



APPLYING AGGRESSION MANAGEMENT® SOLUTIONS IN THE SPORT, LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES

To understand the application and benefits of Aggression Management® Solutions within the Sport, Leisure & Entertainment Industries it is essential to illustrate two things.

We must:

- 1) Make the distinction between assertive behavior and aggressive behavior.
- 2) Understand where and how aggression begins.

Assertive behavior says, “I am going to win because I’m going to be the best that I can be”, whereas *aggressive behavior* says, “I am going to win because I’m going to take you out!” We teach assertive skills within law enforcement and if officers can transact their duties in an assertive way then so can athletes. In 1998, Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa epitomized two individuals who were assertive in their objectives. After waning attendance over a baseball strike, these two assertive individuals got the American public behind them and brought the game of baseball out of its declining popularity. Yet we have boxers biting off ears, basketball players choking their coaches and other baseball players spitting in referees’ faces. This is inappropriate and aggressive behavior and it must be addressed not only by the athletes, but also by those who work and play alongside athletes. It is my contention that when a coach or a manager tells a subordinate to “go out and be aggressive” and subsequently that subordinate become overtly aggressive resulting in people becoming injured; that coach or manager will ultimately be seen as culpable.

It is also important to understand that aggression begins when any individual becomes unable to cope with their anxiety. At this juncture, the mind perceives this anxiety as a threat and the body responds by producing the fuel to aggression: adrenaline. Thus begins a spiral of aggression that can, all too often, result in violence. As spectators observe their favorite players conducting themselves in an aggressive way, they too become aggressive in the stands, especially when these elements are exacerbated with the introduction of alcohol. Contemporary research in the field of “mirror neurons” has demonstrated that individuals watching an action movie experience to some degree the same fear and aggression as if they were actually experiencing that action. Whether athletes, spectators, vendors, participants in gaming establishments or worker-on-worker aggression, the Sport, Leisure & Entertainment Industries provide a prime setting for potential aggression.

As we look at conventional means of managing aggression, we see topics like Conflict Resolution and Anger Management, which are not working!

Conflict Resolution presupposes conflict; you are already reacting, you are already past any opportunity to **prevent** aggression. If we are only trained to respond when two individuals are in conflict (nose-to-nose) eventually we will get someone who does not communicate verbally but instead communicates physically and “out of nowhere” they strike out; worst yet they may have a weapon and they may decide to use it. Indeed, a few years ago in a Detroit gambling establishment, an off-duty police officer expressed his anxiety/conflict at one of the gaming tables by pulling out his weapon and shooting himself in the head in front of hordes of horrified patrons.

Anger Management does not adhere to the axiom: “if you can measure it, you can manage it”. The problem with Anger Management is that we all measure anger differently and therefore experience and express it differently. There is no common denominator or metric for us to measure anger.

Aggression Management® Solutions, incorporated those skills needed to identify and measure the emergence of aggression, foresee the possibility of conflict thereby enabling them to effectively persuade an individual away from their escalating aggression. For a further understanding of Aggression Management® Solutions please visit www.AggressionManagement.com then select Aon in the left panel.