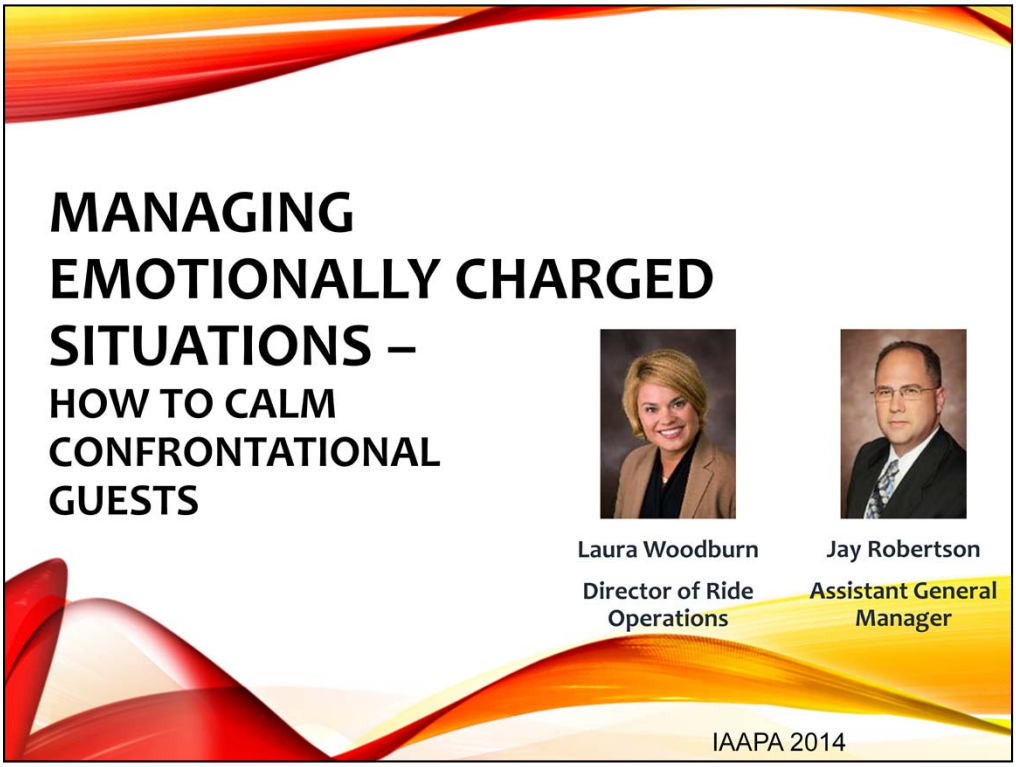


In 2013, we presented the original program, Managing Emotionally Charged Situations. We received quite a bit of positive feedback. Our goal was to provide participants with an overview look at items to consider for their employee program. This would include training, practical application and best practices to be used with guests hat are emotionally charged.

Ours is a world of many non negotiables / black and white things– height, weight, accessibility, health restrictions, ride interruptions….

Ours is also a world of perception / shades of gray – employee discourtesy, rudeness, weather delays….

How do we train our staff to Manage Emotionally Charged Situations and to calm confrontational guests?

This year we will look again at our core 7 items and expand on several, diving deeper into the ongoing training that can help you to help your staff in these situations. Our goal is to help you develop an even stronger foundation or platform of training centered around emotionally charged stations. We hope this information will benefit you and your existing program.

MANAGING EMOTIONALLY CHARGED SITUATIONS

- What this program is……
  - A means of communicating best practices among our industry
- What this program is not…..
  - Legal advice or answers to all situations

What this is – best practices – will share real life scenarios – coming from the angle of guest anger / frustration when things do not go their way and even excitement like on opening days for new attractions. Not from medically induced fear.

