

## 1. Be Empathic and Nonjudgmental

Conflict often arises from misunderstanding or unmet emotional needs. Approach the situation with curiosity, not judgement. Show that you're listening and trying to understand even if you don't agree. Empathy is the first step toward calming heightened emotions.

## 2. Respect Personal Space

Physical proximity can either comfort or provoke. Giving someone space helps reduce perceived threat and can make them feel more in control. If you're unsure, err on the side of more space and be mindful of your body language within that space too.

## 3. Use Non-threatening Nonverbal Cues

What you do physically matters as much as [what you say](#). Keep your body language open, your posture relaxed and your gestures slow. Avoid folding arms, pointing or sudden movements. A calm presence can speak volumes.

## 4. Keep Your Tone and Message Calm, Simple and Clear

Tone affects tension. Speak slowly and clearly using simple language. Avoid shouting or overexplaining, this can overwhelm someone already in distress. Repeating your message in a calm tone helps reinforce safety and direction.

## 5. Focus on Feelings, Not Just Facts

De-escalation isn't about proving a point. It's about validating emotion. Instead of saying, "You're wrong," try "It seems like you're upset." Acknowledging feelings helps build rapport and lowers defences.

## 6. Ignore Challenging Questions

Not every question deserves an answer in the heat of a moment. Some are designed to provoke. Stay focused on safety and support. Deflect or redirect if needed, without becoming reactive.

## 7. Set Clear, Respectful Boundaries

Being calm doesn't mean being passive. [Boundaries can be set](#) in ways that are firm and kind. Try: "*I want to help you but I need you to speak quietly so we can talk.*" Clear expectations give structure without escalation.

## 8. Allow Silence for Processing

Don't rush to fill the quiet. Silence gives people space to think, breathe and regain control. It also signals patience and confidence on your part, two qualities that encourage safety and calm.

## 9. Give Time for Decisions

Pressure creates panic. Where possible, offer time and options. This can reduce anxiety and resistance while restoring a sense of autonomy. Choice often leads to cooperation.

## 10. Priorities Safety Always

Even with the best strategies, situations can escalate. Your safety and the safety of others must come first. Know when to step back, seek support or end an interaction. Walking away is not weakness, it's responsibility.