

## 1. Principles of conflict management

Positive communication      Communication has such an important part to play in reducing the risk of conflict that if we get it wrong, we are likely to increase the possibility of conflict.

Rules for positive communication      The general rules that are applicable when communicating with anyone we come in to contact with and especially when dealing with a situation that has the potential to dissolve into conflict are:

Do	Don't
Be helpful and encourage resolution	Be dismissive and inflame the situation
Remain positive	Insult or be abusive
Remain emotionally detached and professional in your dealings with people	Respond to provocation
Be, without exception, polite, and conduct duties in a fair and respectful manner	Be rude or disrespectful
Communicate clearly and constructively	Patronise
	Ignore people

Benefits of positive communication / reduction of the likelihood of conflict

- Helps you to retain control of the situation
- Gives the person you are dealing with more confidence in your ability, they know you want to help
- Reduces potential for aggression
- Builds a better rapport
- Helps in ensuring that you are taken seriously
- Allows facts to be gathered quickly and accurately
- Establishes a flow of communication
- Increases the likelihood to listen to and understand what you are saying
- Allows situations being more likely to be resolved with the avoidance of conflict and greater co-operation

Security professionals should be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Definitions of violence at work      Whilst violence at work is an extreme example of a situation involving conflict which, thankfully, will involve few of us, it is interesting to note that the Health and Safety Executive identifies it as a particular issue and defines violence at work as "Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work."

This includes:

- Physical attacks – whether visible injury occurs or not, including sexual and racial attack.
- Serious verbal abuse and threatening behaviour – for example, if an unacceptable threat has been made against a person, including over the telephone.

RIDDOR also recognises aggression within the work place and now includes a new definition of an accident: "An act of non-consensual physical violence done to a person at work."

If the act of violence or the effects of verbal abuse create a situation where either the injury or psychological effects of the incident results in the person being incapable of work for more than 7 days, then this should be reported under RIDDOR.

## Employment legislation

### Employer's duties

There are a number of pieces of employment and health and safety legislation that have a direct impact upon what your employer can expect of you in relation to managing conflict and other health and safety related issues.

The *Employment Rights Act 1996 – Section 44*, defines the expectations that your employer might have of you in a conflict situation. An employer cannot discipline an employee who leaves their place of work because of danger that they believe to be serious and imminent and which they could not be reasonably expected to prevent. This includes taking any appropriate steps to protect themselves or others from the danger. This is important in the context of the security industry as the law says that you cannot be expected to place yourself in danger.

The *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* also has an impact upon on what might reasonably be expected of you, as your employer has a duty of care toward you.

Section 2(1) States that it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all his/her employees.

Section 2(2) (c) states that 'it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that employees receive such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff by ensuring that staff are competent. In this case, you are being trained in how to deal with any risk of conflict in your role as a member of the security team.

### Employee's duties

It is clear from the legal obligations placed on employers that you should not place yourself at risk. Nevertheless, the responsibility does not rest entirely with your employer; you have responsibilities too, primarily under health and safety legislation. Two sections of the act have particular relevance to the issue of managing conflict:

- *Section 7:* It shall be the duty of every employee, while at work, to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work.
- *Section 8:* No person shall recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any statutory provisions.

The *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999* also imposes a requirement for employees to bring to the attention of employers, any situation or condition which the employee considers to be of serious danger and any shortcomings in the employer's health and safety arrangements.

## Purpose and content of employer policies

- Reducing risk of harm to self and others
- Reducing risk of litigation by ensuring compliance with legislation relating to issues of managing conflict and violence at work
- The reassurance of staff that such conflict and violence will not be tolerated and that there are adequate policies and procedures in place to deal with it when it does occur
- Establishing, distributing and publicising procedures for dealing with issues of conflict and violence at work
- Source of information about responsibilities, explaining to employees (including agency staff and contractors) what is expected of them in the workplace
- Providing a guide to different circumstances

Typically, such policies will particularly include:

- A definition of what constitutes violence and conflict at work
- A clear statement on the unacceptability of violence and conflict at work
- Procedures for reporting incidents of violence and conflict at work
- A clear statement on what is expected of staff in the workplace
- A clear statement on the potential disciplinary consequences of engaging in violence or conflict at work
- How training for dealing with issues of violence and conflict at work will be made available and how it will be structured
- Details of support mechanisms and complaints procedures available for victims
- Quite often, such policies will include the setting up of an independent confidential reporting and help line for staff

It should be borne in mind that under the Health and Safety Executive definitions, bullying and harassment can be identified as violence in the workplace. Such bullying and harassment can be 'upward' as well as 'downward' – in other words, it is as wrong for employees to attempt to bully or harass their superiors, as it is the other way round.

Members of security teams should familiarise themselves with such policies and legislation, since their impact is not confined to a narrow set of duties or circumstances. For example, there is a legal requirement to carry out risk assessments (both routine and 'dynamic') regarding work activities, which should be reflected in the company policy. The principles of these policies and laws certainly relate to all areas of conflict management, whether they be in a nightclub, a hospital, a superstore or wherever, but they equally apply at all other locations and in all other forms of activity that security teams and individuals may operate. Further information is available as free downloads on the HSE website ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)) and many companies now publish their policies on their intranets.

Non-compliance  
with policies

Non-compliance exposes both the employer and the employee to significant risks, including:

<u>Criminal penalties</u> Fines for criminal convictions In exceptional circumstances, imprisonment (e.g. for corporate manslaughter)	<u>Civil penalties</u> Civil damages awards Compliance and enforcement orders
<u>Other risks</u> Personal harm Damage to the reputations of the company and the individual Internal disciplinary procedures Higher insurance premiums and excesses	

Factors that can  
trigger an angry  
response

Triggers of conflict can include:

**Drugs:** Direct use of drugs changes our pattern of thought, perceptions and our reactions to situations we are involved in. We are at greater risk of disease or illness, which will also influence our mental state. Indirectly it may cause debt, rivalry or leave us in a vulnerable position.