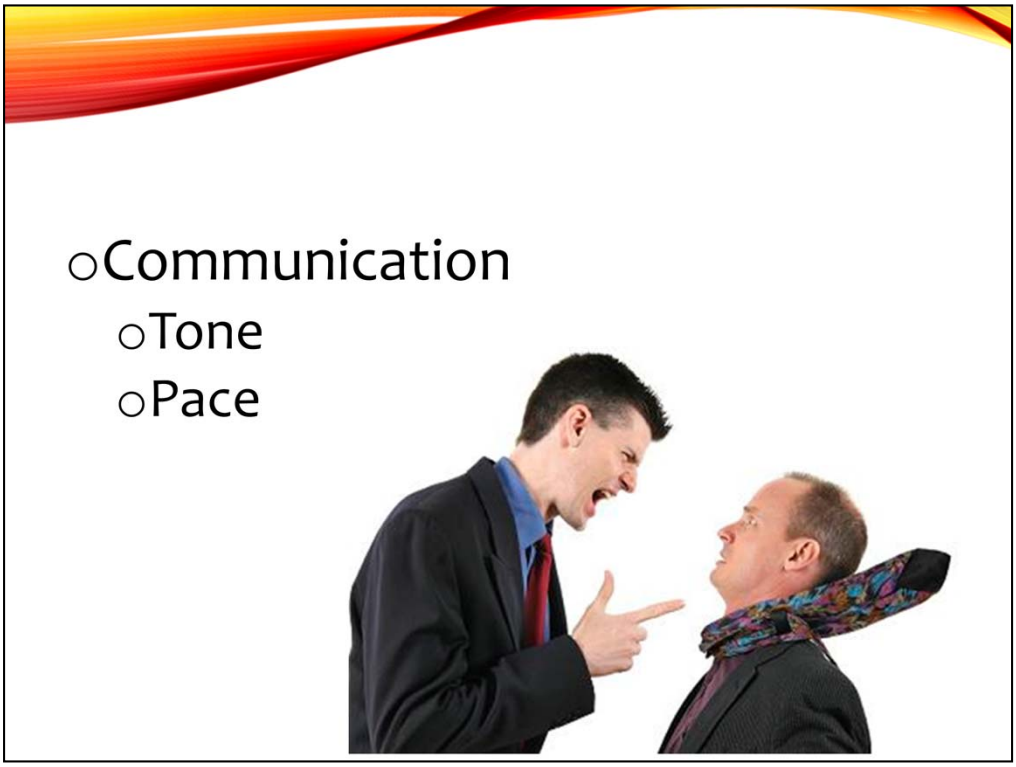
What this is not – legal advice – not massaging egos

MANAGING EMOTIONALLY CHARGED SITUATIONS

- Considerations and Best Practices
  - Communication
  - Communication Barriers
  - Environment
  - Social Media Considerations
  - Training
  - Escalation
  - Post Event

Topics we will cover. Please don’t hesitate to ask questions along the way if you feel compelled

- Communication
  - Tone and Pace
  - Word Choice
  - Empathic Listening
  - Setting Limits



Tone – non confrontational / non adversarial / style of communication / cultural

Pace –

- Cultural and geographical
- Socio-economic
- Country versus city
- Expressive versus dry
- Pauses versus no break in conversation
- Differences / inflection
- Email – difficulties

- Communication
  - Word Choice

Emotional response to phraseology or word choice

FOCUS

- In the absence of giving employees the script – they will develop it on their on and on the fly

Examples –

- Ride stoppage – how do you prepare your employees to respond?>
- Child is not tall enough to ride
- Too large / too tall
- Lost children
- Lost parent
- Refund demands
- Etc. – look to the crowd . . . .

Steven Covey –

The fastest way to communication is to really understand another person. Have you ever had someone ask you the same question multiple times? Why do you think that is? Do you believe they feel understood?

We will discuss this further in depth in the training segment of this program

Have you figured out what your limits are? You must establish what you are willing to offer, or what is the action from a behavior.

Each facility must also determine who has the authority to enact the limits.

For example,

- What behaviors will you not tolerate?
- What will happen if the guest reaches a pre determined limit?
- What are the next steps?
- Is your program consistent and does everyone know their role?
- How will you get people confident in their abilities?

We will discuss building blocks to confidence building when we later discuss training.

