

Counter-intuitive strategies.

- Give a bear hug
- Diversion – re-direct to a preferred activity
- Non-contingent reinforcement density.

When confronted by a student who is becoming or has become aggressive, or does not following a direction, remember the key points:

- your own safety – keep well back – at least two (2) metres if there is any likelihood that the student might hit, kick, spit, at you; stand or sit to an angle of about 45 degrees; only sit if you are physically safe; be ready to move out of the way as needed – there are no prizes for martyrs
- do not try to help the student to stand up as this is when staff can experience joint and back injuries
- clear the space of people and equipment as much as possible
- call the 'puzzle piece is missing' code
- if you are not managing the situation, do not stand around or go through the space
- always be alert to things happening around you and keep clear if you come upon something that might not be safe
- do not interfere if you are not managing the situation
- speak in a clear, non-provocative manner, remembering that a heightened person is unable to choose or process language at their usual level
- use communication supports e.g. symbol cards even with students who usually speak as they may not be able to speak when heightened
- try to work out if the student is motivated by fear or frustration or manipulation or intimidation.

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