

We have all heard the expression, “the customer is always right.” While this is not always true, there are going to be times at a job when you need to deal with difficult customers. This will happen even if you think they may be in the wrong. This information sheet describes why learning how to deal with difficult customers is important and how you can deal with the stress that comes along with it.

WHAT ARE SOME TYPES OF DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS AT WORK?

No matter where you work, you will likely have some type of interaction with customers. At some point, a difficult customer will cross your path. Here is a list of difficult customer behaviors you may have to deal with at work:

- Angry/aggressive
- Impatient
- Intimidating
- Talkative
- Demanding
- Indecisive
- Complaining
- Know-it-all



WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF INTERACTING WELL?

- You will be viewed as professional and hardworking.
- Your supervisors will think highly of you, which may lead to positive consequences, such as getting a promotion.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF INTERACTING POORLY?

- You may be viewed as unprofessional or rude.
- You may seem like you are not putting in effort.
- Your supervisors may think badly of you, which may lead to getting a warning or fired.

HOW CAN YOU DEAL WITH THE STRESS?

- Take deep breaths when you begin to get frustrated or upset.
- Show that you are listening and that you care.
- Use body language, such as standing or sitting up straight and do not cross your arms.
- Have good eye contact to show that you are listening.
- Keep your facial expression looking sincere and interested.
- Let the customer vent and pay attention.
- Never argue with or blame customers.
- Stay calm and speak in a neutral or positive tone of voice.
- Try to solve the problem and get a manager or supervisor if you need help.
- Seek support from other coworkers as to how they deal with frustration at work.
- When the situation is over, let out your negative emotions in an appropriate place, such as the break room, restroom, at home, or outside where the public will not see you.