Washington State Department of Commerce

Catholic Charities EASTERN WASHINGTON

Pivoting To:
De-Escalation Skills with Catholic Charities of Eastern WA's Practical Applications for PSH

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Invest. Build. Serve.

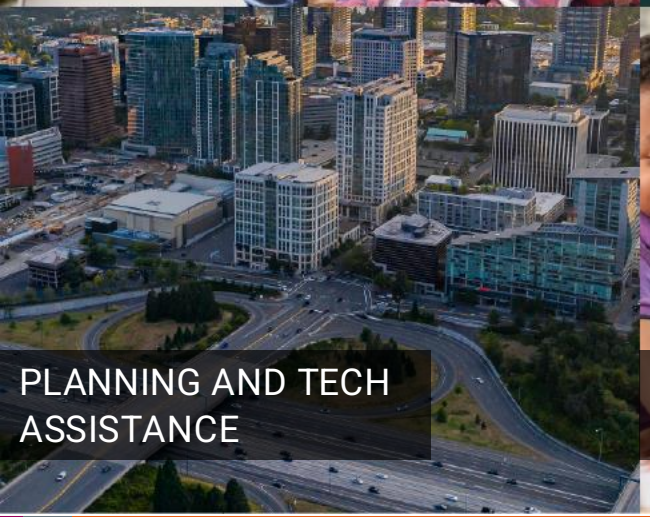
We foster resilient communities



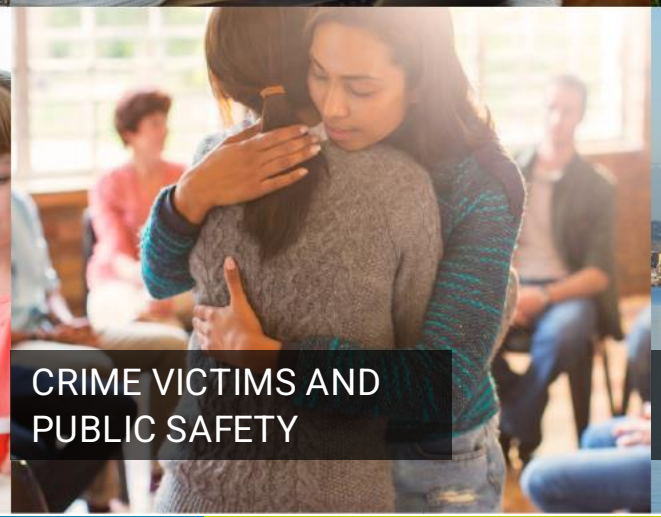






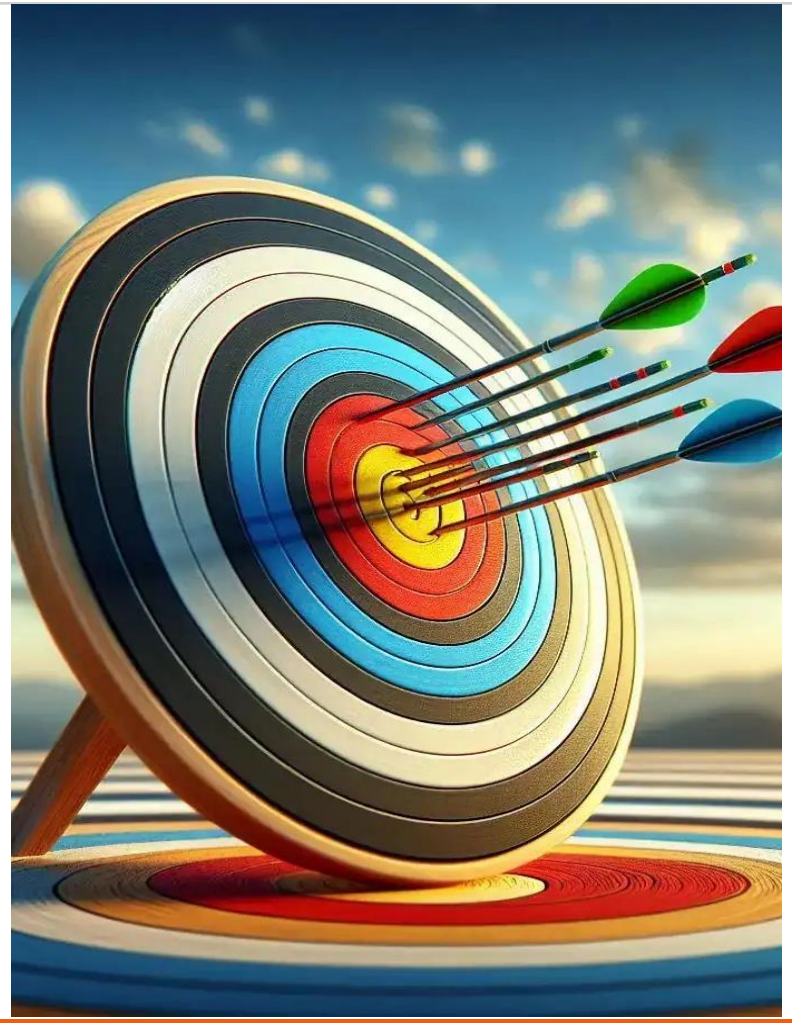








Aims & Objectives



1. Foundations of De-Escalation Skills
2. Program Overview: Catholic Charities of Eastern WA
3. Learn CCEW's 3 Pillars of De-Escalation in PSH
4. Identify Signs of Escalation
5. Build Practical De-Escalation Skills: CCEW as Example
6. Practice One Scenario Together

Foundations of De-Escalation

- De-escalation starts with you.
  The best de-escalation skills are preventative & ongoing.
- Keep your eye fixed on safety
- Relationship is key
- Your expectations set the tone – Stay curious and open to adapting





- Interventions are about the behavior, not the individual
- Set clear, respectful boundaries from the start
- Understand your own limits & supports

Build Awareness

Warning Signs

- Talking loudly, fast, continuous
- Signs of hypervigilance
- Isolating, withdrawing, shutting down
- Nodding but not seeming “tuned in”
- Pacing or fidgeting
- Scattered
- Increased risk taking
- Minimal Eye Contact
- Squaring off – confrontational tone & body language
- Blaming
