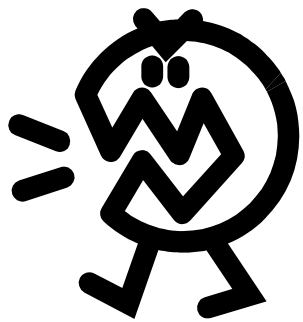


Student Manual



Working with Difficult Patrons

JCL Training & Development

Session Overview:

Introductions, Expectations

- I. Communication: How does it Work?
- II. Communication Tools: How Can it Work Better?
 - a. Ten Tools You Can Use!
 - b. Test Your Knowledge - Activity

Break

- c. Eight More Tools You Can Use
 - d. Test Your Knowledge – Activity
- III. JCL Policies & Procedures
- IV. More Resources

Wrap-up & Evaluations

I. Communication: How does it Work?

Face to Face:

7% Words
38% Tone
55% Gestures



On the Phone:

84% Words
16% Tone
0% Gestures

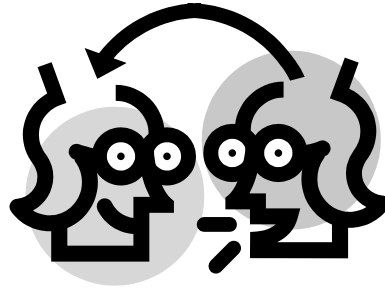
Body Language

What to Do

- Smile sincerely
- Look relaxed
- Good eye contact – try to look calm and interested
- Relaxed facial expressions
- Voice tone calm, caring
- Stand or sit up straight – if customer is standing you should stand too

What to Avoid

- Inappropriate smile
- Expressionless or scowl
- Arms folded across chest
- Glaring
- Rolling your eyes
- Voice tone rises too much
- Sighing
- Touching or crowding space in any way
- Smoking, chewing gum, eating



Verbal Language

What to Say -

Make Request:

- Will you...please
- If you will...then I can
- It works well when
- Have you considered...
- The rate is...
- Do you might waiting while I...

Be Willing to Help:

- Let me see what I can do to help
- I'll find out and get back to you
- I want to help find a solution
- Let's see what we can work out together

Be Precise:

- I'm going too...
- I'll do this much...

Effective Language Gets Results:

- How can I help you? (Open question to get information about what they need)

Fight Starters -

Don't Be Unwilling to Help:

- It's not my job
- I don't know
- We can't do that
- You sure have a problem

Not Indefinite:

- I'll try...(when you say you will try, you will)

Ineffective Language Blocks:

- May I help you? (this asks permission, a closed question limits information)

"But" Negates Everything You Said Before it:

- You filled out this form okay, but...

Not Blaming:

- You should have done it this way
- You didn't do this right

The Word "Policy" Makes People Angry:

- Our policy requires you to

II. Communication Tools

Defuse:

Be Effective with Difficult and Hostile Customers

- **D**on't lose your cool
- **E**mpathize
- **F**ind out the facts
- **U**se courteous control
- **S**tay assertive
- **E**ngage the customer in the solution and **Follow Through**

Don't Lose Your Cool:

Tool 1. Active Listening

Listen actively by **re-stating** and asking **clarifying** questions.

Re-stating

State in your own words what you think someone has just said:

- "Let me see if I understand you correctly. What I thought I heard is..."

Then ask for agreement:

- "Is that correct?"

Clarifying Questions

Ask open ended questions by beginning sentences with "how," "what," and "why."

- "How did the incident occur?"

Summarizing

Summarizing is very important to verify your understanding and prevent mistakes.

Tool 2: Practice Positive Self Talk

Use language that keeps the focus on the _____, not the _____. Use self talk to avoid reacting and to prepare yourself to resolve the situation.

Do not say to yourself:

- "He is accusing me of making a mistake"
- "She can't talk to people like that."
- "You're not perfect, you make mistakes too."

Say to yourself:

- "How can I help solve this situation?"
- "This is a challenge. I want to see how well I can do this time."

Reflect and review

Ask yourself how you might handle the situation differently the next time. Talk to supervisor or other colleagues and get their advice.

Tool 3: Avoid Blaming

Blaming is a _____. When you blame, you often end up doing the job anyway, and you will appear _____ and _____.

Don't say or think:

- "It's not my job."
- "Nobody told me to..."
- "That happened when I wasn't here."
- "Someone else did that, not me."

