



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PROJECT
CORNERSTONE**
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

ONE Escalation and De-escalation Skits

The skits work like this: Each skit is written in two versions, the escalation version and the de-escalation version. They cover the same situation, which is paraphrased at the top of each skit. You will need two students to enact each version, so four students total for each skit. You will need to cut each skit into four scripts, keeping the escalation versions together and de-escalation versions together. It helps to use a highlighter (for example, highlight all A lines on one half of the script, then all B lines on the other half of the script) to help the students know which one to read.

Write on a white board, "We are in control of our own responses". Start the discussion by listing what is in their *UPstander toolbox*. Review tools from all 3 ABC years. (*standing tall, agree with the hook, laugh at the hook, ignore the hook, swim in another part of the sea, distract the hook, support target, do not spread rumors, tell a trusted adult, fill our buckets, invite and include others, use healthy talk, etc.*)

Then draw an escalator to visualize how conversations can either escalate (get hot) or de-escalate (stay cool). A thermometer could be used as well. List the following characteristics of both escalating and de-escalation conversations for the students to reference in the debrief after each skit:

Escalation Say and Do: (intonation, body language, words)

- "In your face" body language
- Angry tone of voice
- *Put-downs*
- Snap judgments
- Refuse to consider the other person's point of view
- *Bucket dipping* words or actions

De-escalation Say and Do: (ABC tools)

- Deep breaths before speaking
- "I" message (about your feelings, not blaming anyone else)
- Relaxed body language
- Calm tone of voice
- Listening to the person who is upset
- *Steps to a real apology*
- Walking away, *telling and making a report*, or getting help
- *Use your lid*
- *THINK* before you act

It helps to have two ABC parents in room doing this exercise. One person to pick pairs of students, hand out scripts and read the paraphrase. One to guide the skits and lead the discussion.

Choose two students; give them the escalation versions, then read out loud to the class the paraphrase of the situation first. Have the two students come to front of class and perform skit (tell them they can involve all the escalation intonation, body language, and words if they like). Ask everyone if they can pick out how the conversation was an escalation. What were the clues?

Then choose two different students, give them the de-escalation version of same situation, re-read paraphrase of situation, then have them come to front of class and perform skit (they can use de-escalation body language, intonation and words if they like). Ask everyone if they can pick out how the conversation was a de-escalation and if they can pick out the various *UPstander tools* utilized.

SKIT #1: A and B are friends, but B played with C at lunch recess. A is feeling sad about being left out.

a – Why did you play with her? (Escalation)
b – Sometimes I like to play with different people.
a – Fine! Then, you're not invited to my birthday party!
b – I don't care! I didn't want to go anyhow.
a – I was only inviting you because my mom said I had to invite everyone!
b – Whatever! I don't want to be your friend!
a – Fine! We're not friends anymore!
(Angry tone of voice, *put-downs*, body language)

a – Why did you play with her?
b – Sometimes I like to play with different people.
a – Fine! Then, you're not invited to my birthday party!
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a – I was only inviting you because my mom said I had to invite everyone!
b – Whatever! I don't want to be your friend!
a – Fine! We're not friends anymore!
(Angry tone of voice, *put-downs*, body language)

a – Why did you play with her? (De-escalation)
b – Sometimes I like to play with different people.
a – I was just kind of sad cause I thought we were going to do jump rope today.
b – Oh, sorry. How about tomorrow?
a – Sure. Promise?
b – Promise!
(*"I" message*, use your *lid*, deep breaths, apology, calm tone of voice)

a – Why did you play with her?
b – Sometimes I like to play with different people.
a – I was just kind of sad cause I thought we were going to do jump rope today.
b – Oh, sorry. How about tomorrow?
a – Sure. Promise?
b – Promise!
(*"I" message*, use your *lid*, deep breaths, apology, calm tone of voice)

SKIT #2: B borrowed money from A one week ago for Friday ice cream, and B hasn't paid A back yet. A decides to ask again today.

a – Hey, are you ever going to pay me back for the ice cream? (Escalation)

b – I never borrowed money from you.

A – Yes, you did! For ice cream last week.

B – I don't remember that.

A – You better give me my money back!

B – How can I give you money when I don't owe you any?

A – I'm going to tell everyone you steal!

B – Well, then I'm going to tell everyone you're a liar!

(Angry tone of voice, body language, *bucket dipper* words)

a – Hey, are you ever going to pay me back for the ice cream?

b – I never borrowed money from you.

A – Yes, you did! for ice cream last week.

B – I don't remember that.

A – You better give me my money back!

B – How can I give you money when I don't owe you any?

A – I'm going to tell everyone you steal!

B – Well, then I'm going to tell everyone you're a liar!

(Angry tone of voice, body language, *bucket dipper* words)

A – Hey, did you remember to bring me the 50 cents from last week? (De-escalation)

B – For what?

A – Ice cream.

B – I don't remember that.

A – Yeah, you borrowed money to get a popsicle.

B- I don't think I did.

A – You honestly don't remember?

B – No, I don't.

A – Ok. But I know you did, and I can't loan you money anymore. (Walk away)

(*THINK*, calm tone of voice, walk away, realize some friends aren't worth it, could talk to their mom or dad as well)

A – Hey, did you remember to bring me the 50 cents from last week?

B – For what?

A – Ice cream.

B – I don't remember that.

A – Yeah, you borrowed money to get a popsicle.

B- I don't think I did.

A – You honestly don't remember?

B – No, I don't.