- Increased literal or black & white thinking, struggling with complexity
- Significant shift in regular behavior



Common Triggers



- Perceived disrespect
- Trauma responses
- Mental health struggles
- Substance use challenges
- Overwhelming emotions/tasks
- Unmet needs
- Ongoing stress
- Fear of losing housing or services
- Negative treatment from neighbors
- Transitioning into housing



What Happens During Escalation



anxiety, heart rate,
literal thinking increases

Trigger

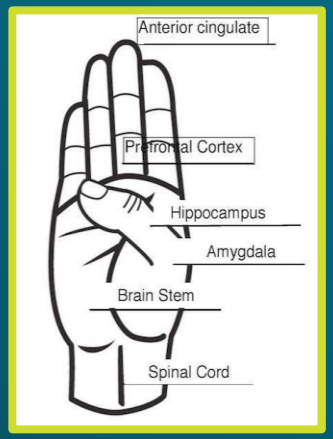
Elevated Baseline due to Chronic Crisis/Hypervigilance

Regulation &
Recovery

Baseline Threshold

ability for problem solving,
critical thinking, naming
emotions, listening
decreases

Energy Curve of Escalation



De-escalation Techniques

- Stay calm – Regulate yourself – Be compassionate
- Use non-threatening stance & tone – Lower your own energy
- Provide space – Don't crowd the person
- Show empathy and compassion
- Take a moment to attend to basic unmet needs
- Address the behavior clearly & quickly
- Set clear limits – be directive if needed for behaviors that need to stop immediately
- Provide choices
- Validate feelings – without agreeing to unsafe behavior
- Be transparent & consistent with expectations
- Avoid power struggles – staying neutral & nonjudgemental

Program Overview: Housing Stabilization - Crisis Response Team

Catholic Charities
EASTERN WASHINGTON



THREE PILLARS. ONE STRONG FOUNDATION.

