Deadlines. Health issues. Money issues. Misunderstandings. Life can be stressful. When not dealt with appropriately, stressful situations can boil over. Health and safety champions can help unit-based teams identify potentially violent encounters before they occur and manage them if they do.

If you find yourself in a potentially escalating situation, remember to:

» Use a calm voice and maintain eye contact.
» Empathize: “I understand you are frustrated.”
» Leave a door open. Maintain a safe distance: “Let’s sit down to talk this over.”
» Be respectful. Ask instead of tell: “Please, can you tell me what’s wrong?”
» Give options, not threats: “Can we take a quick break while I get some information for you?”

NOTE: If you are feeling threatened or the situation continues to escalate, leave the area and contact your supervisor or security. For all emergencies call 911. Defer to the rules for your department or facility.