- Communication Barriers
  - Pre Judgment
  - Proxemics
  - Body Language

-Scripting – way you view the world – your lens

-Prejudice / Bias / Stereotype

- -Differently Abled – intellectual disability / physical disability
- -Gender
- -Race
- -Culture / region
- -Religion – sukkot example

-Hot buttons

-Personal emotional control – "I over E"

-How do you adapt your behavior so you can listen with empathy? Deliver the message in a way that tells them you are open and hear them?

-Consider too – have you prejudged the problem?

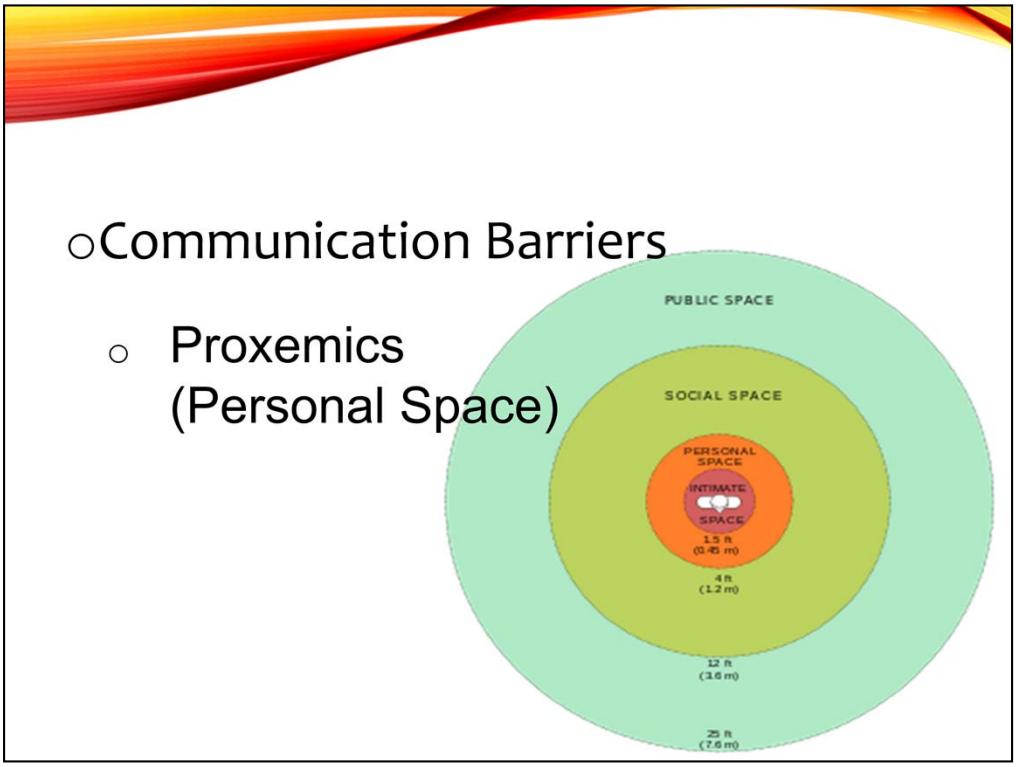
-I’ve heard this before, and I’m going to respond with…..

-I’ve had a bad situation just before I now meet with you……

-My day started off bad and I know it will be bad again when speaking with…..

-This person has a disability and I know they will push me with…….

-This person has a disability and I’m not comfortable with……



Interpersonal Distance, body orientation and touch: effects of culture, gender and age. -Remland, Jones and Brinkman. 1995

•Public – 12 – 25 feet

•Social – 4 – 12 feet

•Personal – 1.5 – 4 feet

•Intimate – within 1.5 feet

What determines?

•Culture

•Upbringing

•Gender

•Life experiences

Now imagine our environment – what creates tension? Explore ride / show thrills, dining excitement (foodies), etc.

