

Steps to De-escalate a Conflict

1. Listen for emotions initially, not words
2. Maintain a calm presence and tone of voice
3. Acknowledge emotions e.g. “I can see you’re really upset/angry/frustrated”
4. Use active listening skills and open questions to encourage person to talk more
5. Reflect back your understanding of what they’ve said
6. Once the person is calmer explain the situation from your perspective

Things to Avoid:

- Becoming defensive or arguing – this is likely to inflame the situation
- Using body language that appears to shut the other person down
- Ignoring the angry person – this is likely to make them angrier and to further exaggerate their angry behaviour in order to get noticed
- Quoting Rules & Regulations at them – this will give them something to push against, and have the effect of sustaining the conflict for longer