

De-escalation Guide



What's your Role?

Your Role: Be Elite

Being Elite is Being: Strong • Calm • Caring • In Control

Remember: It's OK to be emotional—it's an emotional game. Your job is to channel emotion, not add to it.

Identify Your Priority

Before responding, ask: "What's my priority right now?"

| Safety | Game Flow | Sporting Respect |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Physical/verbal threats | Game delays, schedule | How people treat each other |
| Immediate intervention | Keep play moving | We disagree respectfully |
| Firm boundaries | Brief, direct action | Model respect for kids |

If **safety** is at risk → act faster and firmer.

If **game flow** or **sporting respect** is the issue → you still act, but can try a short de-escalation step first.

Stop Play. Slow it Down.

When tension rises:

1. **Take a breath** – Reset yourself first
2. **Remember the purpose** – Safe, respectful experience for kids
3. Work in **pairs**.
4. Walk up **calmly**, at an angle, not chest-to-chest.
5. Keep **hands visible**, body relaxed, voice low and steady.
6. Show **empathy** and **respect** for their feeling.

Use CARE

The CARE Method

Use this 4-step script during tense moments:

C – Context

Name what's happening around them

- *"Coach, it's a one-possession game and every call feels huge right now."*
- *"I can see this game really matters for the bracket."*
- "Coach, this has been an intense game and emotions are high."
- "Player, that was a tough moment late in the game."

A – Acknowledge

Reflect emotion without arguing

- *"You're frustrated because you want a fair shot for your kids."*
- *"You're anxious about how this impacts advancement."*
- "You're upset because you think your child was treated unfairly."
- "You're angry at yourself for that mistake."

R – Refocus

Bring attention back to kids, safety, game flow, sporting respect

- *"The officials need space to work; the kids need us to model composure."*
- "Right now we need to keep this gym safe and respectful."
- "Right now the kids need adults modeling composure."
- "Right now we need to get the game moving again."

E – Execute

Give a clear next step or boundary

- *"I need you in the stands now; after the game I can explain the bracket."*
- "You need to step back to the bench and calm down."
- "You need to return to the stands and lower your voice."
- "If you want to talk more, we can do that after the game."

Removal

If they **comply** → Thank them briefly and move on.

If they **do not comply** → move to removal

State the Removal Clearly (No Debate)

Use a calm, firm, short script:

- **Coach:**

“Coach, your behavior has crossed the line of sporting respect. You need to leave the gym for the rest of this game. If you do not leave, the game will not continue.”

- **Parent/Spectator:**

“Your behavior is no longer acceptable in this gym. You need to leave the facility immediately. If you do not leave, we will stop the game and involve site leadership/security.”

- **Player:**

“Your behavior is unacceptable for this event. You are done for this game. Go to the locker area / designated space and stay with your coach or parent.”

Key points:

- Do not argue the details of the call or complaint.
- Repeat the removal direction once if needed, using the same words.
- Keep your tone calm, low, and professional.

Involve Backup if Needed

If the person refuses to leave:

- Signal or call site director / security / association rep as pre-planned.
- Keep your distance, avoid physical contact.
- Focus on safety first; you can sort out details later.

If the situation does not resolve, call 911.

Quick CARE Scenarios

Coach got heated during a close game

Priority: Game flow + sporting respect

"Coach, every call feels huge right now [Context]. You want a fair shot for your kids [Acknowledge]. Right now, your players need your voice on the next play [Refocus]. We'll finish this game and talk after the buzzer [Execute]."

A parent is loud about the bracket

Priority: Sporting respect

"This game really matters for your team [Context]. You're anxious about advancement [Acknowledge]. Players need a calm sideline and respectful voices [Refocus]. After the game, I'll walk you through the bracket; for now, please return to the stands [Execute]."

A player is upset on the bench

Priority: Sporting respect

"That play was tough [Context]. You're upset about that mistake [Acknowledge]. Your teammates need you to show them how to handle frustration with respect [Refocus]. Take a breath, grab water, then talk with your coach [Execute]."

Before, During, After

Before games:

- Clarify roles: who handles coaches, parents, and documentation
- Pregame contact with coaches (text/call OK) to set expectations

During games:

- Use CARE early before moments escalate
- Keep language calm, short, basketball-focused
- Remember: Safety → Game Flow → Sporting Respect

After tense moments:

- Document: time, teams, individuals, brief description, action taken
- Report to site director/MYAS as needed

Sporting Respect Definition

We will respect each other as players, coaches, officials, and fans, even when we don't completely agree. We can disagree without becoming disagreeable.

Being intentional is being purposeful, proud, and present.