

## Considerations in assessment of agitation

Remember to call for  
security/support staff as needed

|                       |                                                                  |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Past History          | Review Medical & Behavioral History; Current Medications         |
| Reasons for agitation | Identify the Reason for Behaviors; Identify Triggers & Interests |
| Environment           | Implement Safety & Therapeutic Interventions                     |
| Social                | Review Caregiver Supports, Consents                              |
| Severity              | Assess Severity & Plan Response                                  |

### Severity of Agitation (consider baseline and developmental level)

| MILD                                                                  | MODERATE                                                   | SEVERE                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Subtle behaviors such as fidgeting, pacing, irritability, fixed state | Raising voice, yelling, non-redirectable, defensive stance | Combative, imminent risk to self or others, speech pressured or rambling |

## Agitation de-escalation strategies

| Verbal Strategies                            | Language                                               |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Ask patient & caregiver what helps.          | "What has worked in the past?"                         |
| Set expectations and consequences            | "If you are having a hard time being safe, we will..." |
| Offer forced choices                         | "Would you like to do X or Y?"                         |
| Redirection/Distractions                     | "What else could we do?"                               |
| Listening to their perception of the problem | "Tell me if I have this right..."                      |
| Build empathy: validate their experience     | "What you are going through is difficult               |
| Behavioral Strategies                        | Tips                                                   |
| Use one voice & give simple instructions     | Ensure the team is on the same page                    |
| Reward cooperation and praise                | Catch and reward when displaying expected behaviors    |
| Maintain space & consider body language      | At least two arms-length distance. Calm demeanor.      |
| Minimize stimulation                         | Dim lights, reduce noise. Minimize staff (1-2)         |
| Consider soothing sensory tools              | Child life consult, offer food/items of comfort        |