OSCE stations for mental health nursing: de-escalation

OSCE stations for mental health nursing: verbal de-escalation uses calm communication, personal space and help from colleagues to reduce distress and avoid confrontation. Use this original practice checklist with your course guidance and supervised skills teaching.

Numbered practice steps

1. Check immediate safety, exits and how to summon help before approaching. Keep personal space, avoid blocking an exit and identify yourself calmly when safe. Ask how the person wants to be addressed; confirm identity and explain your role without crowding or delaying urgent help.
2. Check the environment, exits and how to summon help. Keep a safe distance and avoid trapping the person or placing yourself where you cannot leave.
3. Let a suitable staff member lead the conversation. Speak slowly with a calm tone, introduce yourself and ask what is upsetting the person.
4. Acknowledge the feeling without arguing or threatening. Keep sentences simple, allow time to answer and avoid unexpected touch or crowding.
5. Offer realistic choices such as a quieter space if safe. Consider pain, fear, communication difficulty, intoxication or illness and seek an appropriate clinical assessment.
6. If danger increases, withdraw to safety and call trained help. Afterwards document triggers, what helped and any injuries or care needs for the team.
7. Close by checking understanding, ensuring comfort and cleaning your hands and equipment as appropriate. Document findings and hand over any unresolved safety concern to the supervising practitioner.

Common omissions

Trying to win an argument can increase tension. A quiet space must not become a trapped space. Do not demonstrate restraint, threaten sedation or exceed your training in a communication station.

Try an original practice task

Practise with a partner who is frustrated about waiting. Ask the observer to notice your distance, voice and choices, then repeat using less language and more listening.

These steps support learning, rather than authorising independent treatment. Follow your school's task and local policy; ask for help when a decision exceeds your competence.

Related nursing practice

Return to mental nursing OSCE practice or use the full checklist directory.

For a related communication exercise, try the de-escalation practice station. Its task and clinical setting may differ from this checklist.

Common questions

Is this a school marking sheet?

No. This is an original learning checklist. Your school sets the task and assessment criteria.

Can I print this checklist?

Yes. Use the PDF download on this page for practice.

Sources

- NMC: The Code
- NICE NG10: violence and aggression

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.