**Alcohol:** The influence of alcohol also changes our thought patterns and perceptions. Many users of alcohol, especially those who take it in large amounts, suffer side effects such as aggressive behaviour. Withdrawal may also induce violent behaviour. Within the workplace, it slows down performance, which in turn affects and may endanger those working alongside you.

**Illness:** Common illness such as colds, etc, can be associated with conflict along with those more commonly related illnesses such as stress, mental breakdowns and exhaustion, although not as extreme. Any illness makes us feel down. Reduction in the workforce can add to the problem of conflict, more work is expected of those in attendance, who in turn will suffer tiredness and stress. When dealing with illness special care has to be observed especially when force is used to restore control.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination based on sex, race, creed, colour, sexuality, political beliefs, religion or age can cause resentment and ill feelings, which may also be felt by a group or society. This has the effect of

creating divides and in turn may lead to conflict situations.

#### Physical discomfort

Unwanted physical contact ([link to intimidation](#))

Financial difficulties: These can add extra worry to lives and change the way in which we react to situations or interact with colleagues, friends or partners.

Relationships: Difficulties in relationships may also affect our perception, social activities and ability to control our feeling or emotions. It may then lead on to relationships outside the partnership, which in turn widens the risk of conflict.

#### Emotions

Stress/frustration: An inability to carry out a task or life-skills due to determining factors, i.e. resources, ability, complexity or workload. Socially related stress/frustration, i.e. relationship problems spill over into our work lives and vice versa, i.e. a bad day in the office is sometimes followed by a drink in the pub or at home.

Envy or jealousy: The reaction to another's looks, work ability, wealth, lifestyle, pay, position, treatment or their standing within society or a group. Envy or jealousy of another at work can spill over into our social lives and vice versa.

Guilt: We may say or do something, which we may later regret. This makes us feel angry with ourselves and that anger may be taken out on an inanimate object, or in extreme cases, another person or animal.

Intimidation: Our reaction to this is similar to that of guilt. We are angry and seek vengeance.

Embarrassment: When embarrassed we feel the urge to restore the balance. We avenge the insult on the person that has embarrassed us or we act in a way, which we feel appropriate to restore the respect of our subordinates. If embarrassed by our peers we take out our anger on our subordinates or those we see as the least threat.

Dissatisfaction: We expect the quality of our lives and the service we are given during our lifetime to be second-to none. Speed of service, quality of goods and levels of service are all paramount in maintaining satisfaction. We are all too eager to criticise the actions of others but fail miserably to identify our own weaknesses and shortfalls.

Frustration from inconvenience: 'We want it and want it now' has sadly replaced 'Patience is a virtue'. Waiting and queuing have now become outdated. As our lives evolve, the need for faster service is ever more in demand. The effects of this however are not all good. Quality and service levels have diminished which, instead of reducing inconvenience and conflict, has sadly increased the problem. There are things that we can do to reduce the risks of conflict in these situations, we can offer more choice, provide more relaxed and comfortable environments, incorporate measures to reduce recurrence of problematic situations, etc.

Anxiety: Fear and worry change our way of thinking, our ability to carry out simple tasks, communicate or think things through rationally. All of these add additional feelings of stress, frustration, guilt, embarrassment and intimidation and may have effects on the subject or on others within that environment.

Inability to communicate or feelings of inferiority: Quite often a feature of domestic violence, one party may strike out physically or verbally because of an inability to otherwise establish a position of dominance. This can also lead to situations where the weaker party attempts to manipulate the environment, physically or politically in their favour, which may be another manifestation of workplace violence or aggression.

As an individual, you may be dealing with people on a daily basis, security team members will inevitably deal with people experiencing some of these feelings, and the work undertaken by security staff can sometimes provide a trigger for these feelings to surface.

Activities where there are greater risks of conflict

Some tasks a security team member carries out will carry a greater risk of conflict. These may include:

- Challenging actions: When you ask a colleague to explain their views or findings.
- Ability: By questioning someone's actions and their ability.
- Appointment: Can we really expect to question our line management
- Applying workplace procedures: Requesting staff to conform to smoking prohibitions, equality in the workplace, and dignity at work can lead to frustration.

Factors that can inhibit an angry response

Inhibitors are 'external' or 'internal'.

External inhibitors will include:

- Imposed discipline: Where there are clear penalties for breaking clearly defined rules and such penalties will have what the subject considers being an unwanted or disadvantageous outcome. At a local level this may be sanctions, internal discipline or eviction. At a societal level, this may include prosecution and/or legal penalties such as fines or imprisonment.
- Peer group pressure: Where being seen to flout the customs or rules may be considered 'bad-form' by friends and colleagues.

Note: Particularly dangerous situations may arise where the subject feels that he or she is not subject to external inhibitors, such as the law and that such inhibitors do not have any power to do anything that will disadvantage him or her further. This is sometimes known as the 'nothing to lose' scenario.

Internal inhibitors may include:

- Self-control or self-discipline: Some people naturally have high levels of self-control and self-discipline.
- Fear of retaliation or confrontation: Where the subject feels at a physical, intellectual or moral disadvantage and feels that the costs of attack outweigh any possible advantage to be gained (particularly in the physical context).
- Personality and character: Some people are simply not aggressive, whilst others are quite the opposite.
- Previous experience: Where the subject has suffered a disadvantageous outcome in a similar situation previously.
- Fairness: If the process is seen to be 'fair' (equitable) the subject may see objection to be 'bad form'.

Nothing to lose

It is particularly important to consider the issue of those with 'nothing to lose', i.e. where no violence inhibitors exist. You are likely to come into contact with such people during the course of work, who may include:

- People with emotional or psychiatric disturbances.
- Suspects who have breached bail conditions, or have warrants not backed for bail outstanding against them.
- People suffering temporary but severe emotional trauma, such as the parent recently estranged from his or her partner or children (particularly children).
- People who have no stake in society; for example, vagrants.