Say Instead:

- "Let me find the person who can help you with this"
- "What I can do for you now is this."
- "That isn't the kind of service we like to provide. What can we do to correct this situation?"

Empathize

Tool 4: Calming Language

Use calming language when a person is angry to let them know you understand how _____ their concern is.

What to Say:

- "I can appreciate what you're saying."
- I can understand how you'd feel that way.
- "I can understand how that would be annoying (or frustrating)"

Find out the Facts

Tool 5: Ask Permission to Ask Questions

To get problem solving information and fact finding, start with _____ - _____ questions:

- "Do you mind if I ask you a few questions to help resolve this?"
- "I need to ask you a few questions to resolve this, and some might be questions you've answered before. Is this okay?"

Start your sentence with "how," "what," and "why" to get detailed information.

- Do you mind if I asked you "how" you got that information?

Tool 6: Share Information

Tell patrons the _____ for policies and procedures. Don't assume the other person will know why they have been requested or told to do something. Rules that seem arbitrary to people can be very irritating.

- If you're getting information, be sure to give them yours.

Tool 7: Apologize if Appropriate

Apologize if you discover during fact finding that one of the following situations exists:

- Failure to keep a _____ or _____
- Incorrect information has been given out
- Billing or financial errors
- Inconvenience

Use Courteous Control

Tool 8: Bridging

Bridging is a technique to bring someone back to the point courteously. To “bridge,” take something that was said, and repeat it to bring the caller back to the subject at hand.

Example:

Patron: “Where have you been? I called three weeks ago for help!”

Staff Member: “You placed your call for service three weeks ago, now that I am here, what can I do to assist you?”

Tool 9: Disengage

If you are close to losing control, give yourself a moment to recompose yourself. Say something like: “Just a moment, let me check with someone else.” When you move away, you are giving yourself and the other person a chance to _____
_____.

Tool 10: Refer to Your Supervisor or Someone Else

By getting your supervisor, you are showing you take the problem _____.
If the supervisor overturns your decision it doesn't mean it was a bad one.
Circumstances change, and so do decisions.

If you have to send them somewhere else...

1. Tell them _____ you are sending them there.
2. Give them your _____ .
3. Stay on the line or call ahead to _____ the person you're sending them to.
4. If follow up is needed (someone will call them) set a _____ when they can expect a return call or visit.

Stay Assertive

Tool 11: Instant Replay

This is a useful technique when you want to say "no" or otherwise set limits with someone who is having trouble getting your message. This technique is also an effective way to inform another person about what you want when they don't seem to understand you.

This is especially helpful in a situation where giving the reason behind your answer would provide the other person to drag out a pointless argument.

1. _____ in your own mind exactly what you do or don't want (your bottom line).
2. Formulate a short, specific, easy to understand _____ about what you want. Keep it to one sentence, e.g. "Please pay the overdue fine."
3. Use _____. Stand erect, make eye contact, keep hands quietly at your sides.
4. Calmly and firmly _____ your statement as many times as necessary for the person to get your message that you will not change your mind.
5. You may briefly _____ their ideas, feelings or wishes before returning to your broken record. "I understand that you're upset, but I want you to pay the overdue fine."
6. Don't allow yourself to be side tracked by the other person's statements. Try your broken record at least _____ times before moving on to something else.

Tool 12: Directing Anger

Directing someone's anger means giving them a suggestion for something they can do to help change the situation.

Example:

"A lot of people have said the same thing. You're not the first one to complain. Let me give you the name of the person to talk to and their phone number. I encourage you to share your problem with them. Maybe the policy can be changed."

3 Options to offer them:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Tool 13: Selective Agreement

Selective agreement is a technique for dealing with criticism or a statement that you disagree with. You find something in the comment to agree with "in part" outwardly, while inwardly sticking to your own point of view.

Example:

Patron: "I was in yesterday at 4:30pm and the drive up window at BV was closed. (*You were here yourself at the window until 5pm.*)"

Staff: "You were at the window at 4:30pm yesterday?"

Patron: "You're darn right I was, this place was closed early."

Staff: "You're right, the window you were at could have been closed early."

Follow your selective agreement with an offer to help:

Staff: "Now that we're both here, what can I do for you?"

Tool 14: Setting Limits

If someone uses abusive language with you or is violating your personal space physically by crowding, touching or pushing, you may need to assertively set clear limits before continuing your discussion. When you set limits, you must be willing and able to _____ with what you said you would do.

