MANAGING RAGE
A Summary Review

Based on material presented by
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Note: Please refer to Powerpoint presentation for complete information.

Part 1  Chaotic Rage

Goal:
To reassure, to calm the person down.

Technique:
Use calm movements.
Soft, firm, but reassuring voice.
Distract them if you can.
Use their name to get their attention.
Be very cautious about touching them.
Use simple, concrete sentences.
Use simple summary statements.

“Really scary, huh?”
“You don’t like that, do you?”
Part 2  Fearful Rage

Goal:
To reduce their sense of danger.

Technique:
Move away from the person, slowly.
Give the client room to move or leave.
Relax your posture.
Make sure your movements are slow.
Your voice is firm and confident – reassuring.
Be very careful with physical contact. In the rare occasions where it is warranted, use a firm touch, with no stroking or patting.
Keep up a reassuring litany of phrases:

“I know you are scared- that’s OK. Put down the chair. You don’t need that. I’ll keep it safe here. You can put it down now. I’m way over here. Go ahead. Sit down. I’ll keep it safe.”
Part 3  Hot Rage

About the ladder technique:

Select the most dangerous behavior and repetitively demand that it cease, using short sentences.

Once that behavior stops, choose the next level down of problematic behaviors and use the same approach.

Continue to use the technique until the person is de-escalated.

Pitch it low in your chest.

Tone is firm, and strong.

Project your voice so it “reaches” the person’s center.

Once the person is stable and willing to talk, THEN set a firm and direct limit.

“Ralph, you have threatened me physically and used obscene language toward me. I will not accept anyone trying to intimidate nor abuse me. I would like us to take a break from each other. You can go take a walk. I’m going back to my office now. We can talk about your paycheck later. But not right now.”
If the person objects:

“We are talking about it! What we are talking about is that you threatened violence. We cannot get anything accomplished if you are going to do that. I know you were very upset. You know that we never solve any problem when that happens. Let’s talk about it again when both of us are feeling peaceful. I have some free time at 3 P.M. today. I’ll be happy to see you then. But when you return, I expect you to treat me with the same respect I treat you – without threats, without cursing or yelling. We can and will talk about your concerns. But that will be later, when we can easily talk about it. Not now. “

Do NOT reward aggression by immediately going into problem-solving mode.

The tripwire principle:
If the person continues to escalate, go for safety.
A. Hot Rage: Fury

Goal:
Embody control until the person can achieve it.

Technique:
Your posture and tone should be commanding, imposing.
Stand out of range of an immediate blow, but directly in front of the person.
Your voice is strong, forceful. Do not shout.
Keep your voice low-pitched and calm.
Use direct contact, and frequently use the person’s name.
Use the ladder technique:

“Ralph, stand back, you’re too close. Stand back. Stand back. We’ll talk when you stand back”.

B. Hot Rage: Bluffing

Goal:
To help the person save face, and then set limits for the future.

Technique:
Use the ladder technique but with a conversational, much more matter-of-fact tone.
Eye-contact, too, is matter-of-fact, as if you were having a discussion rather than a confrontation.
Do not explicitly point out their fear to others’ attention. They will feel the need to defend their honor.
Do not overwhelm them by being too loud and forceful, or too domineering in posture.

When somewhat calmer or if did not escalate so high, you can offer some information and reassurance:

“Look, Frank. I know you thought I was making fun of you, but that wasn’t the case at all. I was just pointing out that you forgot your meds, so you wouldn’t have to come back for them later.”

At the end of the confrontation, include some “ego building”:

“Frank, I’m glad this worked out with no one getting hurt. Next time, though, don’t do this in front of them.

Come to me and talk to me, one adult to another. You shouldn’t put your personal business in front of them.

O.K. Are we clear for next time? Good. Now as for this time, . . .

“
C. Hot Rage: Opportunistic Manipulators

Goal:
To not buy into their manipulations.

Technique:
Rather than making eye contact, look past their ear.
Stand relaxed and ready to evade a blow.
Express flat disinterest in their demands, accusations, and complaints.
Use the repetitive commands of the ladder technique.
Your vocal tone is flat.
Do not negotiate.
Do not discuss anything as long as they are using this kind of degraded behavior.
Part 4  Cool Rage (predatory)

Goal:
To demonstrate that you are not prey.

Technique:
Stand ready to move.
Be poised but not too defensive.
Avoid gesturing.
Be openly strategic.
Ignore their attempts at using anything against you.
Keep your voice matter-of-fact, give clear but vague statements of consequences. Repeat over and over:

“You know exactly what we are talking about.”

“You know what is going on here. You know what is happening.”

Use ladder commands if necessary.
Minimize eye contact. Look between the eyes with a flat stare.
Your entire goal is to convince this person that it is not worth it to hurt you.
Once you have succeeded and are free from him, you need to get help – most likely from law enforcement.
Part 5: Paranoid Rage

Goal:
To ‘differentiate’ yourself from the client.

Technique:
Better to be somewhat distant rather than too warm and friendly.
Tell the person what you are doing, and why.

“Joey, you asked me why I’m on the computer so much. I explained this to your before. I’m looking at your crisis plan, the one we talked about. See, right here. It lists your medications, and important phone numbers to call”.

If sitting, turn your body at a slight angle.

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