Human responses to emotional and threatening situations

#### Physical responses

The human brain reacts to fear by sending out signals to the body, which then releases adrenalin and other chemicals to prepare our body for responsive action. Our body's physical reaction to these messages include:

- Muscular tension: Our muscles tense up to protect our bodies from impact and to protect vital organs and we might experience muscular facial spasms
- Our skin responds and sweats to cool the body
- Shaking legs and arms: Legs and arms can shake due to the increased fuel that the increased blood flow brings
- Our body loses the ability to carry out fine and complex motor movements. We can only

- down
- The eyes open wider for clearer and sharper vision, however, our field of vision narrows
- Our hearing decreases so that we can concentrate on our sight as our main source of information
- carry out large movements
- Pounding heart as the body increases blood flow
- Faster, heavier breathing
- Dryness to the mouth
- Churning stomach
- Nausea

### Psychological responses

In addition to the physical response, there is also a psychological response. In these situations, our brain can operate in one of two ways. On one level, we think in a rational manner, on the other we are driven by the emotional side of our brain.

When faced with conflict, it is often the emotional side of our brain that dominates and we do not think clearly. Security staff should be aware of this and take time to think problems through and assess the situation with a clear head.

<u>Psychological responses</u>	
During a conflict situation, there is a tendency for people to be more emotional than rational.	
<i>Rational</i>	<i>Emotional</i>
Objectively assess all risk factors from all sources against experiences, available resources and options	Fear • Anger • Aggression

### Fight, Flight or Freeze

There are other aspects of how people react to conflict. All living beings (which include people) have three basic survival instincts. When the body prepares itself in response to fear we will either:

Fight	Flight (run away)	Freeze
<i>Defence</i>	<i>Fear</i>	<i>Shock</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect and prevent ourselves from further injury</li> <li>When fleeing is not an option</li> <li>The instinct to remove or neutralise the cause or effects of the problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To avoid injury or death</li> <li>To seek help or safer conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camouflage themselves or reduce retaliation</li> </ul>

Where 'flight' is the chosen option, it is often used to create an opportunity to communicate with others at risk and to gather together the appropriate resources to deal with the risk. In this way, it is a sensible tactical approach and can hardly be considered to be 'cowardice'.

### After the threat is removed

When the threat has gone physiological responses are:

- Breathing becomes slower and deeper
- Glucose levels reduce
- Heart rate slows down
- Blood supply returns to normal
- Muscles relax

Then we are back to normal – or are we?



Signs and  
symptoms of  
shock

After any traumatic event there is always the danger of shock. The security team member needs to be very aware of the symptoms of shock – as it can kill. Shock affects us all in different ways, and whilst one person may suffer no symptoms or effects at all, another may show symptoms of shock immediately, whilst another may not display symptoms until sometime after the event.

The signs that somebody is suffering from shock include:

- A rapid but weak pulse
- Rapid shallow breathing
- Air hunger
- Pale, grey-blue skin
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Giddiness
- Thirst
- Restless, anxious or aggressive
- The person may become unconscious

Treatment of  
Shock

The treatment of shock involves:

- Removing the cause
- Laying the casualty down
- Raising and supporting the legs
- Loosening tight clothing
- Keeping the casualty warm
- Counselling
- DIAL 999

## 2. Assessing and reducing risk in conflict

### 6 Golden principles of customer care

One of the greatest causes of conflict is the failure to communicate and keep subjects informed of what is happening, why it is happening, or what may be expected to happen (and when). In dealing with conflict, it is important that security team members remember the 6 golden rules to customer care:

1. Acknowledge the person  
Acknowledge the presence of the subject and identify yourself.
2. Identify the person's needs  
Find out what their expectations and priorities are and in what time scales they want them achieved by.
3. Involve the customer  
Work with the customer to identify a viable solution. Team members should be fully aware of the options available to them and their limitations, but also be flexible in their approach to finding a satisfactory compromise.
4. Empathise  
Put yourself in the person's shoes. Listen carefully, exercising active listening skills and acknowledge their grievances.
5. Accept responsibility  
This does not mean declaring that it is your fault, but acting assertively and taking responsibility to find acceptable solutions or compromises for the person involved.
6. See it through  
Provide information and support until the issue is resolved, keep them informed, explain the situation and why it is necessary and provide alternative courses of action if possible.

### Dealing with grievances

Unreasonable or unachievable customer expectations might include:

- The visitor or complainant who wants to see a specific person now
- The complainant who wants immediate refund
- The important and offended visitor who wants 'that person fired'
- The protestor who claims that your company must stop doing this immediately

Ensure that you:

- Identify what their grievance is and what they want to achieve.

*What are their priorities, timescales and what compromises are they likely to make?*

- Consider what, in the context of the procedures, are your options and what you can deliver.
- Negotiate a mutually acceptable solution.

*Provide them with information that you have and see if a compromise is possible.*

- Consider how you can benchmark whether the agreed objectives have been met.
- If the customer is still not satisfied, give details of the customer complaint procedures and how they can access it.

### Stages of escalation in conflict situations

By assessing risk and choosing the right response to the situation, the individual increases the likelihood of achieving the desired objectives of:

- Controlling the situation and maintaining control
- Resolving the problem quickly and fairly
- Avoiding injury to parties concerned or bystanders
- Reducing damage to premises or property

Security staff members should take measures to ensure that they:

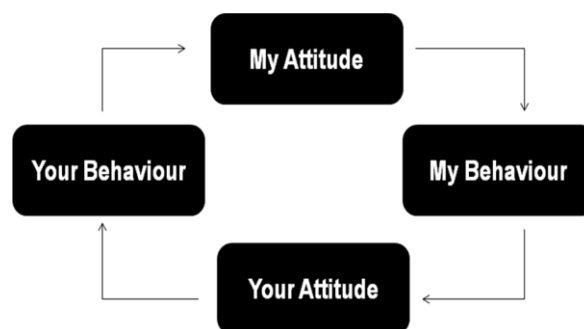


- Understand the facts of the incident
- Adopt preventative measures to stop the situation worsening
- Reducing the risk of an allegation of assault
- Spend time and resources effectively to resolve the situation

The attitude and behaviour of the individual will have a significant influence on the outcome of a situation. This is best seen in the attitude behaviour cycle.

