



# DE-ESCALATING INTERACTIONS WITH THE PUBLIC



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# TECHNIQUES TO HELP KEEP THINGS CALM

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- Tone of voice (relaxed/calm, gentle, neutral/quiet)
- Body stance (sit, limit gestures)
- Facial expression (positive self talk, Mona Lisa lips, soft face, drop tongue)
- No interruptions/one person speaking at a time
- Be curious (strive to understand – not respond/be understood)
- Be less formal – or show max respect
- Allow/Help the other person save face
- Be a “team” with the other person (not a me/them mentality)
- Use Humour (only if appropriate)
- Give time and space
- Focus on the positives
- Stay in the present moment (don’t refer to past issues)

# THINGS TO SAY TO SHOW UNDERSTANDING

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- “I understand where you are coming from” with no “but” following (can say “we still need to....”) shows understanding/acceptance but not necessarily agreement
- “Let’s agree to disagree” - shows understanding but with a more direct way to stop the discussion
- “We are allowed to have different opinions – it’s okay - we don’t need to agree about it all in order for me to help you” - a reminder of respect being asked for/given – and a de-escalation tool
- “I appreciate your perspective/input” - showing understanding with respect - without necessarily agreeing

# THINGS TO SAY TO CREATE SPACE

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- “You have some good ideas, but this is not really the time for this discussion – can I get back to you...” or “could you email me...” - creates respect – allows for space/calming – establishes boundaries respectfully (be sure to give them a way to share their ideas)
- “I really appreciate you and what you have to say – but I think we should discuss this another time”
- “Can we take a break and talk about this later?”
- “I think we both need a break”



# THINGS TO SAY TO MOVE THE SITUATION FORWARD

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- “I think we have been focusing on the problem – now let’s focus on finding a solution”
- “What I hear you saying is..... - is that correct?”
- “I value your relationship with the City (more than arguing) ...”
- “I can really see how you feel/how bothered/annoyed you are...”
- “What do you need right now?” or “How can I help you today?”
- “Can I help us get to the solution?”



# THINGS TO SAY TO COMPLETELY DISENGAGE

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- “That doesn’t work for me”
- “If you continue, I am going to step away” – one warning only
- “I am not willing to talk about this anymore”
- “I will get someone else to help you with this issue...they will contact you tomorrow”
- Smile and say nothing – allow enough space that the conversation can be changed (by you or someone else)



# IF YOU NEED TO DISENGAGE

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- End Politely but Firmly (Take Action – don't just say you are going to)
- Attempt to Have The Angry Person Exit (Do Not Threaten)
- Try to Exit the Situation Safely Yourself
- Notify Your Team/Supervisor
- Move Into the Debriefing of the Incident

# AFTER YOU DISENGAGE, USE YOUR TEAM

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- Debrief/vent about the situation from your own perspective – be supported in having an emotional release
- Discuss your needs moving forward
- Consider the other person's perspective (debrief as the observer/bystander)
- Identify the potential needs of the other person
- Develop a strategy for next steps that offers a resolution that honours both your own and the other person's needs





# QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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