

Phrases

*Overall, try to maintain a neutral tone of voice and body language. Don't fuel a situation.
If you see a staff member in a confrontational conversation – walk over to them and stay with them.*

General:

Do you have a Library related question I can help you with?

I want to help. Can you speak more slowly so I can understand you?

Please tell me what happened.

Would you mind if I write this down?

Maybe you can explain the situation to my manager, let me get them.

Kill Them Softly With Diplomacy: “Clearly, we’ve upset you and I want you to know that getting to the bottom of this is just as important to me as it is to you.”

Express empathy: “That must have been very frustrating for you.”

Show appreciation for the difficult person’s feedback: “Thanks for taking the time to let us know how you feel.”

Here is what I am going to do for you...

Stronger Language:

If you can't use more appropriate language I will have to ask you to leave.

Please step back when you are speaking to me.

You are making me feel uncomfortable, I am going to go get my supervisor.

I am sorry, I can no longer continue this conversation. I have to get back to my work.

I am required to call 9-1-1. (Follow through and make the call or have another staff member do it.)

Resources:

- Perfect phrases for customer service : hundreds of ready-to-use phrases for handling any customer service situation by Robert Bacal (Nonfiction - 2nd Floor 658.812 Bac)
- The customer service survival kit : what to say to defuse even the worst customer situations by Richard S. Gallagher (Nonfiction - 2nd Floor 658.812 Gal, also in Libby)
- <http://www.callcentrehelper.com/the-right-words-and-phrases-to-use-with-an-angry-customer-30110.htm>
- <http://top7business.com/?Top-7-Ways-to-Get-An-Angry-Customer-to-Back-Down&id=1645>
- <https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-phrases-that-will-instantly-calm-angry-or-emotional-people>

Elmhurst Police officer said to me, EPL is “obligated to provide a safe environment” for patrons and staff.