

De-escalation to prevent workplace violence during COVID-19

Tips for conversations with employees, customers, patients, students & clients

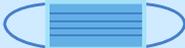
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Injury Prevention Research Center

Creating knowledge to keep you safe



Behavior change, **such as wearing masks**, can be stressful, and policies around behavior can cause agitation. 

Here are some de-escalation techniques:

- **Be patient.** Just as it takes an individual time to become agitated, de-escalating from an emotional state takes time.
- **Resist the urge to ramp up to the feeling of urgency** that the individual feels.
- **De-escalate in an engaged but not personal way.** You do not have to agree with someone to de-escalate the conversation. The goal is not to prove them wrong, but to motivate them to change their behavior.
- **Start by hearing them and acknowledging what you hear.** Agitation and escalation often happen when an individual doesn't feel heard.
- **Listen more and talk less.**



Ways to approach de-escalating a conversation:



Ask open-ended questions or present open-ended statements and let them complete their answer.

Tell me more about how you are feeling.

What aspects of the mask policy do you disagree with?

Respond by clearly showing you heard them.

I understand that you aren't happy about policies that require mask wearing.

I hear that you don't think the store is in a position to tell you that you have to wear a mask.

Put you and them on the same page and see if they have ideas of what to do.

We both want you to be able to (go to school, go into the store). The (school, store) requires masks, but you don't want to wear one. With the policy, I am not able to allow you to (go into the store, participate in class) without a mask. What do you think we can do?