

AGENDA

**NCATOD Presentation by
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SUCCESSFULLY RESPONDING TO HOSTILE CLIENTS

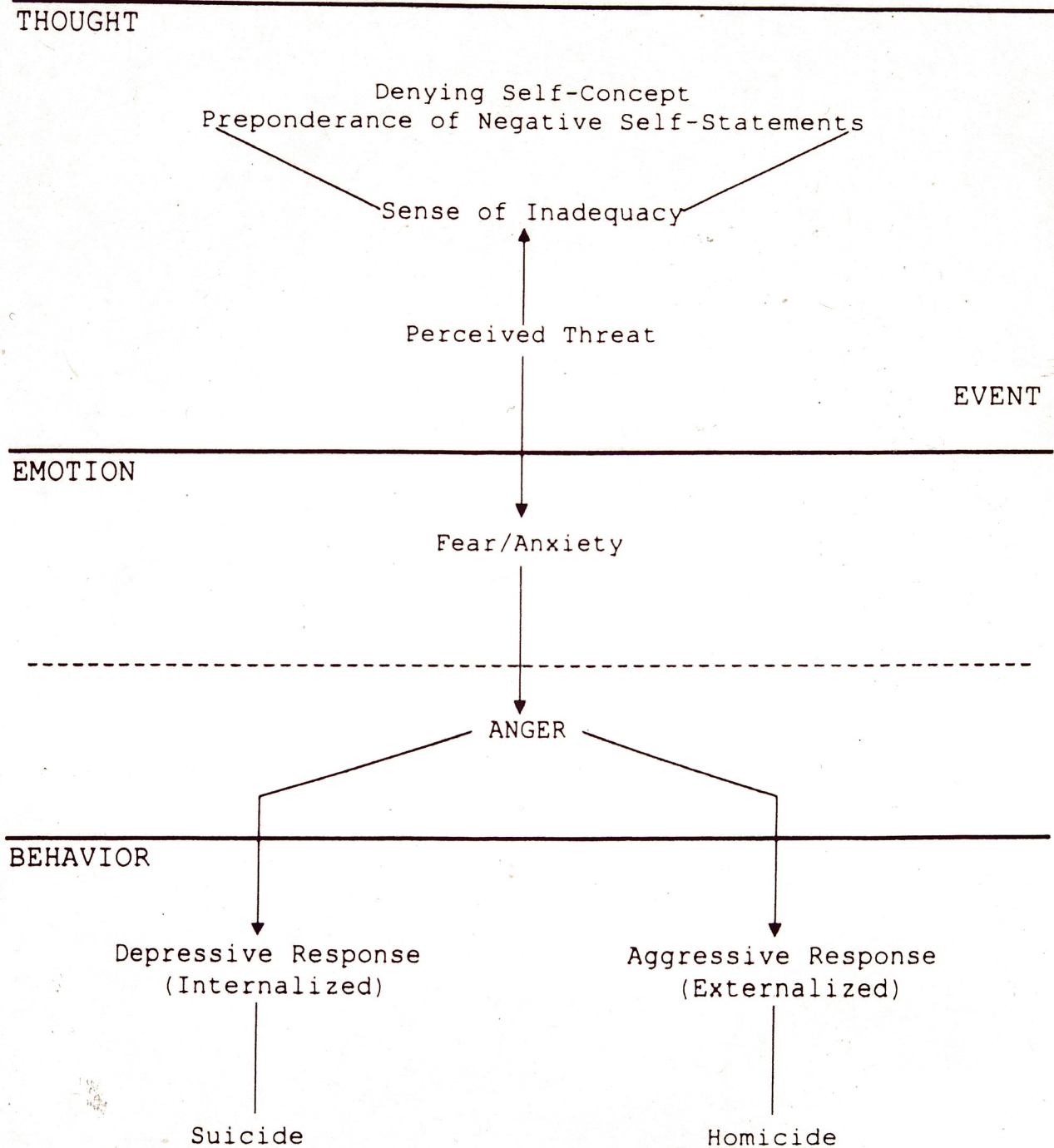
Exploring Personal Attitudes About Anger

**Understanding the Dynamics of Anger
And How Aggression Escalates**

Changing Our Conditioned Response

Effectively Responding to Another's Anger

DESTRUCTIVE ANGER



**EFFECTIVELY RESPONDING
TO
ANOTHER'S ANGER**

THE FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE DEFUSION

Put Safety First

Reduce Your Conditioned Reaction

Ask for Clarification

Present an Attitude of Respect

Let Go of the Need to be Right

Reduce Anger Provoking Language

Three Words to Remember:
Relaxation, Communication, and Respect

DEFUSION TECHNIQUES

Listen for and Respond to the Fear

Listen for and Respond to the Self-Message

Provide a New Interpretation

Be of Good Humor

Do the Unexpected

Use Emotional Honesty

WORKING WITH THE ANGRY CLIENT

DIFFUSION TECHNIQUES

LISTEN TO AND RESPOND TO THE REAL MESSAGE

The person who is acting in an aggressive manner, whether it be verbal or physical, is attempting to send a message. The words and behaviors used by the individual are not the true communication. Although aggression looks forceful and powerful, the message underneath is one of desperation, and powerlessness.

