

**Personal** safety on shift is always at the forefront of our minds, and it's something we should be discussing with our teammates on a regular basis. It's very easy to grow complacent when we become familiar with doing something regularly, like attending shifts, but events and circumstances can change quickly and without warning. This week, we want to discuss preventing aggression on shift and give you some practical tips to share with your teammates to help stay safe.

### Sources of aggression on shift

Common examples of aggression on shift can include **A)** friends arguing between themselves or with the Service Provider, **B)** friends frustrated with our terms of service or **C)** friends exhibiting mental health issues.

Regardless of the cause, violence often follows a pattern of increasing aggression. It's important volunteers remain aware of the signs so that aggressive situations can be avoided by either defusing the person's anger or initiating emergency procedures. Look out for the following signs of aggression: **annoyance - raised voices - verbal threats - physical gestures and physical violence.**

### Risk factors on shift

Shifts operate in a diverse range of communities, and risks can come from a range of different factors, including **1)** environmental factors such as serving friends with a history of aggressive behaviour or mental health issues, operating at night, or operating in unpredictable locations. **2)** Task-based factors such as operating alone or dealing with people face to face, and **3)** volunteer-specific factors just as experience, number of volunteers, training and personality types. Understanding our shift environment can help us implement the correct controls to help prevent or manage aggression on shift.

### Control measure: **de-escalating anger** (only if you feel comfortable to do so)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1)</b> Make eye contact, but don't stare, address them by their name.</li> <li><b>2)</b> Stand at least 1 meter away, avoid challenging body language such as hands on hips.</li> <li><b>3)</b> Be considerate of cultural differences or disabilities.</li> <li><b>4)</b> Give your full attention and speak respectfully.</li> <li><b>5)</b> Let them have their say without interrupting</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>6)</b> Once finished expressing their feelings, ask for specific examples of the person's concern.</li> <li><b>7)</b> Display empathy "I can see this has upset you".</li> <li><b>8)</b> Ask open ended questions, for example, "what would you like to see happen?"</li> <li><b>9)</b> Reflect back what you're hearing "you'd like us to extend the shift as its difficult for you to arrive earlier?"</li> </ol> |
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### What **NOT** to do When Confronted With Violence on Shift

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1)</b> Argue with an aggressor</li> <li><b>2)</b> Turn your back on the aggressor</li> <li><b>3)</b> Isolate yourself from other team members</li> <li><b>4)</b> Attempt to disarm an armed person or get physical</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5)</b> Attempt to break up a physical altercation between friends (others) on shift</li> <li><b>6)</b> Try to be brave - your safety and the safety of the team is the highest priority</li> </ol> |
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**Remember the safe word "DAPHNE" and your two Safe Places.**

We have a great webinar on de-escalation and preventing aggression on shift that we encourage you to share with all your teams this week to help them remain safe on shift.

- eLearning webinar Aus: <https://vimeo.com/810366158/ab94f511d6>
- eLearning webinar NZ: <https://vimeo.com/810800976/a034b7a370>