



JPPF Customer Service - Communication skills: De-escalation activity

Introduction:

This is an activity incorporated into the customer service workshop or it can be completed separately to specifically target communication skills essential for de-escalation.

The activity provides links to both suggested reading to explain what de-escalation is and a video that provides a demonstration of managing a difficult situation with a difficult customer using good de-escalation techniques.

There are also links to video interviews with a customer service representative and court security office telling their stories and giving their perspectives pending.

To complete the activity the learner is given a task of using their communication skills to re-phrase sentences to avoid emotional triggers.

In the workshop situation, this exercise can be shared and discussed with other participants and may feed into the action plan as a skill for practice.

What is de-escalation:

De-escalation is a behaviour that is intended to prevent escalation of conflicts and provide approaches in conflict resolution and requires communication skills, maintaining personal control and engaging with the customer.

De-escalation reading links:

Skiba, R. (2020). Conflict De-Escalation: Workplace Training. Open journal of Social Sciences, 8, 153-162

<https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=101501>

Lewis "Von" Kliem, MCJ, JD, LLM. Conditions for effective de-escalation. Force Science Institute

<https://www.police1.com/police-training/articles/4-conditions-for-effective-de-escalation-tbBZKo260wycSdh/>

De-escalation Techniques, Safe and Supportive Schools

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/sssta/20110707_DeescalationTechniques.pdf

10 Tips for De-escalating Conflict – Life Strategies Ltd

<https://lifestrategies.ca/docs/10-Tips-For-De-Escalating-Conflict.pdf>

De-escalation Techniques - MACSC: Med-Tex Services, Inc

<https://macsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/De-escalation-Techniques.pdf>

De-escalation video and interview links:

Managing difficult situations -

https://thrive.justice.govt.nz/pluginfile.php/26692/mod_folder/content/0/Managing%20difficult%20situations.mp4?forcedownload=1

Working for Justice: Customer Service Representative -You Tube

[Working for Justice: Customer Service Representative - YouTube](#)

Working for Justice: Court Security Officer – You Tube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkvODbBtio8>

De-escalation strategies:

AWOCA (Ask, Why, Options, Clarify, Action)

TENR (Threat, Exposure, Necessity, Response)

STOP (Signals of stress, Take control, Opposite, Practice)

De-escalation scenario and activity:

Communication skills – Avoid emotional trigger phrases

Avoid using a trigger or ‘no’ phrase. Using calming or ‘yes’ phrases strengthens the rapport with the customer. Use calming phrases to describe what you CAN do for the customer to solve the problem.

For example, below are some common emotional trigger phrases that we should avoid saying **“I don’t know.”** It’s better to say **“I will find out”** or **“Let me get the information and get back to you as quickly as possible”** or **“Let me find someone who can give your that information”**.

This will make the difference between a frustrated customer and a happy one. Even though you may not have given the information required by the customer, trying to assist and letting them know you are trying will make the difference.

Try to rephrase the following statements to avoid emotional triggers:

Avoid saying	Alternative
Avoiding issues the customer raises	
<i>“I don’t think we need to get into that.”</i>	
<i>“I can’t do that.”</i>	
Contradicting the customer	
<i>“That can’t be right.”</i>	
<i>“You’re wrong.”</i>	
Absolute statements	
<i>“We never...”</i>	
<i>“You always...”</i>	
<i>“That’s just not possible.”</i>	
Adult to child statements	
<i>“If you’ll just start behaving like an adult...”</i>	
<i>“Now calm down.”</i>	
<i>“Don’t get upset.”</i>	
Labelling	
<i>“I often deal with your type.”</i>	
Threatening – statement to assert power	
<i>“Have you finished?”</i>	
<i>“I’ll have to record your behaviour.”</i>	