These messages could be one of many:

I feel degraded by being here.

I need help and I'm afraid you won't help me.

I feel unimportant.

I'm afraid you'll discount me.

I think I'll do it wrong and won't get what I need or you'll laugh at me.

I'm no good. I'm worthless.

A person, using aggression, is holding on to his/her dignity as best as she/he can. The helper can assist by listening carefully for the clues to the underlying real message, and responding to that communication. This response can be verbal or behavioral. The key is to remember that the aggression is not directed at you personally, but is the client's learned manner of communication.

Sometimes the message is:

"I'm powerless - without control in my life".

This is never true. Help the person discover the power/control she/he does have and be sure not to take control over areas that rightfully belong to the client.

PROVIDE A NEW PERCEPTION:

People react to situations out of their history. If their history has been filled with experiences of being punished by those in authority, then they expect punishment rather than help. In this situation, the helper, seen as the person with power, becomes the "punisher". The helper/system is the enemy.

This perception can be changed by:

1. not arguing with the client;
2. using short sentences as you
3. offer help and direction.

The message you want to give is, "I'm not against you, I'm with you".

Another misperception is the personalization of a situation. This can be translated into the thought, "You're doing this to hurt me personally". Short explanations of the real situation can help to change this misperception.

WORKING WITH THE ANGRY CLIENT

DIFFUSION TECHNIQUES

HUMOR:

Aggression is often a protective device, a defense mechanism, used to hide fear. Aggressive outbursts are most prevalent during times of extreme tenseness, moments of panic, or long periods of stress. This is due to chemical changes in the body. During anxious episodes, adrenalin and noradrenalin are produced and released at a faster rate than during times of calm. These hormones are not only the body's ingredients of fear, but also of anger. If the client were able to literally run away, these chemicals would be used up. The situation demands that she/he stay and the response is anger.

Another way to reduce these chemicals is through laughter. When a person laughs, chemicals are released in the body which counteract the adrenalin and noradrenalin. There is the lowering of tension and aggressive behavior dissipates.

It becomes important, when using humor, to remember that sarcasm or put-downs will place the person in a position to protect self, which will probably result in more anger. Therefore, the laughter can be at something not important to the client, or at the ridiculousness of life in general.

CHANGING PLACES:

Often, during an aggressive episode, the individual becomes so busy in the task of defending self that she/he has forgotten that situations can be felt and seen from many perspectives. The helper is the feeling recipient of the attack. The aggressor has forgotten that the helper has feelings; the aggressor thinks that the helper is dissimilar to him/her in this respect. An easy reminder is to ask, "How would you feel if I said that to you?"

The client is usually seeing the situation from his/her own frame of reference. She/He hasn't considered that the helper is looking on from a different perspective. Ask him/her to try seeing the situation from your place. If she/he has trouble doing this, help by presenting the limitations placed on you and ask, "What would you do if you were in my spot?". It is also helpful if the helper looks at the situation from the client's perspective.

WORKING WITH THE ANGRY CLIENT

DIFFUSION TECHNIQUES

HONESTY:

It has been shown in various studies that for one individual to consciously harm another, she/he must first forget that the one to be harmed is a human being with many similar characteristics to the aggressor. In other words, the aggressor makes the other person into an object. Since objects do not have feelings, it is okay to inflict pain, either emotional or physical. The key to diffuse the aggressive act is to remind the aggressor that you are human and have feelings in common. The easiest thing to find in common with another human being is a feeling because all people have feelings. Therefore, if the worker can risk levelling a feeling, she/he has presented self as a non-object on common ground with the client.

Another aspect of this is connected to the theories of frustration and aggression. When a person sees an object frustrating his/her process to a goal, she/he will use aggression to overcome that object if she/he thinks aggression will work. Be honest. Let the individual know you are human, not an object, and that no matter how aggressive she/he becomes, the situation won't change. Then point out other alternatives that might help.

DO THE UNEXPECTED (CONFUSE DEFENSES):

An individual will often use aggression as a tool of manipulation. She/He has learned that aggressive behavior elicits certain responses, either a retort or a retreat. As long as the aggressor receives these responses, the aggression will continue. The helper can stop the aggressive attack by responding in an unexpected way. This means that the helper doesn't respond by changing the subject (retreat), giving a long explanation (retreat), or telling the client where she/he is wrong (retort). Instead, a response which doesn't put either person on the defensive will dissipate the aggression.