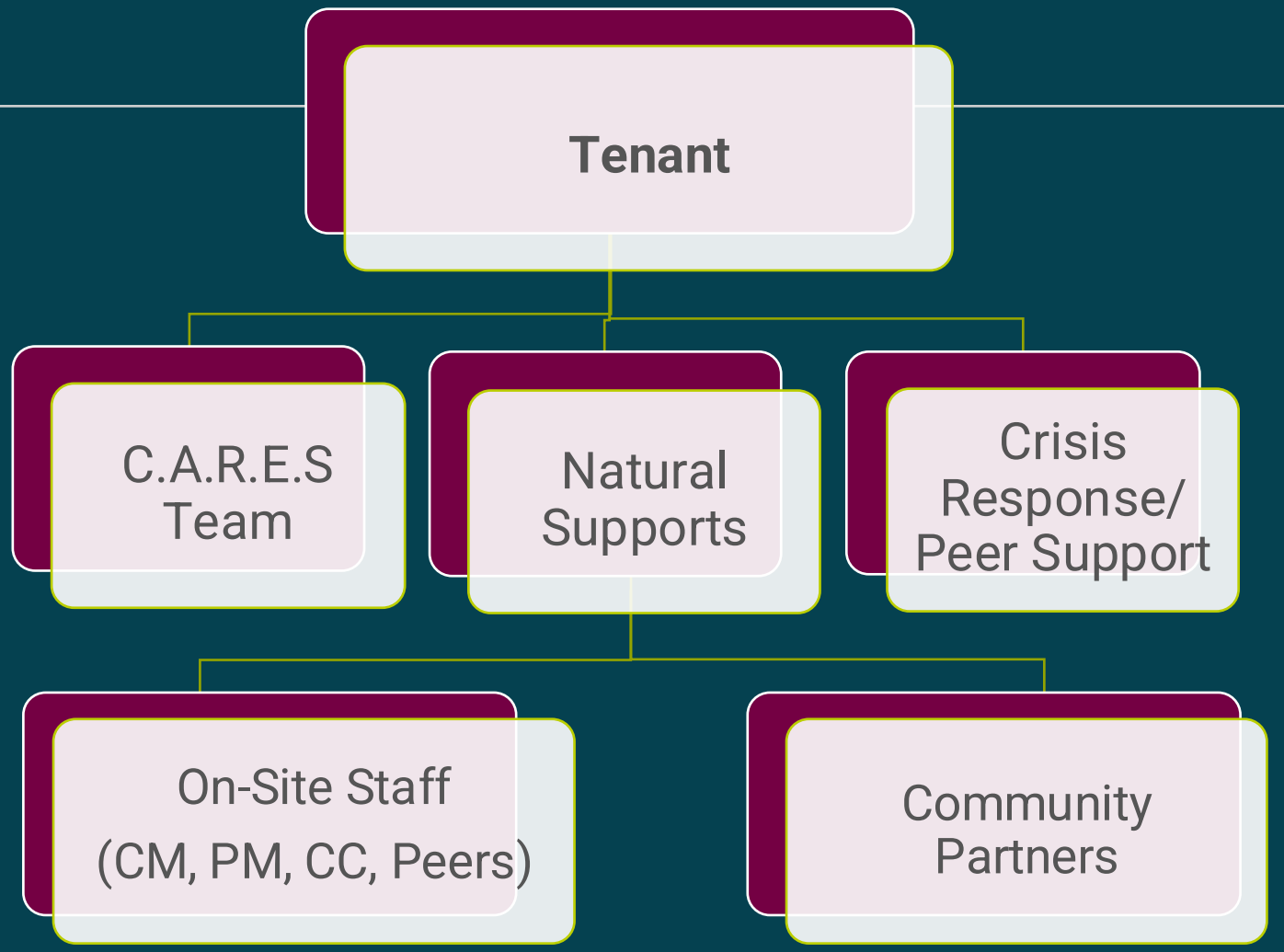
Building trust. Strengthening communities. Supporting futures.

