

Aggression Management for Higher Education

The Aggression Management system has been developed by John Byrnes and illustrated in his book *Beyond Conflict: Preventing Aggressive Behavior* (2002). Aggression Management has been used in many institutions including the US Army, NASA, the US Postal Service and various educational and healthcare organizations, colleges and universities.

Byrnes proposes that there are two types of aggression, primal and cognitive. Primal aggression is defined by adrenaline driven physical changes, while cognitive aggression is defined by intent driven strategic and tactical planning. Byrnes has hypothesized that by teaching university faculty, staff and students to recognize both types of aggression incidents such as Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University may be avoided. He calls this framework Aggression Management. While his framework is useful for spotting these extreme types of aggressive behavior, they are also useful in addressing “everyday” aggression which occurs more frequently in higher education.

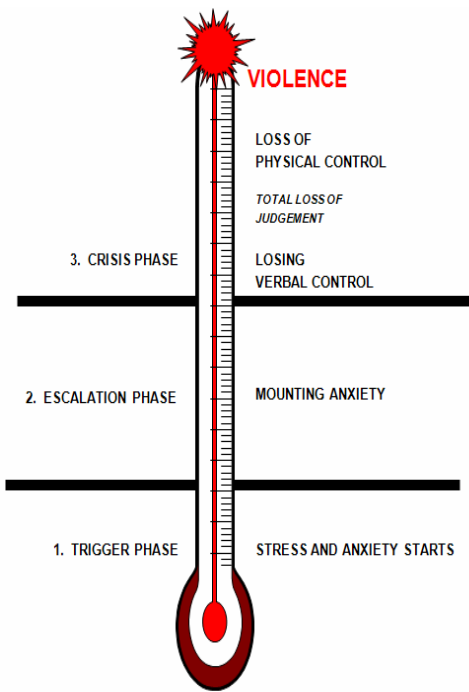
The system can be taught in a 1-2 day workshop setting, online training available for RA’s or half day introductory workshops. The training is useful for any department which comes in contact with aggressive individuals (parking and transportation, registrar, financial services, residential life, judicial affairs, police, health and counseling services, intramural sports, athletics...)

Understanding Aggression Management

The Aggression Management Model is built upon a three-phase continuum (illustrated on the back page) intended to identify and explain how people move through the phases of aggression, with a particular focus on cognitive aggression. The three phases of the Aggression Continuum include the Trigger Phase, the Escalation Phase and the Crisis Phase.

The **trigger phase** is characterized by the experience of stress and anxiety by an individual. It should be noted that humans experience the trigger phase on an almost daily basis but are able to cope with the feelings aroused. The **escalation phase** occurs when the stress goes beyond the individual’s ability to endure. During this stage an individual’s body language, behavior and the level of verbal aggression increase. Byrnes proposed that it is here the individual enters primal aggression with the goal of intimidating the opposition. The **crisis phase** is characterized by a loss of three things: verbal control, judgment, and physical control. The end result may be an act of violence. Since violence may well be the outcome of the crisis phase it is imperative that college personnel learn to assess threats before they reach this stage.

In addition to the three phases of aggression Byrnes has proposed that the phases are overlaid by nine levels of a continuum that sustains cognitive and primal aggression. The system also illustrates 7 types of aggressive behavior which are more passive in nature (the Sherman Tank, the Sniper, the Clam, the Exploder, the Negativist, the Bulldozer and the Complainer) and how to better manage these people away from their aggression.



THE ARTS OF AGGRESSION MANAGEMENT®

The Art of Being Prepared™- This is a critical step in the process of Aggression Management. The chain of events that lead from conflict to an explosive and violent incident are traced, and the individual triggers are identified. This will permit workshop participants to recognize the sources and early signs of impending aggression so they can first prevent and if necessary defuse a situation in its earliest stages. Intervention Team Members are introduced to the most common personality traits in potentially troublesome individuals and how they manifest themselves in the higher education environment. The elements of a plan and the tools at your disposal are reviewed, and your best solutions are identified.

The Art of Persuasion™- Workshop participants learn about both verbal and nonverbal communications and how to interpret the aggressor's messages. The skills needed to communicate effectively in order to prevent or defuse potentially explosive situations are taught. Intervention Team Members will learn how to best convince an aggressor that their

suggested course of action is in the aggressor's best interest. They will learn how the Primal and Cognitive Aggression Continua are linked to their corresponding effective solutions to best prevent or diffuse aggression.

The Art of Safe Escape™- The importance of a safe environment is noted and the tools to effect an escape-friendly environment are described. The workshop participants learn how to work closely with fellow staff, faculty and students, designing signals and codes for immediate communications in potentially difficult situations. Position assessment is reviewed, and the steps to prepare for a safe escape, including exit identification, are covered.

Contact Information: <http://www.aggressionmanagement.com/>

Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D.
Perry Francis, Ed.D.
John Byrnes, Founder

brian.vanbrunt@wku.edu
pfrancis@emich.edu
johnbyrnes@aggressionmanagement.com

603-491-3215
734.487.4410
407-718-5637

The Un-Magnificent Seven

			
Sherman Tank	The Sniper	The Exploder	The Complainer
			
The Negativist	The Clam	The Bulldozer	

www.AggressionManagement.com
© Center for Aggression Management 2008, All Rights Reserved