



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES - STAYING CALM & SAFE

When people feel uncertain, confused or unheard they can become distressed, anxious or angry and can present challenging behaviours. Planning ahead for how to respond when this occurs, can help us to stay calm and able to cope with challenges when they arise.

CHECK YOUR SAFETY SPACE

- Respect personal space: 2-3 metres away. If someone becomes agitated, aim for 3-4 metres
- Know where your exits are and/or retreat options
- Know the escalation plan is for your team
 - What behaviours from a customer would trigger a staff member escalating to a manager?
 - What behaviours from a customer would trigger contacting the Police?
- If your safety may be compromised remember ESCAPE, HIDE, TELL ([refer to Crowded Places guidance](#))

USE YOUR EYES AND EARS

- Sometimes even before a person speaks, their facial expression or the way they are walking or standing will give you a hint as to how a person is feeling
- When a person is agitated, they will often speak more quickly or with a louder voice. This can be a clue that a person is upset
- If you see someone becoming agitated, check whether it might reflect a communication challenge or indicate a support need (e.g. vision, hearing, neuro-diversity)

USEFUL INFORMATION:

- **Call Ten Five (105)** to report things that don't need urgent Police assistance - from any mobile or landline.
- **Call 111** if the situation is an emergency.
- Protecting Our Crowded Places from Attack: [Recognising and responding to threats](#) [external link] - NZ Police
- Protecting Our Crowded Places from Attack: [Self-assessment tool](#) [external link] - NZ Police
- Clearhead [mental health & wellbeing support](#) [external link]

BE CALM AND WELCOMING

- Introduce yourself, smile and make eye contact to establish rapport, take your time
- Be respectful: give the person your full attention and listen carefully to what they say
- Use please and thank you when making requests (rather than issuing commands or demands)
- Aim to understand their concerns: ask open questions and check with them to ensure you have understood
- Listen for the underlying needs in their message: tone of voice, emphasis and body language can be clues as to what is important to them
- Speak slowly and allow time for the person to think about options and responses
- Be empathic and non-judgemental in your words and your actions

SET BOUNDARIES

- If a person raises their voice, makes threats, or is uncivil in words or behaviours:
 - Be calm
 - State the unwanted behaviour
 - State the behaviour you want to see, in order to be able to help them
 - If the behaviour persists, end the communication
 - IF YOU FEEL UNSAFE REMOVE YOURSELF AND SEEK HELP

TALK TO SOMEONE AFTERWARDS

- Find time to talk with someone afterwards
- You can expect to feel the effects of adrenalin in the period after the event.