

Handling difficult situations

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Handling emergency

An **emergency situation** is the one in which there is a reasonable suspicion that the behaviour of a given person indicates that they suffer from a mental disorder and that they may directly threaten their own life or the life or health of other people.

In such a case, the ambulance and the police should be called (**tel. 112, 999, 997**). When submitting the notification, the forms of risk posed by the person should be highlighted.

In ambiguous situations, it is advisable to call the Crisis Intervention Center in Łódź (tel. 42 630 11 02 operating 24/7).

According to the provisions of The Mental Health Act

- A person whose behaviour indicates that due to mental disorders they may directly threaten their own life or the life or health of other people may be subjected to a psychiatric examination without their consent.
- The need to conduct the above-mentioned psychiatric examination is determined by a psychiatrist. If it is impossible to obtain the help of a psychiatrist, it can be decided by another doctor, e.g. by an emergency physician.
- If necessary, the doctor conducting the examination immediately orders the transfer of the examined person to the hospital.



Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Suicide attempts – DOs:

- Talk to the student face-to-face, ask openly about their feelings and plans associated with suicide. Persons experiencing suicidal thoughts respond well to interest shown to them;
- All suicide threats must be treated as a potential life menace;
- Treat a student's confession about planning a suicide as a cry for help – call an ambulance and stay with the student until its arrival;
- Be calm and express your readiness to help and concern about the student;
- Make sure that the student receives medical help – only the professional can judge a person's current mental condition and potential life risks;
- Advise to the student where they can receive support in the future (BON, Crisis Intervention Centre).

Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Suicide attempts – DON'Ts:

Do not downplay the situation by telling the student that actually they do not want to kill themselves;

Do not discuss the senselessness of taking one's own life or the morality of suicide;

Do not ask other students to take care of the colleague in subject;

Do not start any „therapeutic“ conversation with the student.

Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Weird, incomprehensible behaviour - DOs:

- If the student's behaviour is very disorganized or you are concerned about their health or the health of others - call the Ambulance;
- Talk to the student directly and specifically, focusing on the current situation;
- Express your concern about the student's behaviour and your belief that they need help;
- If you cannot understand what they are saying, ask for explanation;
- Pay attention to the student's feelings and fears, but do not confirm their untrue beliefs;
- Limit sensory stimulation (quiet other students, if you feel safe invite the student to another room);
- In such a situation the student may pose a potential threat to themselves and others because their perception of reality is distorted, and their behaviours result from irrational premises.

Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Weird, incomprehensible behaviour – DON'Ts:

Do not enter the student's intimate sphere, do not touch them, prevent other people from surrounding the student, as this may cause fear and an aggressive - defensive reaction;

Do not assume that the student, despite the symptoms, is able to take care of themselves;

Do not overwhelm the student with questions about the reasons for their strange behaviour;

Do not argue with the student's delusional beliefs;

Do not assume that the student will understand what you are saying;

Be flexible in your approach to the student;

Do not pursue a student who has decided to run away - report the incident to the police and to the university security services;

Do not ask other students to take care of their colleague.

Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Anxiety attack – DOs:

Talk to the student face-to-face;

Allow the student to talk about their feelings associated with fear – this enables reducing the anxiety and tension;

Provide safe and quiet space to the student until the symptoms subside;

Stay calm, speak clearly;

Convince the student that they need professional help in healing anxiety symptoms;

Recommend the Academic Support Centre as the place where the student can obtain information about a possibility of treatment.

Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

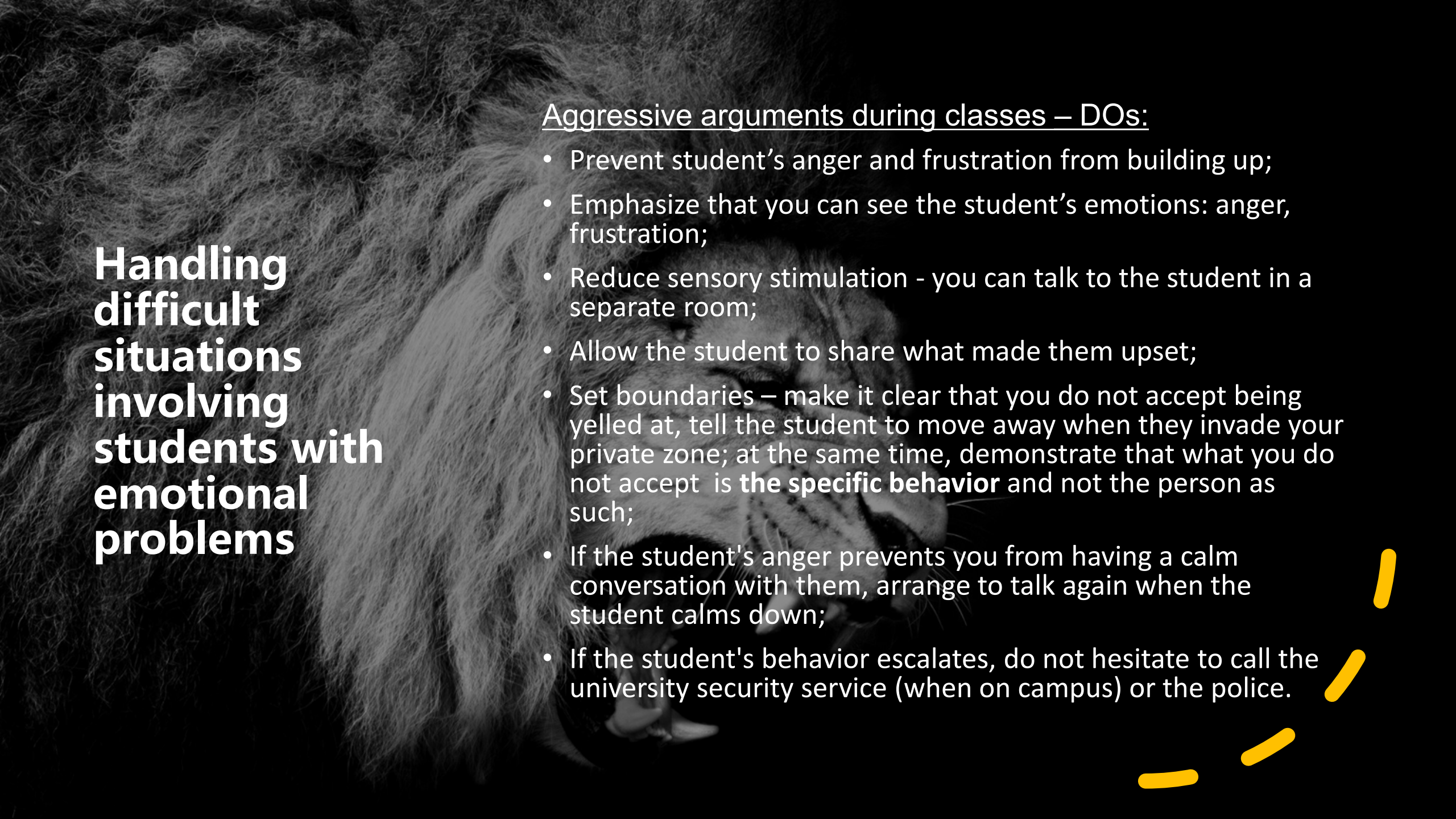
Anxiety attack – DON'Ts:

Do not question the student's irrational fear (e.g. of rodents or spiders);

Do not minimize the symptoms of anxiety experienced by the student;

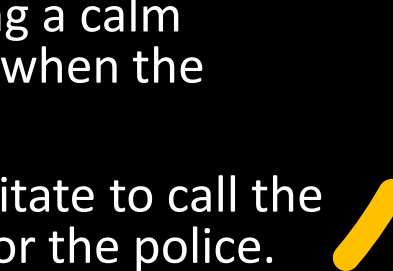
Do not convince the student that their symptoms do not require therapeutic intervention;

Do not overwhelm the student with too many ideas for resolving their situation.



Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Aggressive arguments during classes – DOs:

- Prevent student's anger and frustration from building up;
 - Emphasize that you can see the student's emotions: anger, frustration;
 - Reduce sensory stimulation - you can talk to the student in a separate room;
 - Allow the student to share what made them upset;
 - Set boundaries – make it clear that you do not accept being yelled at, tell the student to move away when they invade your private zone; at the same time, demonstrate that what you do not accept is **the specific behavior** and not the person as such;
 - If the student's anger prevents you from having a calm conversation with them, arrange to talk again when the student calms down;
 - If the student's behavior escalates, do not hesitate to call the university security service (when on campus) or the police.
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Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

