

## DIFFUSING ANGER

Unfortunately, there is no guaranteed method or magical phrase that can diffuse a client's anger. If we learn not to make a situation worse by our own reactions the anger will often dissipate on its own.

- (1) **When tempers flare, your best response is simply to listen.** Let them ventilate. Anger that is listened to will often diffuse. Anger that is not diffused will build to hostility.
- (2) **The best way to maintain your cool when clients lose theirs is to understand that their anger is not a personal attack.** They are mad at a situation, not you. Don't contribute to their stress and yours by getting defensive and taking their anger personally. Be objective.
- (3) **Remember you choose how to respond to an angry client.** You need not answer anger with anger. You choose your words, and are responsible for them.
- (4) **If you make a mistake, admit it.** An honest acknowledgement of error can calm an angry person.
- (5) **Record their complaint in writing.** While this does not indicate that you agree with their complaint, it does assure them that you are taking the dissatisfaction seriously.
- (6) **Keep the discussion centered on the problem rather than on each other's personalities.** However, if the client resorts to verbally attacking you as a person, you don't have to listen.

Explain that you want to help, but cannot when they speak to you in such a way. Get someone else to assist you if the client will not control him/herself. Two to one odds can give you the psychological advantage. Alert your supervisor and the police if you and your co-worker cannot calm your irate client. If the client appears dangerous, **IF YOU THINK YOU ARE IN IMMINENT PHYSICAL DANGER, WALK AWAY IMMEDIATELY.**