
Conflict and Anger and Defusing Conflict for Public Works

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Who Are You?

- Watched by everyone because you have a uniform and/or you're a city employee
 - Everyone has a comment about you
 - You are being evaluated
 - You represent the city
 - Professional
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Types of People You Deal With

- Nice People- Except maybe if you ticket them, fine them, or require compliance to city rules
 - Difficult People-May try hitting you!
 - WHY DO PEOPLE GET ANGERY? YOUR THOUGHTS!
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Anger Impairs Judgment

- Why do people get Angry?
 - Why does anger impair judgment?
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Things You Need to Know

Non Verbal Communication

- The first minute of an interaction often determines its direction and outcome
- How people react to an interaction is largely dependent on the cues they pick up from you
- The quality of the interaction strongly influences future interactions with you and other officers



Nonverbal signs of Anger

- Touching or rubbing nose
- Inappropriate smile (don't believe you)
- Rubbing back of neck (frustration)
- Scuffing shoes
- Loud volume voice
- Rapid speech
- Short, quick breaths
- Clenched fists
- Flaring nostrils
- Reddened face



Non Verbal Communication

Control yourself before you Control others

- Tense and relax muscles– relax more deeply
 - Breath slowly and deeply
 - Self-talk yourself calmer
 - Scan the environment
 - Know what you want to accomplish
 - 93% of Communication related to Body Language
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Be Careful of Your Gestures

- Curling index finger upward to call someone over (Considered degrading by Asians who call dogs this way)
 - Direct eye contact with Latin Americans, Japanese, Koreans (Considered confrontational disrespectful, even sexual)
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What You Need to Have

- Professional Presence is Important
 - How You use Words are Important
 - Your Tone of Voice is Important
 - Your Body language is Important
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LEAPS

- Listen-Allow them to vent as long as that do not cross line to abusive/derogatory
 - Empathize
 - I am surprised your not more frustrated
 - Ask questions
 - Note a similar experience you had
 - Do not give advice
 - Do not condescend
 - Paraphrase
 - Restate their concerns
 - You fell X because Y
 - Summary
 - You make a decision
 - Be clear and authoritative
 - Explain your legal options
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Nonverbal Calming

- **Use open palm and open arm gestures**
 - **Avoid touching angry people**
 - **Use intermittent eye contact rather than stare down**
 - **Relax your facial features, smile, show concern (EMPATHY!)**
 - **Use soft tones and normal to low volume**
 - **Move slowly. 70% plus weight on back foot to allow you to move away**
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Defusing Anger

- Acknowledge the feeling. keep your voice calm.
 - Explain options. Having choices conveys respect and acknowledges power in a positive way.
 - Model respectful behavior. Treat people in an adult manner even if their behavior is childish. DON'T humiliate them.
 - At first signs of anger, decide whether probing the content or acknowledging the feeling is preferable. Sometimes an open-ended or factual question redirects the party and allows them to cool down. In some situations, calling attention to the emotion at the moment of escalation can actually increase the intensity of the feeling.
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Defusing Anger

- Give the person time-- take the pressure off and allow cooling out time. People de-escalate at different rates.
 - Use empathic statements carefully. Overstating or understating the intensity of the feeling may trigger the person. Some empathic statements can sound insincere or condescending, such as "I can tell you're feeling angry."
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