#### Attitude behaviour cycle

The attitude/behaviour cycle works in such a way that the attitude of one person affects their behaviour towards another person or situation, which in turn affects the attitude of the second person, which then affects their behaviour towards the first person. In simple terms, it is a vicious circle which unless broken will continue without result. The diagram demonstrates the cycle.



As long as the circle or cycle is allowed to continue, the situation is likely to deteriorate. It is a bit like the triangle of fire, where, if all of the components necessary for a fire exist in one place, a fire will occur. In the triangle of fire, there must be a conscious effort to separate the components to extinguish the fire. It is the same with conflict - in order to break the cycle one of the parties concerned must change their behaviour or attitude. This in turn will affect the response behaviour and attitude then enable a conclusion to be reached.

In this situation, it is better for the lead security staff member to break the cycle. Your primary duty is to ensure that the situation reaches a satisfactory conclusion as quickly as possible and at the lowest confrontational level possible. Some may see such an approach as backing down or as a weakness. This is wrong. Defusing and resolving situations effectively is a skill and the ability to break the cycle shows professionalism and control. Security staff must be aware of his/her own actions, since their own negative responses, such as rudeness, arrogance or lack of empathy may create the very workplace violence situation that he is trying to avoid.

Whilst there are a few isolated individuals who will deliberately seek violent confrontations, sometimes without warning, the majority of people will be acting on influences and signals that they have received and to which they will respond in a way that experience has taught them is appropriate in their circumstances and will best serve their interests.

#### Common signatures and characteristics of escalating responses

- They are an expression of the subject's perception of the situation or circumstances. It is important that the member of the team tries to understand this perception ('empathy')
- They are an attempt by the subject to bring the situation or circumstances within his or her control
- If one level of interaction fails, it is likely that the subject will escalate to the next level. If inappropriate intervention is offered (arrogance, rudeness, refusal to communicate or failure to acknowledge), this may happen very rapidly
- If appropriate intervention is offered, it is usually possible to de-escalate back to a lower level

#### Indicators of aggressive or potentially violent behaviour

Level one: Normal behaviour

Normal behaviour involves: Normal conversation, debate and compromise.

Level two: Mild irritation

Mild irritation might be demonstrated through:

- Slight raising of the voices – voice becomes more strident as situation deteriorates into level three
- Basic gestures, finger wagging, pointing, etc
- Interrupting

- Emphasising one particular point continuously, regardless of reasoning or response
- Constantly states you are not listening to them, considering their point of view, or being unreasonable

Level three: Frustration

Frustration is demonstrated in the following way:

- The person becomes more insistent on points taken up in level two
- Dismissing other people's proposals (including yours)
- Staring and glaring or shouting and blaming
- Flushing of the face
- Snarling and lips clenching over the teeth
- Trying to attract your attention
- Drumming of fingers, sharp tapping of pens, keys, papers or any other item to hand on any surface
- Pacing, impatience and clockwatching (the 'busy-man' scenario)
- May start to give ultimatums or insist on access to a higher level of management or try to block out other approaches to or demands on your services

Level four: Controlling behaviours

As anger grows, the aggressor can attempt to dominate and take control. This can be seen in the following behaviours:

- Clenching and unclenching of fists
- Attempts to 'hassle' or fluster
- Attempts to isolate by moving into or in and out of personal space, or even intimate space by using extended arms and legs or sheer body bulk as blocking devices to limit your movement (also see 'Proxemics' below)
- Increased volume to block out other inputs
- Crushing papers, polystyrene cups, breaking pencils, etc
- Heavy and emphasised limb movements
- Staring and visual 'lock-on'
- Heavier demands and ultimatums

Level five: Displays of potency and force

At this level, we get warning signs of aggression. The signs can include:

- Kicking and punching of inanimate objects
- Exaggerated inflation of chest
- Muscle stretching exercises
- Over-exaggerated pacing in and out of intimate space
- Glances acquiring information and concentrating on the target
- Tensing and dropping of shoulders

Level six: Physical threats and direct intimidation

At the sixth level, aggression is directed at the other person and includes:

- Poking and pushing
- Other threatening behaviours
- Stronger ultimatums and demands (the 'or else' scenario)

Level seven: Physical attack

At the seventh level, the situation has descended into violence and we see the first punch, kick or head-butt.

## Passive behaviour

Passive behaviour is evident when people:

- Apologise a lot
- Do not make eye contact
- Put themselves down
- Ramble when speaking
- Back down
- Agree to things they do not want to do
- Have a quiet strained voice
- Fidget
- Smile consistently
- Use negative or uncaring phrases in conversation

This type of behaviour can be deceptive and as an individual, you should take care not to be lulled into a false sense of security. This type of behaviour is commonly linked with guilt. What the guilty party attempts to do is to make you feel sorry for them and to take the matter no further.

## Threat posed by persons

There are essentially four considerations when considering the threat posed by persons:

- Known facts about the person's history or background
- Physical characteristics of the person
- The behaviour of the person, indications of anger and their response to reasoning
- Any threat from third party involvement

In weighing up the situation, you need to consider:

What they know about the person? Is there a history of:

- Criminal, violent or abusive activity
- Anger and aggression and what is the usual conclusion to such episodes
- Involvement in drugs or alcohol abuse
- Health problems
- The aggressor being a danger to themselves or to others
- The aggressor reacting violently to known persons or situations

What can be observed? A dynamic assessment should be made of the individual(s):

- Size, height, weight, sex, age and fitness
- Their 'state of readiness' (i.e. their balance, posture)
- Physical state in respect of substance abuse or health problems
- Any injuries or disabilities that they might possess (including educational or communications disabilities)

Behavioural patterns

The basic patterns of behaviour are:

- Co-operation The majority of people will comply with requests
- Passive Indicating agreement whilst believing something else
- Active Pushing, shoving, pulling or walking off
- Aggressive Shouting, swearing, personal insults, verbal threats, bullying and harassment
- Violent Punching, fighting, kicking and various forms of assault
- Aggravated Extreme violence, use of weapon

Be aware that a person's behaviour may fluctuate during an incident. Effective interpretation (or reading) of these fluctuations and effective management of these situations, will often make the avoidance of violence possible. When considering a person and their response to reasoning, the decision that security staff must reach is whether the aggressor is co-operating and the situation is progressing to a satisfactory conclusion, or is the situation worsening and the aggressor's behaviour becoming increasingly out of control.

