

Security SpotLight

An Informational Guide for Security Clients

What if...?

What if someone is determined not to cooperate or continues to be verbally aggressive?

- **Politely advise the person your supervisor will need to help him or her.**
- **Ask the person to wait and immediately call your supervisor.**
- **If your supervisor is not available, get help from your associates.**
- **Document the incident.**

If at any point you feel threatened, keep yourself and others safe from harm and immediately call for assistance.

*Integrity / Vigilance
Helpfulness*



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Staying Calm When Others Aren't

As part of your job, you might encounter employees and/or visitors who are upset, frustrated, angry, in a hurry, or outright rude. How you respond can influence the other individual's behavior and how, or if, the situation is resolved.

There is a difference between an upset customer and a difficult one. Generally, upset customers are fundamentally reasonable and rational. They are upset for a specific reason and will become reasonable and rational again once the specific problem is addressed. In contrast, difficult customers are "chronically crabby." They seemingly thrive on disruption and seek attention through negative behavior. It can be difficult to communicate with this type of customer as they will likely find new reasons to be upset when old ones are resolved.

Although it might be tempting to avoid the approach of a difficult customer or ignore the phone when the number of a known instigator appears on the caller ID, it is better not to and doing so might just increase their displeasure.

Encounters with difficult people can be challenging. However, a positive attitude and practice, can help you develop the skills needed to calm them and manage the situation effectively.

Creating Calm Amid Conflict

The first step in successfully dealing with a difficult person is to manage your own behavior. There are many reasons why difficult people behave negatively. Among other things, they could be tired, frustrated or stressed. While you can't control behavior or attitude of others, you can adjust

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Challenging Encounters

Your ability to remain calm and nonconfrontational can greatly influence the outcome of a challenging encounter. Your attitude and behavior can either intensify the situation or help to peacefully resolve it.

your own to avoid contributing to their negative disposition.

Positive body language projects a helpful attitude. Maintain a facial expression that is neutral and focused, and communicates interest and a willingness to help. Don't roll your eyes or smirk since these can be interpreted as insulting. Demonstrate a confident and attentive body posture by standing or sitting up straight. Make direct eye contact and project a non-threatening, open demeanor.

Attitude is not only reflected through body language, but also in tone of voice. Be sure your inflection communicates: "I'm here to help as best I can." Avoid sighing as it often suggests annoyance or impatience. Speaking calmly with an even tone will help you sound confident and competent. People often respond more to **how** you say something than to **what** you say.

Managing Disruptive People

The first objective in effectively interacting with difficult people is to calm them. Maintain a respectful attitude that conveys a willingness to help and practice active listening. Active listening means you are focused on what the other person is saying. You should avoid talking when they are speaking and you should avoid distractions so you can concentrate on what the other person is saying.

Some individuals may not respond to your initial attempts to calm them down. They might become verbally aggressive and approach you with a flurry of demands and harsh words. Remain courteous and in control.

- Do not try to "out shout" the difficult person.
- Do not interrupt—sometimes the best response is to let the person "vent." When the person pauses, use active listening skills to guide the conversation.
- Don't take insults or inconsiderate remarks personally.
- Do set reasonable and enforceable limits. You deserve to be treated with respect.
- Summarize what you heard and request clarification, if necessary.
- Focus on the issue, not the emotion.
- Don't respond reactively. Think before you speak.
- If possible, offer a solution, that is within the scope of company policy.



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