Face to face:

"I want to help you, however, if you don't step back a bit and give me some space, I will ask you to leave the office."

On the telephone:

"I want to help you, however, if you keep shouting I will hang up."

Engage Patrons in the Solution

Tool 15: Gain Cooperation

Begin your request for action with a statement of how the request will help them:

- "To help you save some time..."
- "To help me complete your request quickly..."
- "So that I can access your records..."
- "So I can bill you the correct amount..."

Tool 16: Say "No" Courteously

Explain what you _____ do, instead of what you _____ do.

- "You can have the material tomorrow."
- "We will make this available for as soon as we receive it."

Don't use a negative

- We can't do that.

Tool 17: Request Ideas About a Solution

Involve the customer in coming up with a solution to the problem he or she is upset about.

- "Specifically, what would you like me to do?"
- ""What could I do that would make this okay for you?"

Sometimes there is a situation where you can't reasonably do anything to help. In response to your request for ideas, the customer may say, "I guess there is nothing you can do, I just wanted to get this off my chest."

Ways to Wrap Up

1. Use _____ .
2. Talk in the _____ tense.
3. Spell out the _____ actions.

Say, "Thank you for coming/calling/bringing this to my attention."

Tool 18: Under promise and Over deliver

Examples:

- If you think it will take two hours, tell them four.
- If you think a hold normally takes 3 days to get to another branch, tell them a week.

When you get the job done earlier, you're a hero!

III. Policies & Procedures

In Tool 6 we talked about how it is important to **Share Information** with patrons. You cannot give quality customer service (one the JCL values) without understanding the reasons behind our policies and procedures. If a patron asks why we have a rule, you should be able to give a simple, reasonable answer.

Questions to Ask:

1. What is the difference between a Policy and a Procedure?
2. What happens to organizations who operate without them?
3. What happens when organizations focus too much on them?

Policies – Administrative Regulations Manual (ARM)

Set by our Library Board. You need to know and understand these rules. Explain to patrons: "These rules have been set by our Library Board of Trustees; I do not have the authority to change them. I can get my manager; you can fill out a comment form, or contact a library board member directly..."

POLICES TO KNOW:

ARM 20-10-50 PATRON CODE OF BEHAVIOR
ARM 20-10-20 LIBRARY CARD AND PRIVILEGES
ARM 20-20-20 CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Procedures – JCL Procedures Manual

Can be created and updated by department managers, with final approval from our Administrative Team. These rules exist to help us operate the

library in a safe, efficient manner. The bottom line is to do what is in the best interest of the library and patrons.

PROCEDURES TO KNOW:

PS 20-50-20 DISRUPTIVE PATRONS
SU 60-01-30 INCIDENT REPORT
PS 40-30-40 DENIAL OF BORROWER PRIVILEGES
PS 40-30-60 USER NOT PRESENTING LIBRARY CARD
PS 40-60-70 CLAIMS RETURNED ITEMS
PS 20-70-50 OFFERING A REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Links for You

All portal users

- [Administrative Regulations Manual](#)
- [Calendar - Staff Access](#)
- [Connections Strategic Plan](#)
- [Contact LIT Support](#)
- [Disable Filtering for a Patron](#)
- [Disable Filtering for Staff](#)
- [Discussion Forums](#)
- [Facilities Work Order](#)
- [Forms Online](#)
- [JCL Procedures Manual](#)

JCL Intranet Front Page

IV. Other Resources

*Fescemeyer, Kathy. Healing After the Unpleasant Outburst: Recovering from Incidents with Angry Library Users. Reference Librarian. June 2002, Issue 75/76. pg 235-244.

**Solomon, Muriel. Working with Difficult People. Paramus: Prentice Hall, 2002. – Includes Tactful Phrases to Help You Confront Difficult People.

**Turner, Anne M. It Comes With the Territory: Handling Problem Situations in Libraries. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2004.
Practical and clear, Turner offers suggestions and techniques for handling a variety of situations. The emphasis is placed on the situations, not individuals and on implementing fair and appropriate behavior rules.

**Willis, Mark. Dealing With Difficult People in the Library. American Libraries Association, 1999. --The best hands-on guide to solving problems through communication, preventative measures, and the enforcement of patron behavior policies.

*Available using *Articles & More* on the JCL webpage. Search with the title in quotations.

** Book is available at JCL