

# PATIENT POPULATION COMPETENCY - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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Some of the patients we serve suffer from anxiety, depression or other behavioral health issues. While we have had very few circumstances that have escalated to a point of needing professional intervention, the environment (waiting, large number of people etc.) may cause some to become agitated. Below are some tips on how to handle these circumstances.

## Tips and Techniques:

- Try to remain calm even if the patient is escalated (it is about the patient, it is not personal).
- Offer to find a more private place to address the issue (especially if other patients are upset).
- Try to connect with the patient on an emotional level, their feelings are real even if the resolution they are seeking is not possible or their interpretation of the circumstances is inaccurate etc.
- Respect the patient's personal space. While it is helpful to put yourself at their level (i.e. seated if they are seated), don't block a door or other pathway that prevents them from leaving the situation.
- Avoid saying "I understand" or "calm down" as these terms may agitate a person further. Better to say "I hear you're (frustrated, upset, disappointed)." Often, just letting someone vent and acknowledging their feelings will be sufficient for them to de-escalate.
- Empower the person by presenting realistic options to choose from that will provide resolution (*a few examples include*: you can stay here and wait your turn; you can go grab a snack and walk around for 5 minutes; you can leave the Clinic).
- If you feel unsafe, or if you need additional support, ask for help from a Leadership team member. Behavioral health staff may be called if conditions warrant professional help.