Centered on Integrity, Respect, and Safety



Avoiding Escalation/Crisis in PSH: CCEW Strategies

- ***Include wraparound supports***
- ***Always support clients with Trauma-Informed Care***



CCEW Process

For the purposes of this strategy – a “crisis” is defined as either:

1) an acute, concerning behavior from a client or guest

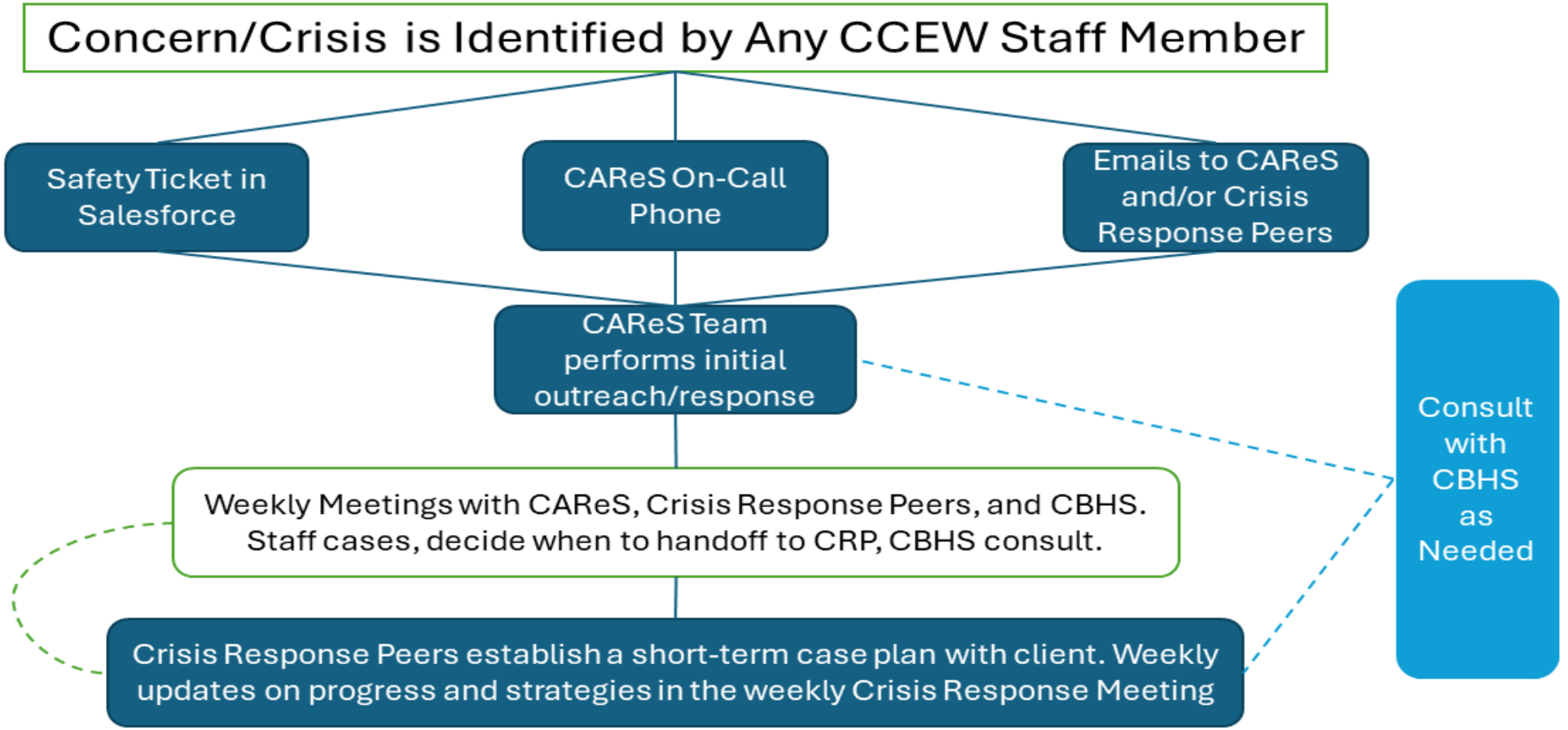
- or -

2) a tenancy concern, which is jeopardizing that resident’s housing, or could if not addressed.

Cases for Crisis Response Team will follow a general trajectory of:

- Concern is expressed by CCEW staff member.
- Initial outreach by CAReS Team Member.
- Handoff to Crisis Response Peers.
  - This will generally be accomplished in the regular meetings.
- Crisis Response Peers create and execute service plan.
  - Initial engagement with the client, where a person-centered service plan (SMART Goals) for 30-90 days will be drafted.
- Crisis Response Peers will work with the client, checking in at least 1-3 times per week on the progress of the service plan.
  - CRPs will be sure to keep any other case manager or building staff consistently updated on the progress of this short-term service plan.
- CRPs, CAReS, and CBHS will discuss the progress of these service plans during the weekly meetings.
- Once the crisis/concern has been resolved, the case will close for this team.

Safety Ticket Process:



Practical Applications

The value of **communication** can't be understated…

With a participant

- Active Listening
- Show Empathy – Listen for feelings & values
- Transparency
- Avoid stigmatizing language
- Stay Mindful of Non-Verbal Communication



Amongst PSH Staff

Communication happens before, after, & during an issue arises with a tenant

How does this happen with CCEW?

- Safety tickets
- Weekly Zoom meetings (C.A.R.E.S & Crisis Response) to address safety tickets & outcomes
- Include tenant: offer intervention meeting w/ on-site staff
- Keep people housed: system alerts for recerts & compliance
- Problem solve & brainstorm
- Community partners: street med, BH providers, VA