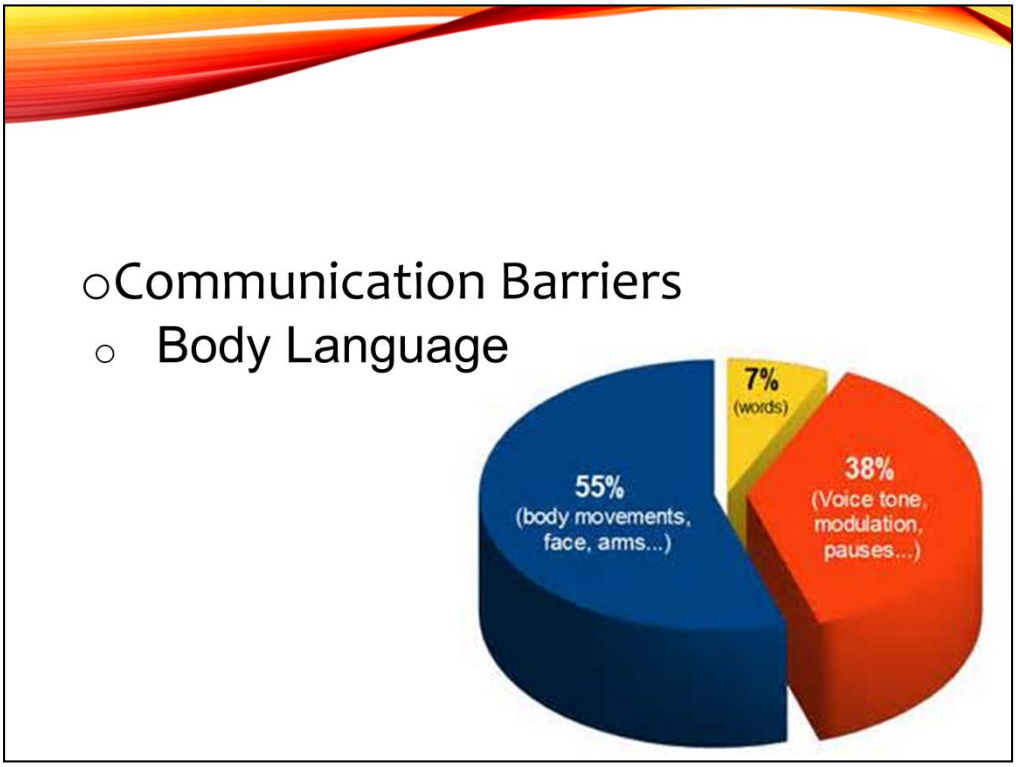
•Waterpark, FEC, Traveling show

•Queue line

•Selling emotions – which one do they take home with them?

•Lighting

•Environmental concerns e.g., rain, heat, cold, entry points, ingress, egress, create diversions



Crossed arms / lean forward / slouch / facial expressions / open stance / active vs still / heavy breathing / sighing / crying / style of dress / shake hands / standing vs sitting /

How do you adapt to what you see?

•Mirror?

•Maintain?

Self awareness? What tactics do you use to maintain professionalism?

•Eye roller?

•Hands on hips / defensive posture?

•Eye contact – heavy or not much?

•Take notes?

According to Stephen Covey…

7% words we use

55 % facial expression and body language

38% tone

- Environment
  - Location
  - Setting

Away from others when possible – not far

Close to exit gates? Internal “quiet room”, bench in midway

How are you moving them? What are you saying?

•Please allow me to…..

•I can assist you better here….

•I’m having difficulty hearing you with the noise from the midway

Why is this important?

Multiple groups at once?

