TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

We often forget the role that body language plays in communication. Nonverbal cues are especially crucial when dealing with a person who is upset and potentially violent.

UNDERSTANDING NONVERBAL MESSAGES

Pay attention to signs that a person is angry or frightened. These include:

- Trembling.
- Sweating.
- A red face.
- Crossed arms.
- Clenched jaw or fists.
- Shallow breathing.
- Glaring or avoiding eye contact.
- Pacing the floor.
- Sneering.
- Crying.

SEND THE RIGHT NONVERBAL MESSAGES

Don't get too close. An angry or upset person feels threatened by someone who stands too close. Give the person two to four feet of distance from you.

Avoid:

- Glaring or staring.
- Threatening mannerisms, such as having clenched fists and a raised voice.
- Getting angry.

Taken from "Preventing Workplace Violence," Parley International.

REMAIN CALM. LISTEN TO THE VISITOR BUT REMAIN FIRM. DO NOT INDICATE ANY THREAT TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

Visually inspect the individual for a weapon. A planned "keyword" may need to be arranged to indicate the need to call the Sheriff's Department

As soon as the conversation or actions of the individual become threatening, call 911 and request that Sheriff's Department respond. A preplanned "keyword" may be arranged with a co-worker alerting them to call the Sheriff's Department.

Remain calm.

- Be courteous and confident.
- Keep distance between you and the visitor.
- Do not touch the individual.
- Protect yourself at all times.
- **Don't become a victim.**

- Find another staff member to join you or keep the meeting in an open area.

- Listen to the visitor, giving him or her the opportunity to vent.

- Remain firm but calm when communicating with the visitor.

- Do not indicate any threat to the individual, either through body language or verbal communication.

- Do not disregard the person's opinion or blame the person.

Attempt to be helpful. Use phrases such as:

-"What can we do to make this better?"
-"I understand the problem and I am concerned."
-"We need to work together on this problem."

- As soon as the conversation or actions of the individual become threatening, call 911 and request that Sheriff's Department respond. A planned "keyword" may be arranged with a co-worker to alert them to call the Sheriff's Department.

- Without touching, visually inspect the person looking for suspicious bulges or any other indication of a weapon.

- If the Sheriff's Department is called notify the District Office.

- When scheduling a meeting with a known aggressive individual, arrange for another staff member to be present or for the Safe School Officer to be in the office.