### Warning and danger signs

#### Anger warning signs include:

- Non-verbal adaptors  
*People who do not adapt their conversation in response to dialogue*
- Prolonged eye contact
- Facial colour flushes/darkens
- Standing tall, head back
- Kicking the ground
- Large movements
- Breathing quickens

#### Anger danger signs include:

- Clenching and unclenching fists
- Facial colour pales
- Lips tightening over the teeth
- Chin and eyebrows drop
- Shoulders tensing
- Hands move above the waist  
*(arming the delivery system)*
- Target acquisition glances
- Stance changes and body lowers

All of the above signs are linked to our basic animal behaviour patterns for engaging or disengaging from a potential or perceived threat. Of course as we have already observed, there are subjects that will not respond to the empathetic statement. In these cases, the risk of aggression and violence is very much higher and each situation will need to be dynamically risk assessed by you.

Finally, in making any assessment, the member of the security team should also take into account other parties that might become involved in the situation. In particular: Does the aggressor have accomplices and are they likely to become involved? Are there external spectators who may interfere with the situation or make it worse?

We must also be careful in such situations to be sensitive to social and environmental conditions and expectations (indeed, to some degree the law requires it of us), being careful not to refer in any derogatory way to things that may make the situation worse (racial, religious, gender orientation, etc).

### The threat associated with objects

The threat associated with objects essentially relates to those items and objects that might be used as weapons if a situation were to escalate. Considerations relate to objects that are designed as weapons such as knives, through to objects that can be improvised as weapons such as glasses, scissors or smaller items of furniture or equipment. The two key questions are:

- Are there items in the area that might be used as weapons?
- Does the person have access to weapons?

The response to these questions will dictate the response of the member(s) of the team to the situation.

### The threat associated with the location

The threat associated with location can range from the generic through to the specific. The objective of any such action is to deny the aggressor access to weapons or potential weapons. The best approach is a proactive one – keep the arena clear of possible weapons. However, you must also be alerted to what the potential aggressor brings into the arena with them as this will allow a colleague to assist.

The types of issue might include:

- Are there immediate slip, trip and fall risks (for example, if the incident occurs on a building site)?
- Are there other hazards, such as traffic including warehouse traffic?
- Do you have easy access to an escape route if the situation deteriorates beyond your control?
- Is lighting sufficient for risk to be fully assessed?
- What support is available from other members of the security team?
- If the situation escalated, would it pose a risk to innocent by-standers?

## Proxemics

Considering the issue of behaviour in the conflict management situation, the invasion or attempted invasion of personal or intimate space by a stranger may indicate a serious or dangerous deterioration in a situation. Proxemics is the study of interspatial relationships in people and other animals. For us, it relates to how we define and use those areas of space in our immediate vicinity in our interactions with other humans.

We define those spaces around us as:

0m-0.5m	Intimate space	The space in which we only usually allow the most intimate contact and transactions by 'trusted' friends and colleagues.
0.5m-1.2m	Personal space	The space in which we usually interact with good friends, family members and those by whom we do not feel threatened.
1.2m-3m	Social space	The space within which we carry out most social interaction, including general conversation and dealing with customers.
3m+	Public space	The distance at which we freely intermingle with strangers

Proxemics are important in that the way people use them can indicate the nature or stage of a relationship. You should also be aware that your positioning could aggravate a situation if you stand too close to an aggressor.

## The relationship between time and distance

An average person can cover short distances very quickly:

- To cover 6 feet it takes - Less than ½ a second.
- To cover 12 feet - Less than a second.
- To cover 21 feet - Less than 1 ½ seconds.

This is known as the reactionary gap.

Another interesting set of facts relates to the average fight.

- An average fight lasts approximately 7 seconds.
- Within this time, 15 blows can be exchanged.
- Injury generally occurs within the first 3 seconds.

The significance is the speed at which events can escalate. On average, it will take just eight seconds for an aggressor to attack from twelve feet away to the conclusion of a fight. You do not have much time to react.

If you witness a fight, you should never intervene directly. Summon assistance should it be required.

## Responding to threats

When dealing with people displaying these types of behaviour (escalating signs of aggression and invasions of space), you should approach the situation cautiously. These types of situation can soon become confrontational and as a member of security staff, you should attempt to defuse the situation if trained to do so.

The approach you should always bear in mind as previously mentioned, is using emphatic phrases such as: "I understand what you are saying" or "Yes I know, how can I be of assistance?" or "Please don't shout, I'm here to assist you." Their objective is to establish a common ground and purpose from which the potentially confrontational situation can be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. However, not all situations can be resolved using verbal techniques.

## Immediate considerations

In situations where the conflict has not been resolved and there is a risk of escalation, we then reach the point where we have to make conscious decisions about the actions that we might have to take. Security staff will need to begin to formulate a strategy, after consideration of the following:

- Presence:* Will just being there, our position in relation to others, our stance and posture defuse the situation?
- Primary control skills:* Can we use containment, holding and escorting techniques to reduce the risk of aggression. Are we trained to deliver these techniques?
- Defensive strategies:* If this is not possible, can we use breakaways, blocks, and disengagement skills if the situation were to deteriorate and the aggressor become violent?
- Stopping strategies:* Would any physical actions you take to stop an incident, cause serious injury to you, the aggressor or bystanders?

In determining the correct approach, the staff will assess risk to themselves and others. The primary questions will be:

- Will your actions resolve the situation or worsen it?
- What back-up is available?
- Is the person responding to reasoning?
- What are the external factors (what is going on around the situation)?
- What are the behavioural signs?

