

De-escalation Skills



APS professionals meet people in their homes, the community, and other locations to discuss allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. That doesn't come without dynamics that can be challenging for all involved. This course will discuss practical tools to utilize in tense situations to help APS professionals keep their interactions calmer and productive as well as recognize when it's best to leave an unsafe situation. Participants will explore ways that APS professionals can maintain their professionalism in difficult situations and respond in ways that effectively address the underlying cause of someone escalating. Participants will leave with strategies to help diffuse conflict, which promotes their safety while improving outcomes with clients, alleged perpetrators, and collateral contacts.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this training, participants will be able to:

- Identify how an APS professional's self-awareness and interpersonal relationship skills can prevent a situation from escalating.
- Identify common activators that contribute to negative reactions and responses.
- Discuss techniques that can address specific behaviors and ease agitation.
- Explain signs that a situation may not be safely de-escalated.

Meet the Trainer

Ruth MacKenzie

Ruth MacKenzie brings over 30 years of experience in social services, with a career spanning frontline work to systems leadership. She began in group homes while earning her degrees, later serving eight years in Child Protective Services as a social worker and supervisor.

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VIRTUAL EVENT

Cohort 1:

Date: Oct. 28, 2025

Time: 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Cohort 2:

Date: Nov. 20, 2025

Time: 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

This course will be conducted remotely through **Zoom**. A link will be sent to the participants a week before training.



REGISTRATION

Please register through your respective county's training process.

The registration due date for this training is Mon. October 20, 2025



AUDIENCE

This training is intended for new and experienced line staff who interview clients and collaterals, provide risk assessments, develop service plans and/or provide case management service.

Ruth went on to lead outreach, grant writing, and program development for homeless services before shifting her focus to older adults through APS, IHSS, and the PA/PG/PC. With master's degrees in Social Work and Public Policy & Administration, Ruth is grounded in the belief that authentic, meaningful relationships are at the core of all social service roles. Her guiding principle: our first task—no matter the role—is always care.



Virtual Training Protocol

- Download or update the most recent version of Zoom
- Please log in 5 to 10 minutes prior to the workshop to allow for troubleshooting, if needed
- It is highly recommended to use a headset for this workshop, as participants will be asked to participate in group discussions and small break-out groups
- Use "Computer Audio" for optimal experience
- If you have access to a functioning camera, we ask that you turn it on for the full duration of the workshop as it offers a more conducive learning experience
- If you are planning to log on to the training using two separate devices (one for audio, one for video), please be sure to mute one of the devices to prevent any audio feedback
- Please be sure your screen name is your first and last name in Zoom. Learners who are not able to identify themselves within the first 15 minutes of training, and remain unresponsive after the moderator has attempted to make contact via chat or verbally multiple times will need to be removed from the training session
- Please refer to the "[Virtual Learning Tips](#)" handout for additional information on how to update your Zoom screen name, etc.

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