

# 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. De-escalation staff may be called if conditions warrant professional help.