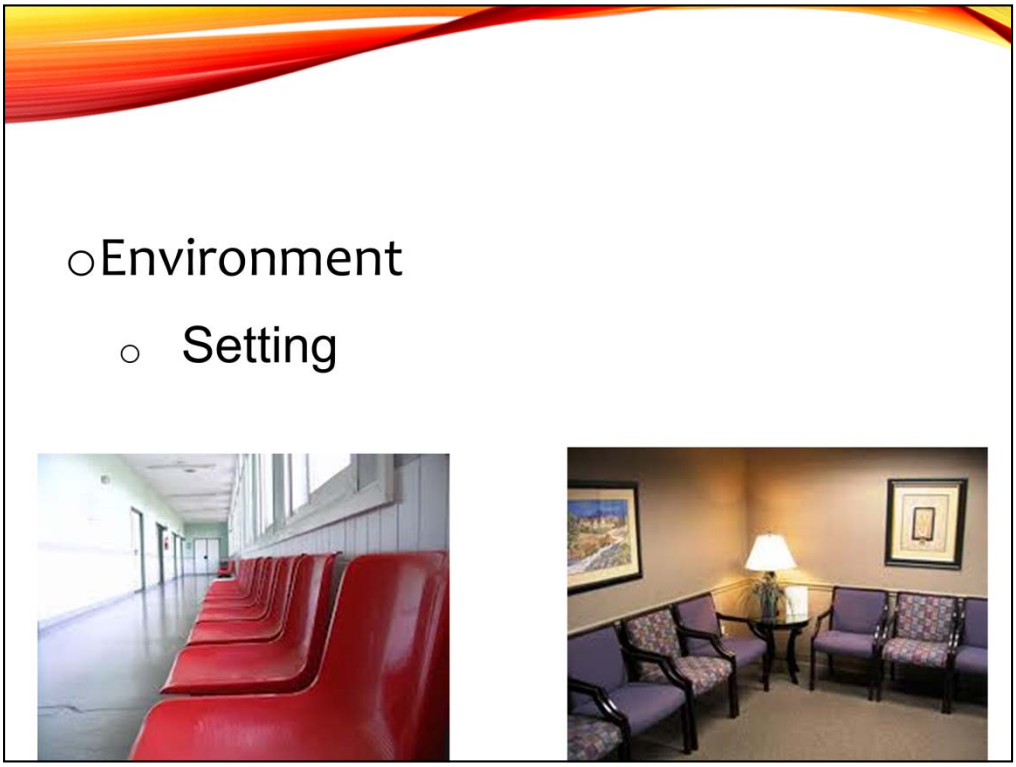
Who is the representative / spokesperson?

Outside stimulus – are you controlling the environment?

- Reduce noise
- Reduce stimulus
- Reduce distractions
- Provide comfort and an environment of “calm”
- Focus speaker on resolution
- Minimize “guest journalist”

When is it OK to be outside?
What can you do it you have no inside location?

If you do, what should you consider?



Color – Huffington Post Oct 9, 2013, looked cited Leslie Harrington, exec director of the Color Assoc of US which forecasts color trends. There is an innate reaction to color. Red increases heart rate – stimulating color going back to cavemen signifying fire and danger.

Some colors have learned associations, such as the color light blue was my grandmother's kitchen color.

We see "Red", calming "blue" sea, easy "green" refreshes, "yellow" isn't always mellow – stands out and is inviting to people,

FF&E

Water and food available? Instantly gratifying.

Lighting? Temperature?

What items are in the room? For example – heavy objects that may be thrown> Mission Statements and Service Promises that may be thrown in your face….

CCTV and Panic Alarms and Secondary Exits

October 6, 2013 – 51 Amazing Facebook Stats, Craig Smith wrote

•60% sharing

•150 billion FB connections – 819 million are mobile users

•350 million average daily uploaded photos

•76% of users log on daily

•Canada is the most active country

How many have videos on line from their facilities? Good scenarios? Bad scenarios?

Must always be aware that YOU will star in a clip at some point online. How would you react differently if you knew that ahead of time? But do not let that stop you from doing the right thing.

Proactive Measures

Follow Up Timeliness

Who? owns this

Kirk, Walt, Brandon and company

In the absence of a strong message, one will be created for you.

- Training
  - Front Line
  - Management

Jay's texting scenario- basic communication skills – level set to build upon. YOU CAN NOT EXPECT THEY WILL COME TO YOU WITH ANY LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION SKILL – we must educate them on these skills.

Resources are available? Level of empowerment?

Words to use? Scenario / role play training? Practice a lot! If you don't put words in their head (scripting), they will respond on the fly. What messaging are they sharing with our guests.