The Power of a Sandwich (a.k.a diversion strategies)

- Isolate the problem from the individual
- Ask them to sit with you, if comfortable
- Focus on basic, immediate care needs
- Ask them to walk with you, change scenery if possible
- Move the interaction away from other people

What is a diversion strategy used with the participants you've built relationships with at CCEW?

Aligning Core Concepts of Harm Reduction with De-escalation



- Always be mindful: What's 1 step we can take to reduce harm in this situation?
- Participant has autonomy
- Show respect at all times – no matter what risky behavior someone is involved in
- Services are participant centered
- Provide supports and resources moving forward
- Collaborate with problem solving

When can we collaborate with a participant who is escalated or showing risky behaviors?



Maintaining Staff & Tenant Safety

- Maintain awareness of exits and surroundings
- Keep appropriate personal space
- Avoid power struggles
- Be mindful of body language
- Request backup early when needed
- Follow agency safety protocols
- Document significant incidents

Pro Tip: ***Deescalation starts with you. Keeping yourself calm, grounded and connected with supports helps keep everyone safer.***

Scenario Practice

A tenant is upset about not being allowed to have guests with limited hours and number of guests. It's a house rule. They think there's too many rules for guests and they think they should have whoever they want over in their own home. They were raising their voice, cussing at staff, posturing at staff while they spoke, talking a mile a minute and not letting staff get a word in.

What emotions might be driving their behavior?

What safety considerations apply?

What de-escalation skill might we start with?

How can we demonstrate respect?

What choices can we offer?



- Integrity builds trust
- Respect preserves dignity
- Safety protects everyone

Effective de-escalation is a skill that strengthens housing stability and positive relationships in PSH.

Thank you!

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