A – Ok. but I know you did, and I can't loan you money anymore. (walk away)

(*THINK* calm tone of voice, walk away, realize some friends aren't worth it, could talk to their mom or dad as well)

SKIT #3: A and B are friends. A is last in the lunch line. B cuts in line. This happens a lot, and A is not very happy about it.

a – You cut. (Escalation)
b – Did not.
a – Yes you did! You always cut.
b – What? I do not always cut!
a – I bet your mom cuts in line at the grocery store.
b – Oh yeah? Well you're slow!
a – You better not eat lunch by me anymore!
b – I wouldn't eat lunch by you if you were the last person on the planet!
(*Bucket dipper words, put-downs, tone of voice, body language*)

a – You cut.
b – Did not.
a – Yes you did! You always cut.
b – What? I do not always cut!
a – I bet your mom cuts in line at the grocery store.
b – Oh yeah? Well you're slow!
a – You better not eat lunch by me anymore!
b – I wouldn't eat lunch by you if you were the last person on the planet!
(*Bucket dipper, put-downs, tone of voice, body language*)

a – You cut. (De-escalation)
b – Did not.
a – Yes you did. You always cut.
b – Well, I guess I do, but I'm sooo hungry.
a – I'm hungry, too, you know? It bothers me when you cut because it's not fair.
b – Ok, I'll try not to cut in front of YOU anymore! (wink, smile, etc.)
(*"I" statement, agree with the hook, laugh at the hook*)

a – You cut.
b – Did not.
a – Yes you did. You always cut.
b – Well, I guess I do, but I'm sooo hungry.
a – I'm hungry, too, you know? It bothers me when you cut because it's not fair.
b – Ok, I'll try not to cut in front of YOU anymore! (wink, smile, etc.)
(*"I" statement, agree with the hook, laugh at the hook*)

SKIT #4: A and B are in different classes. They're playing tetherball at lunch recess.

a – You're out! (Escalation)
b– No, I'm not! that was still good!
a– No, it wasn't! you're cheating!
b – No, you're the cheater!
Push each other
(Body Language, angry tone, *bucket dipper* words)

a – You're out!
b– No, I'm not! that was still good!
a– No, it wasn't! you're cheating!
b – No, you're the cheater!
Push each other
(Body Language, angry tone, *bucket dipper* words)

a – You're out! (De-escalation)
b – No, I don't think so. I think I'm still in.
a – No, you're cheating!
b – Ok, whatever. I'm going to get the yard duty.
(walk away, *tell and make a report*, get help)

a – You're out!
b – No, I don't think so. I think I'm still in.
a – No, you're cheating!
b – Ok, whatever. I'm going to get the yard duty.
(walk away, *tell and make a report*, get help)

SKIT #5: A and B are friends, but A is bossy.

A – Hey, give me the purple hula hoop, that one’s mine. (Escalation)
B – No, I got it first.
A – No, It’s mine. You use the red one.
B – You’re so bossy! I’m using it today!
A – Hey, don’t you call me bossy! You’re bossy! You can’t tell me what to do!
B – No, you can’t tell me what to do! You always try to boss everyone around!
(Angry tone of voice, *put-downs*, body language)

A – Hey, give me the purple hula hoop, that one’s mine.
B – No, I got it first.
A – No, It’s mine. You use the red one.
B – You’re so bossy! I’m using it today!
A – Hey, don’t you call me bossy! You’re bossy! You can’t tell me what to do!
B – No, you can’t tell me what to do! You always try to boss everyone around!
(Angry tone of voice, *put-downs*, body language)

A – Hey, give me the purple hula hoop, that one’s mine. (De-escalation)
B – Oh sure, it’s yours.
A –Ok, it’s not really mine, but I like it best.
B – I would really like to have a turn with it, and then I’ll give it back to you, ok? I just want to try the same tricks you can do.
A – well, ok, I guess so.
(*Agree with the hook, "I" statement, bucket filling*)

A – Hey, give me the purple hula hoop, that one’s mine.
B – Oh sure, it’s yours.
A – Ok, it’s not really mine, but I like it best.
B – I would really like to have a turn with it, and then I’ll give it back to you, ok?? I just want to try the same tricks you can do.
A – Well, ok, I guess so.
(*Agree with the hook, "I" statement, bucket filling*)

SKIT #6: A and B are long time friends who spend a lot of time together. A overheard some girls talking about something she told B in secret. A is upset that her secret was told.

A – I’m never talking to you ever again! (Escalation)
b – Whoa! What are you talking about?
A – You told everyone about the accident! It was supposed to be a secret!
B – I didn’t tell anyone! Maybe they saw it, too!
A – You’re lying! I can’t trust you with anything!
B – Stop being such a crybaby! You’re such a crybaby!
A – Well, what a great friend you are! We’re done!

A – I’m never talking to you ever again!
b – Whoa! What are you talking about?
A – You told everyone about the accident! It was supposed to be a secret!
B – I didn’t tell anyone! Maybe they saw it, too!
A – You’re lying! I can’t trust you with anything!
B – Stop being such a crybaby! You’re such a crybaby!
A – Well, what a great friend you are! We’re done!

(De-escalation)
A – I heard those girls over there talking about my accident. Did you tell them?
B – No, I didn’t. I didn’t say anything.
A – I’m really upset that people know about my accident. It’s so embarrassing.
B – I know you’re upset. But I really didn’t tell anyone.
A – Well, then, who would have told them?!
B – (Take deep breath) I don’t know who. But I didn’t tell them. I’m sorry you’re so upset.
Come on, let’s go does something fun.
(Agree with the hook, bucket filling, "I" message)

A – I heard those girls over there talking about my accident. Did you tell them?
B – No, I didn’t. I didn’t say anything.
A – I’m really upset that people know about my accident. It’s so embarrassing.
B – I know you’re upset. But I really didn’t tell anyone.
A – Well, then, who would have told them?!
B – (Take deep breath) I don’t know who. But I didn’t tell them. I’m sorry you’re so upset.
Come on, let’s go do something fun.
(Agree with the hook, bucket filling, "I" message)