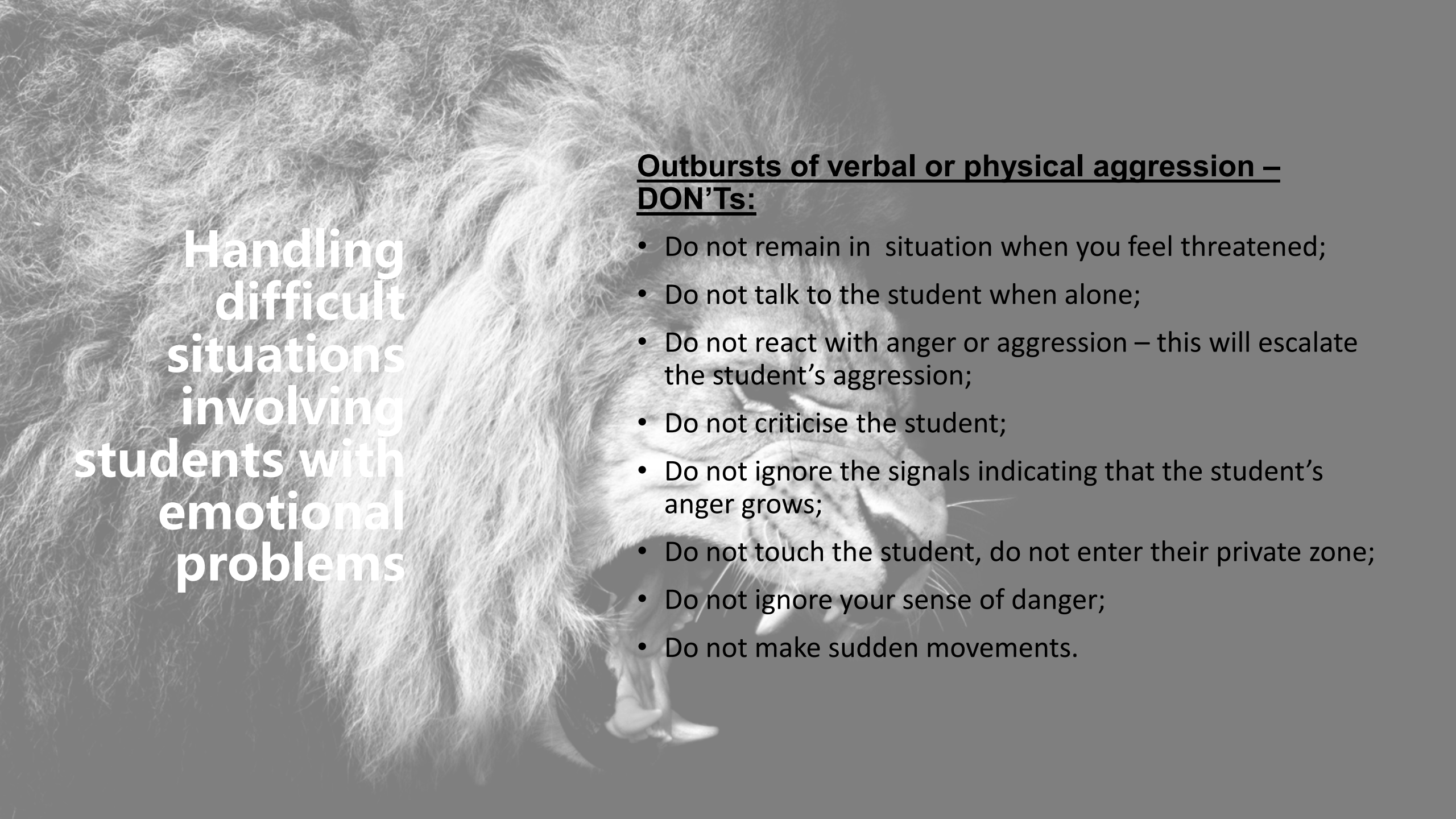
Aggressive arguments during classes – DON'Ts:

- Do not get involved in the argument, do not raise your voice;
- Do not act out of anger (do not try to shame or ridicule the student);
- Do not insist on explaining the reasons of the student's aggressive behaviour if the student is not willing to explain themselves;
- Do not touch the student. This might result in escalation of aggression.

Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Outbursts of verbal or physical aggression – Dos:

- Your safety first – when you feel threatened, call the University Security Service (when on campus) or the police (an indication are: direct verbal threats, threatening with weapon, breaking objects, direct physical threat to other persons);
- take care of other students' safety – order them to leave the room;
- if you decide you should stay with the student until security service arrives, stay in the open to provide an escape route for yourself;
- make sure to be assisted by at least one person from the university staff;
- stay calm – there is a chance that this will calm the student down;
- communicate to the student in a peaceful way what behaviours you do not accept;
- use plain language, express yourself clearly and precisely;
- Promise to the student that you will talk to them again, once they are calmer.



Handling difficult situations involving students with emotional problems

Outbursts of verbal or physical aggression – DON'Ts:

- Do not remain in situation when you feel threatened;
- Do not talk to the student when alone;
- Do not react with anger or aggression – this will escalate the student's aggression;
- Do not criticise the student;
- Do not ignore the signals indicating that the student's anger grows;
- Do not touch the student, do not enter their private zone;
- Do not ignore your sense of danger;
- Do not make sudden movements.

Useful phone numbers:

- Office for Students with Disabilities / Academic Support Centre of TUL

42 631 28 87

- University Security Service

42 631 29 07

- Lodz Crisis Intervention Centre

42 630 11 02