possible*

Level IV – Explosive – *unlikely*

Level V – Violent - *NO*





Take away #2

Stay vigilant

*Conflicts are fluid and situations
deteriorate astonishingly fast.*

ASSIST - Conflict De-escalation



Assess

Safeguard


Strategy

Investigate

Solve

Transition

ASSIST - Conflict De-escalation

 Assess
Safeguard
Strategy
Investigate
Solve
Transition

Assess

The situation
The other person
Yourself



Situation

Environment

Setting



Environment

The social backdrop and physical space
that you're in at any given time.



Setting

The changeable elements within the environment at a specific moment in time.

Includes the -
who, what, when, where,
& dozens of other factors



Safeguard

Situations spin out of
control with amazing speed



ASSIST - Conflict De-escalation

Assess

Safeguard

{ Strategy
Investigate

Solve

Transition

Strategy

Decide how you will move forward.



It's your job to communicate

Stay professional –

Remember this is your job,

You represent the company

Speak clearly, slowly, & softly

Simple words

Remain professional

Let silence to do the heavy lifting

Investigate

Confrontations are often based on

Fear

Apprehension

Respect

Investigate

Many confrontations center on
backstory/historical issues


ASSIST - Conflict De-escalation

Assess

Safeguard

Strategy

Investigate

 Solve
Transition

Solve

Approach

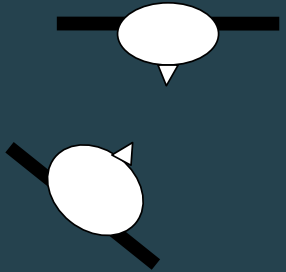
Avoid approaching an agitated person aggressively forward or covertly from behind.

An angled approach is less confrontational.

Never turn your back during a hostile person.

Nonaggressive stance

Stand at an angle, feet shoulder width apart,
with your dominate foot slightly forward.



Remain far enough away to avoid contact

Solve

If you can address the core issue and
resolve the current problem, then you'll
likely resolve the conflict.
If you're able to de-escalate the situation,
the next step is - ->

Transition

Change the subject

If possible, **take** time to show

genuine interest in something of
importance to the other person.



- - **REMEMBER** - -

Failure to follow up on promises will break trust and make any reoccurring conflict hard to resolve.

Conflict De-escalation

a learnable skill





Military,

Law enforcement,

Civilian de-escalation training



Different goals

Different techniques

Different outcomes

Thank you

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