Confidence building techniques

How to ID behavior and know when and how to get assistance before it is needed

Breakdown scenarios – fear of the unknown -they are on the lift hill vs their children are on the lift hill

- Two ways to look at this – example of over confidence on lift and from ground – teen versus parent

What to say or not say to de escalate

- “Told them about this”
- “Always here this”
- “That’s nothing, you shoulda been here last week”
- “The same thing happened to me”

Understanding some need 2 people, 4 people, or more

- Training
  - Front Line

Confidence and approach with guest

Hand off with front line – how to prepare for what it looks like

Manage emotions in moment – how to help people not take it personally

How to provide consistent responses?

How to be consistent with your brand?

Confidence and approach with guest – level set

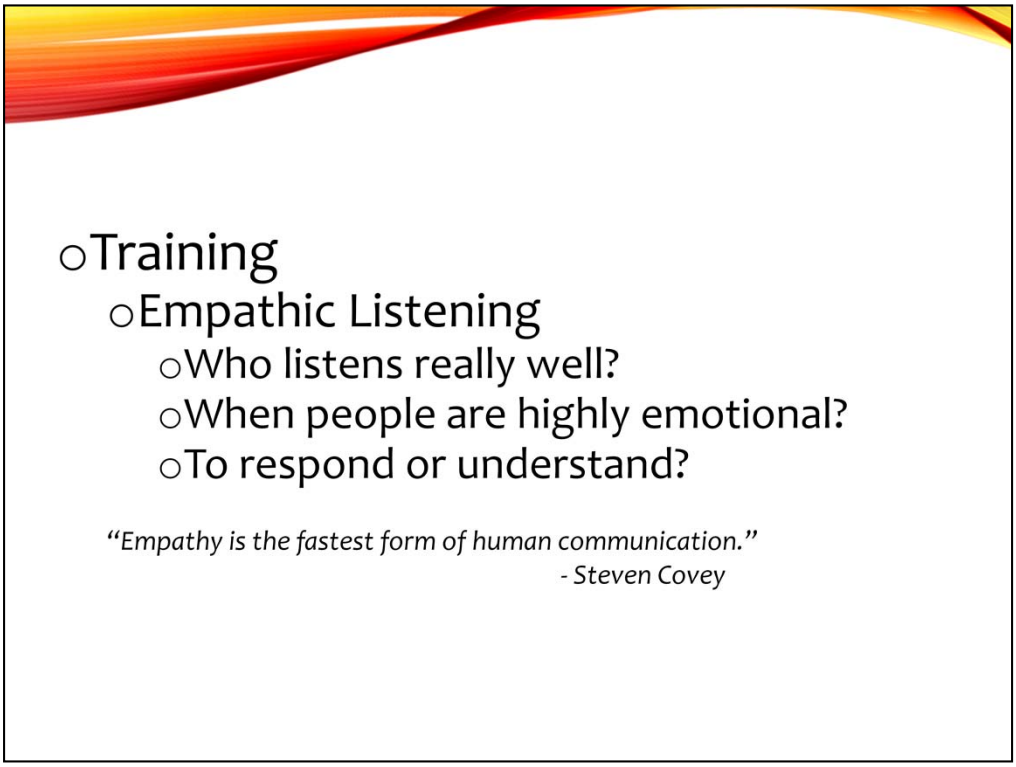
Hand off with front line or even supervisor

Supporting team and what happens when you can't or don't

Manage emotions in moment -

MUST CHECK YOURSELF – ARE YOU READY TO ENGAGE WITHOUT A HIGH EMOTIONAL RESPONSE? IF NOT – LEAVE AND GET SOMEONE WHO IS

Cross departments for resolution – F&B and SWAG – or rides exit passes



Definition of empathic listening – listening to understand what another person is thinking and feeling. It's a method of listening and responding that improves mutual understanding and trust. It enables the listener to receive and accurately interpret the speaker's message. Sometimes it is called active listening or reflective listening.

Have you ever had someone repeat themselves during moments of high emotion? Why is that?

Have you ever repeated yourself in moments of high emotion? Why is that?

In order to get at the heart of the issue, we must listen with the intent to understand the other perspective – and not with the intent to reply.

