

Negative Customer Service Interaction Tactics¹

Confront	Exit	Escalate/Transfer	Hang Up
"That was offensive and here is why. I can continue working with you, but I will not accept that. Is there a different way that I can help you?"	"That was offensive and I won't continue this conversation. Please email <organization's support email> ² and another staff member will assist you."	"I might not be the best person to help you right now, please hold while I find another member of our team to answer your questions."	Simply end the call. ³
Question	Warn	Interject (Mid - High Level Staff only) ⁴	Hang Up Follow Up (Mid - High Level Staff only)
"Can you clarify what you mean by that? You seem to be implying <something offensive or triggering> and I'd like to better understand what you meant."	"I'd like to remind you that <Organization> requests professionalism and collegiality from its members and constituents as well as its staff. Can we agree to move forward with this conversation with that in mind?"	"I could hear this was a difficult conversation and I'd like to offer my assistance. How can I help?"	"Hello, I am <name and title> from <Organization>. <Staff Member> was unable to continue your previous conversation due to the nature of your remarks. Is there a way for us to positively move forward?"

¹ The goal of this document is to encourage staff to be the arbiters of their own experience. There is not a standard for levels of offensiveness: if the interaction is negative enough to affect the staff member, then **ANY** of these responses can be and is warranted.

² There should be a clear destination for staff to redirect negative clients or patrons to.

³ There should also be a follow-up process that does the following:

- A. Allows the customer service rep to process their negative experience in their own time.
- B. Alerts the rest of the staff that a negative interaction has occurred.
- C. Minimizes opportunities for other staff to be harmed by the patron.

⁴ This removes the burden from junior staff to interject on behalf of another staff member and puts the onus for support on staff with more institutional power.