PERSONAL SAFETY PARTNERSHIP
WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP YOU SAFE

FREE RESOURCE
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

QUICK REFERENCE

DE-ESCALATION QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

A pocket guide to staying safe and calm when someone is angry, frightened or distressed. Keep it where your team can find it.

1. KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

- Assess the setting before you engage: who is present, what is in the area, where are the exits.
- Position yourself with a clear way out. Never let the person stand between you and the exit.
- Keep a safe distance, about two arm lengths, and stand at a slight angle rather than square on.
- Know how to get help fast, and agree who will respond.

2. MANAGE YOURSELF FIRST

- Slow your breathing. Drop your shoulders. Keep your hands visible and relaxed.
- Do not take it personally. Behaviour is often about fear, pain, loss or frustration.
- Notice your own warning signs, such as a raised voice or tight jaw, and reset.
- If you are not the right person to respond, hand over early.

3. COMMUNICATE TO CALM

- Speak lower, slower and quieter than the person. Use their name if you know it.
- Listen first. Let them finish. Reflect back what you heard: "So you are worried that…"
- Use short, clear sentences and open questions. Avoid jargon, sarcasm and "calm down".
- Acknowledge feelings without agreeing with unacceptable behaviour.

4. OFFER CHOICES AND BOUNDARIES

- Say what you can do, not only what you cannot.
- Give two realistic options so the person regains some control.
- Set limits calmly and clearly: "I want to help, and I need you to lower your voice so I can."
- Explain the consequence of continued behaviour once, then follow through fairly.

BUILD CONFIDENCE WITH PRACTICE

Reading a guide helps. Practising it in realistic scenarios is what makes it work under pressure. We tailor training to your team, setting and risks.

Request a quote or book a free 30-minute intro call at personalsafetypartnership.com

Personal Safety Partnership Ltd
ICM, NFPS and MMVA accredited conflict management and physical intervention training

info@personalsafetypartnership.com
0208 050 0366 |
personalsafetypartnership.com

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SPOT THE ESCALATION EARLY

STAGE	WHAT YOU MAY SEE	YOUR AIM
Anxiety	Fidgeting, pacing, a change in tone or breathing, withdrawal.	Offer support, listen, reduce uncertainty.
Defensiveness	Challenging, refusing, raised voice, blaming.	Stay calm, set clear limits, offer choices.
Risk behaviour	Threats, shouting, throwing or damaging things, invading space.	Protect everyone, create distance, call for help, do not argue.
Recovery	Tiredness, tearfulness, regret, quiet.	Allow time, avoid blame, reconnect gently.

DO

- Stay calm, patient and respectful.
- Keep your hands visible and body language open.
- Give personal space and time to respond.
- Ask for help early. Do not wait for a crisis.
- Record what happened as soon as it is safe to do so.

DO NOT

- Argue, shout, threaten or use sarcasm.
- Point, stand over someone or crowd them.
- Block the exit or touch someone without a clear reason.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Take on a risky situation alone.

WHEN TO DISENGAGE AND GET HELP

- There is a weapon, or you believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm. Leave if you can and call 999.
- The person is not responding to calm communication and the risk is rising.
- You feel unsafe, or someone else is in danger.
- Follow your organisation's policy. Physical intervention is a last resort and must only be used if it is lawful, necessary, proportionate and within your training and policy.

AFTER AN INCIDENT

- **Check people.** Look after anyone who was hurt, frightened or exposed to what happened.
- **Record it.** Write down facts, times and what was said and done, using your own organisation's reporting route.
- **Review it.** Hold a supportive debrief. What worked, what could change, what do people need?
- **Learn from it.** Feed lessons into risk assessments, procedures and training.

General good-practice guidance only. It does not replace training, your organisation's policies, a risk assessment or professional advice.

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