## Options

If a situation cannot be resolved quickly, the options are essentially fourfold:

- Continuing with a verbal response: This will involve adapting your approach to engage with the aggressor.
- Seeking assistance: The intention might be to draw in another person to consider the concerns of the aggressor, buy time to allow the heat to be taken out of the situation, or increase the presence of security staff.
- Retreating: Sometimes, retreating from a situation might be the best course of action. If we consider the discussion surrounding proxemics, moving to a more distant zone can reduce tension.
- Taking action: This could include escorting people from the premises or even the use of force.

If the situation is deteriorating and there is possibly the need to use force, you will need to consider the following:

- Are you capable of using force reasonably?
- Have you received any formal training?
- Have you the capabilities to free yourself if overpowered?
- Can you justify the use of force?
- What assistance is available from colleagues?
- Does it comply with policies and procedures?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, security staff are advised to think twice before using force.

Remember, force should only be used to gain control and must be reasonable and proportionate. The highest priority at all times, without exception, is the prevention of death and the prevention or minimisation of injury.

## The importance of positioning and exit routes

We have mentioned previously that people are animals and, like other animals, we are at our most dangerous when cornered. It is important then that we always have an escape or exit route; otherwise the option of 'flight' is not available to us. This applies to both the aggressor and the defender, as cornering an aggressor might trigger a fight response out of panic. Therefore, security staff must be very conscious of the environment in which they are working, particularly in the context of entry and exit routes. They should not place themselves between the potential aggressor and the aggressor's exit routes. Equally, they should ensure that they themselves have an available and accessible exit route and that they do not manoeuvre the aggressor into a position where that route is blocked.



### 3: Communicating in emotive situations to de-escalate conflict

**How to use non-verbal communication in emotive situations** Studies have indicated that only 7% of human communication is carried out by speech, the remaining 93% of communication is non-verbal. Of that 93%, 38% is by vocal tones, or the way that we use our voices rather than what we say and the remaining 55% is by what we know as body-language, which includes facial expression, posture and hand gestures. This non-verbal communication will include not only the signals that we send out, but also where we are standing in relation to the person we are communicating with.

It is not enough then that we carefully compose and deliver a string of words including requests, demands and information. We must also consider the way in which we deliver those words, that is; how we stand, how we use our hands and our facial expressions. Failure to consider and coordinate these issues may at best confuse the person whom we are communicating with and at worst may trigger a violent incident caused by a contradiction between what we say and what we gesture.

**Posture, Movement and Gestures** We also discussed posture, particularly those postures and changes in posture associated with identification of levels of aggression and violence. Not only must individuals be aware of and read the subject's posture, they must be very aware of their own to ensure that they are not sending out negative or challenging signals. As members of a security team we should be using positive postures that welcome and indicate non-aggression and the readiness to listen.

Hand gestures are an important part of non-verbal communication and security staff should always be conscious of what they are doing with their hands and arms. Where one open gesture may greatly reduce the threat or challenge that the subject feels himself to be under, another dismissive gesture may escalate a situation in a fraction of a second.

Examples of welcoming body language will include:

- A smile
- Open handed gestures
- Non-challenging ('soft') eye-to-eye contact
- Flowing and deliberate movements and gestures, rather than sharp and aggressive jabs
- Careful and respectful use of Proxemics, so as not to send out threatening signals

Aggressive body language that should be avoided might include:

- Snarling or scowling
- Arms akimbo (hands on hips with elbows turned outwards) or crossed securely or clenched fists
- Fast jerky movements and the use of hand gestures such as pointing or finger wagging

Invasion of personal or intimate space

The member of the security staff needs to match the hand gestures with other signals that are being sent out.

For example, the effect of a smile coupled with the universal open-handed gesture of 'peace' can be quickly destroyed if the security staff member then starts unobtrusively snapping pencils or tearing up pieces of paper (both of which indicate frustration or latent aggression).

**Proxemics** Most of the transaction in a communication with a customer will occur in the social space area, approximately 1 to 3 metres separating the parties. Proxemics divide the space in which we interact as:

0m-0.5m	Intimate space	The space in which we only usually allow the most intimate contact and transactions by 'trusted' friends and colleagues
0.5m-1.2m	Personal space	The space in which we usually interact with good friends, family members and those by whom we do not feel threatened

1.2m-3m	Social space	The space within which we carry out most social interaction, including general conversation and dealing with customers
3m+	Public space	The distance at which we freely intermingle with strangers

**Voice tone** Voice tone is also an important consideration when communicating. If you wish to hold somebody's attention for a sustained period and try to trigger curiosity and interest you will use a mixture of tones, speeds and volume. A flat monotone would only send the receiver to sleep or bore them. The opposite is the case when you are in a conflict situation, dealing with somebody that is already excitable.

- Stimulating conversation will require the tone and pitch to rise and fall, when dealing with conflict you will use a regular pitch, possibly concentrating on the lower end of the vocal scale to sooth
- In stimulating conversation, there will be changes in volume to emphasise points. When dealing with conflict you will use a steady soothing volume
- In stimulating conversation you vary speed to convey excitement. When dealing with conflict you will select a regular pace, not too fast and not too slow
- In stimulating conversation the texture of your voice will be harder, when dealing with conflict soften your voice and expressions

**Overcoming communication barriers** One of the roles of security staff is to communicate such things as requests, replies, instructions, information, directions, etc. However, this does not necessarily mean that our audience are receiving and understanding it. There are many reasons why transmitted information may not be received or, if received, it may not be understood.

<b>Barriers to good communication</b>	Physical & Environmental	→ Poor/faulty equipment, alarms and systems • Distance apart • Background noise, lighting • Damage to signage • Non-appropriate places • Layout.
	Process failure	→ Incorrect documentation • Failure to send information to correct parties • Lack of clarity reporting lines • Misunderstanding of responsibilities
	Attitude	→ Complacency • Assumption • Lack of concentration and interest • Pre-occupied • Concentration disability/difficulty.
	Emotion	→ Stress • Anger • Anxiety • Nerves
	Linguistic(sender)	→ Message lacks clarity • Accent, jargon, slang • Poor choice of language • Poor choice of communication method • Body language.
	Linguistic(receiver)	→ Unable to understand the subject • Hearing disabilities • Literacy skills • English as a second language.

