

GUIDE TO DE-ESCALATION



KNOW YOUR POLICY

Know where the library's Code of Conduct is posted. Refer to it in the case of a challenging patron interaction. It is based on respect — respect for yourself, others, and library property.

DE-ESCALATION VS. INTERVENTION

If at any point you **feel unsafe**, change from de-escalation to intervention, whether that be getting your manager or calling the police.



LISTEN



Practice active listening to keep you engaged in the conversation to understand what they want. You don't have to agree with their opinions to listen and understand what they want. For example, if they tell you your library shouldn't carry a particular book because of the topic, don't argue with them. Instead say, "I'm hearing that you'd like to file a book challenge. Here's the form to do so." **Withhold judgment.** Use pauses and stay calm. Doing so can diffuse the person's intense emotions and create a more positive interaction.

FORECAST

Try to let the person understand what you're doing next to reduce suspicion, develop trust, and **encourage calm.** "I'm going to move here to find the policy you are looking for..."



TIPS

- Acknowledge frustration
- Show empathy
- Don't argue
- Give choices
- Distance yourself from the negative
- Set limits and leave if necessary. Don't compromise safety.

PROVIDE CLOSURE

Have the attitude that there is always something that can be done. **Offer a solution, form, referral, etc.**



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KNOW YOUR POLICY

We have a procedure in place for patrons to request a reconsideration of materials. Our board-approved Policy is on our website's Policies page. It is found on page 7 of our Collection Development Policy.

HOW ARE MATERIALS SELECTED?

Trained and experienced library staff use reviews to select the materials best suited to the needs and desires of the local community. We also use patron requests and knowledge of the curriculum of local schools.



HOW DO YOU HANDLE A CHALLENGE?

The primary responsibility of front-line staff is to listen in a respectful and fair manner. Offer the patron a Materials Reconsideration Form when appropriate. Give any completed form to your Library Manager to forward to regional office. The submission of a completed form initiates the materials reconsideration process.

NOTES REGARDING THE MATERIALS RECONSIDERATION PROCESS

- Our Materials Reconsideration Policy is board-approved, and has been successfully tested in various situations.
- Library trustees are appointed by local government agencies that fund the library. They are the best people to represent community needs and values.
- Trustees work alongside professional library staff to carefully consider any complaint or request to relocate items.
- The Library Director responds directly to all patrons initiating the formal materials reconsideration process
- Trust the process



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