This is so simple to say. Yet it is not easy to do.

You may not agree with what the person is telling you but it is important to remain focused on their communication and not your opinion of what they are telling you. Your goal is to listen with the intent to understand the emotion someone is having around something. I over E

This is helpful in most situations. There are always going to be times where this skill will not help de-escalate the situation.

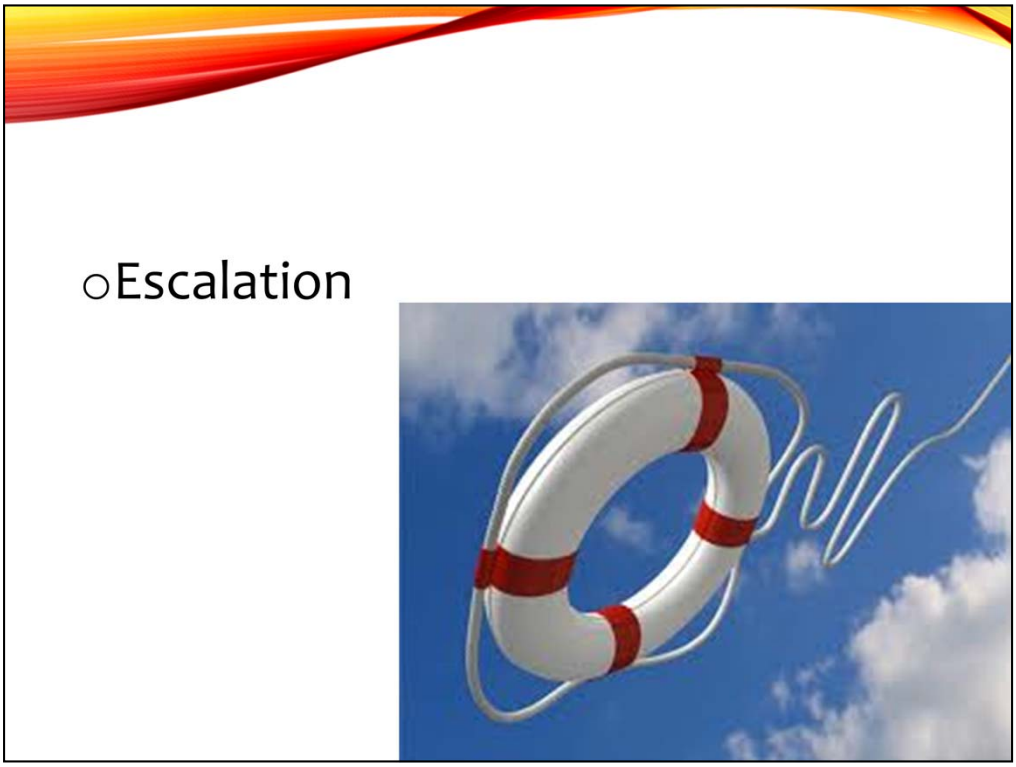
VERBAL BULLY

Typically in our industry we set limits and then exceed them – great example is with Top Thrill Dragster. Then along came Kingda Ka!

How do we set and keep limits with people and when is it appropriate?

- Must fit your facility / brand
- Must be incorporated into training
    - Different levels for different employees perhaps

Dorney may be a better fit……..



Can’t be logical when emotional – some may 2 or 3 or 10 people

Escalates beyond you…now what?

Do not simply drop people at the gate?

- Security Involvement
  - Internal
  - External

What are the short cuts out of the facility?

What does the process of exiting the property look like?

Who is involved and why?

- Post Event
  - Employee Debriefing
  - Documentation

Post Event debrief – did wells and do betters

PTSD

But think about in the moment of the event as well – do you move people to a new location or send them home, etc?

Written and Retained

Technology

Follow Up

GR Log

- Looks for stats
- Frequent flyers
- Watch Out For

QUESTIONS???

SHARE YOUR BEST PRACTICES….

- LWoodburn@hersheypa.com
- JRobertston@hersheypa.com

Thank you for your participation!