**Establish whether information has been received** We need to confirm that the person *understands* what is being communicated and that they understand it in the way that we intended. We can establish this by: Watching the customer's response • Listening to the customer's response • Asking questions • If questions are not understood, rephrasing them • Listening to and assessing the response • Using assertiveness. In some cases, this may require considerable patience. The responsibility is on security staff, who is taking control, to ensure that what is said is understood, not the other way round.

**Improving reception and understanding** There are some ways that we might improve the reception and understanding of what we have to say:

Plan	Plan what you are going to say so that you do not miss any key points • Be accurate, brief and concise • Take in to consideration the 6 common communication barriers • Find an appropriate environment to talk, or move to a more appropriate location/area • Specialist assistance might be required for clients with emotional or linguistic disabilities.
Deliver	Speak at a volume and speed that can be understood • Speak clearly in language that

	can be understood • Use supporting gestures and body language if appropriate.
Check	Rephrase messages if they are not understood • At the end of the discussion, recap on the key points of what has been agreed (particularly actions, priorities and timescales).

### Active listening

It is important therefore, that you signal to the subject that you are concentrating on them and you are listening carefully. This is known as 'active listening' and indicates to the subject that you are paying attention to, and concentrating on, what it is that they are communicating to you. Some of the ways that you do this might include: Focusing on the speaker • Focusing on the spoken word and body language • Do not be judgemental • Avoid agreeing or disagreeing with the speaker • Acknowledge the points that are being made verbally or with non-verbal techniques such as nodding • Paraphrase a long sentence into its relevant points and confirm with the subject that this is what they meant. If your understanding is incorrect, make adjustments as necessary and confirm your understanding again. Do not drop into patronising the subject, or treating them like a child.

### Aggression vs. Assertiveness

Some people see aggressiveness and assertiveness as being the same thing, but this is not the case.

Aggressiveness	Assertiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on the needs of the dominant party. Only accommodates the needs of others when they assist in achieving the dominant party's objectives.</li> <li>• Based on supremacy or 'authority'.</li> <li>• Likely to disintegrate when 'authority' is removed.</li> <li>• Solutions tend to be 'imposed'.</li> <li>• Solutions are one-sided and tend to be tyrannical.</li> <li>• Communication may be based on rudeness and arrogance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on achieving mutually acceptable solutions.</li> <li>• Based on 'consensus', or the agreement of both parties.</li> <li>• Tends to be longer lasting as long as the interests of both parties are recognised.</li> <li>• Solutions tend to be achieved mutually through 'firmness and fairness'.</li> <li>• Solutions are multi-faceted and achieved through compromise and negotiation.</li> <li>• Communication is based on impeccable politeness and respect by both parties.</li> </ul>

### Assertive security staff:

- They are polite at all times, including when closing off avenues of action. (e.g. "I'm sorry sir, you can't go through there. That area is for VIP's today").
- They must have the ability to objectively observe or listen to situations, identify and summarise the points of conflict and identify and propose achievable solutions.
- They must appear confident and calm.
- They must appear to remain neutral and 'fair'. This does not mean giving in to every demand of the person making the complaint, but it does mean being able to understand their point of view ('empathy'). Being 'empathetic' does not necessarily mean being 'sympathetic', since giving sympathy may imply giving a bias to one side of the conflict.
- They must appear firm ('resolute') in understanding what is achievable and must be prepared to explain the limits to which he or she can go. This might mean that the compromise solution may be along the lines of; "I can't agree to that myself since I don't have the authority to do so, but I'll see if it's possible to arrange an appointment for you to see the Manager". It may be necessary at this time to point out that the subject 'cannot go to the Manager's office right now, since he only sees people by appointment'.
- They are able to recognise and appropriately respond to aggression.

### Levels of assertiveness

The usual response will usually be to send a clear non-verbal signal coupled with a request, statement or instruction.

Request: Please wait there, sir. I'm here to help where I can.

Statement: If you wait there, I'll get back to you as soon as I have some information.

Instruction: You'll have to wait there, you are not allowed in this area.

If the invasion of space is persistent or determined, you may need to draw in assistance.

#### Defusing emotive situations

Non-verbal communication should be used to signal non-aggression. Open-handed gestures, smooth flowing movements and the use of proxemics; try to work in the social space between 1.2 and 3 metres. Smiling might be used where appropriate, but care needs to be exercised that it does not appear that you are trivialising their complaint or patronising them personally.

You should listen to their full explanation of the problem as they perceive it. Do not cut them short before they have finished unless this is the only way that direct physical aggression can be avoided. One of the ways that direct aggression may be avoided (when the subject is reaching a point of excitement) is by saying, "Can I just summarise what you have told me so far, so I can make sure that I understand you".

Do not be judgemental or biased, you should listen to their problem or complaint with an open mind.

Use an empathetic approach and try to understand not only their complaint, but also their perception of how the complaint arose and how it affects them. It is a key approach to defusing emotive situations and indicate to the subject that you want to help them, are willing to listen to their complaint and that you wish to find and agree a solution that is acceptable to both parties with them.

You should take ownership of the problem. That does not mean that you accept responsibility for the cause of the problem on behalf of the company, but rather that you take responsibility for finding a solution as best you can.

Be positive and use assertiveness to reach mutually acceptable solutions.

You should be very aware of the limits on your responsibilities and authority. Do not promise more than you can deliver (in fact, the basic principle is 'under promise, over deliver', on which we speak about further below).

That you 'see the problem through'. As a member of the security team you will generally be working shifts, which may mean that your shift ends before the problem is resolved. In such cases you should introduce the oncoming team member to the complainant and explain the details of the case to him, including details of what has been agreed, in front of the complainant (so that they can confirm that this is the situation that exists).

We have mentioned above the principle of 'under promise, over deliver'. For this you need to be very aware of the limits of your authority and your ability to deliver solutions. The approach is based on promising slightly less than you know what it is within your ability to deliver. In this way:

You are left with a little leeway with which to negotiate any further problems that may subsequently arise.

You are in a position to deliver slightly more than you promised, which will please the customer and enhance their respect for you.

#### Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Whilst we are making every effort to achieve a compromised solution without the situation deteriorating, there will be times when the customer starts or continues to display an unacceptable pattern of behaviour. The initial approach is the 'empathetic statement' to try and make the customer realise that a solution is best found by cooperation and that they therefore have an interest in cooperating.

However, this will not always achieve the desired result and failure to take prompt and firm action may lead to a serious deterioration in the situation. One principle that must be maintained throughout these deteriorating phases is to maintain politeness and assertiveness. Guidelines and instructions about how to deal with these situations may vary from site to site and company to company (certainly in regards to limits on what you are and are not allowed to do). It is important therefore that security staff familiarise themselves with such instructions, policies and procedures as exist on their particular site or assignment.

Factors affecting  
behaviour

How the situation develops will depend to some degree on any one of a number of factors, including:

- The subject's relationship with the company (employee, contractor, customer, visitor or caller off the street)
- How the subject perceives their position (e.g. something to lose, nothing to lose, something to gain, nothing to gain)
- The subject's mental state
- The subject's condition in relation to alcohol or substance abuse
- The subject's social and cultural conditioning

A proactive approach should be taken to deal with unacceptable behaviour. It is important that where the subject starts to display unacceptable behaviour, this should be signalled to them and as we see below, the possible outcomes should be explained. This will require the use of assertiveness, which we have covered previously. You should avoid making threats of actions that you cannot or should not deliver, as it makes you look foolish and is unprofessional.

If the situation continues to deteriorate, it may be necessary to refer to the possible consequences:

- "Please do not use such language or behaviour here, it is unacceptable and I *am* trying to help you."
- With regard to employees, contractors, and other associates: "If you continue to use such language or behaviour I will have no choice but to make a complaint through the company grievance procedure. Now, how can we sort this out together?"
- "I am trying to help you (Sir/Madam), but if you continue to use such language or behaviour I am going to have to ask you leave the premises. I want to find a solution with you, but if you continue to behave like this I will have to call the police."

If the situation is deteriorating, it may become necessary to involve a colleague.

Working with  
colleagues to de-  
escalate conflict

Where dealing with low-level frustration, irritation or lack of satisfaction it is often best to deal with the subject on a one-to-one basis, since involving a second person may act as an escalation. However, there are some times where it is desirable or necessary to work with colleagues:

- Where the subject has colleagues or accomplices and back-cover is needed by the security staff
- Where the security team member may need the moral support and back-up of another team member due to the potential imminence of a physical attack
- Where a conflict of personalities is making it difficult to communicate with a particular subject, handing over to a colleague may be the answer

Handing over to a colleague where he or she has a particular and relevant expertise, or is able to display to particular type of empathy (for example, some security team members may have training in dealing with substance abuse or mental health issues)

When thinking about the circumstances under which a colleague should become involved, or asking a colleague to actually assist, the following should be considered:

- One-to-one interaction is always the preferable way to deal with customers. Calling a colleague for support can be seen as an escalation, but sometimes it is necessary
- A simple and discreet means of triggering or summoning assistance should be agreed and practised beforehand to reduce the possibilities of escalation
- However many people are in attendance, only one should actually attend the customer's needs at any one time
- When one security team member hands over to another a briefing must occur, including agreed actions so far, within the hearing of the customer

Team roles

Where a second team member is brought in to assist with de-escalating a potential conflict, one team member will act in the face-to-face role with the subject (the 'lead' role), and the second will act in a visible

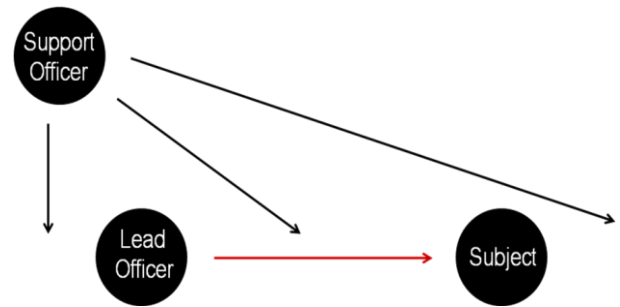
but supporting role. Where appropriate the newly arrived team member may take over the lead role, but the team member dropping back into the support role will have to summarise the situation in the hearing of the subject before dropping back.

Only one team member should act in the lead role at any one time, otherwise the subject may become confused or disorientated.

The role of the support team member is:

- To offer physical support to the lead team member, should it be required
- To respond to requests and directions by the lead team member, as required
- To monitor the surrounding area (including the area to the back of the lead team member) for threats, enabling the lead team member to concentrate on the subject and the problem
- To monitor the subject for threat signals possibly unseen by the lead team member

The support team member will not usually initiate a physical response unless requested to do so by the lead team member. However, if the support team member has seen an immediate and significant threat not seen by the lead team member, it may be necessary for him to act instantly.





#### 4: Problem solving strategies to resolve conflict

Importance of viewing the situation from the customer's perspective

Empathy is a very useful approach when dealing with conflict situations. It shows a higher level of understanding and indicates to the aggressor that you understand the reasons for their behaviour and concerns, and that you will do all in your power to resolve the situation. It is important in defusing conflict situations and indicates to a potential aggressor that you understand the issue and circumstances that are upsetting them, and are better placed to find a solution that will address those issues and circumstances. Empathy helps you to build rapport with the customer and once a rapport is established a conflict or aggression situation is much less likely.

Proactive use of empathy may prevent the incident from deteriorating into conflict. Before speaking to, or offering assistance to an employee, visitor or customer, security staff should consider how they would feel if they were the customer and what they would expect of you, the security team member. You should consider whether your actions, or what you intend to say:

Be acknowledged and accepted	Or	Ignored and rejected
Deals with the situation in a way that does not aggravate	Or	Would the approach make the situation worse
Make the recipient feel that you respect their views	Or	Make them feel as though you are being condescending towards them or dismissive of their views

Empathy does not necessarily mean that you agree with the views of the other person, empathy is not sympathy. As we have discussed previously, some situations that lead to conflict are due to people not being happy with procedures or routines. Remember, those routines will have been prepared and implemented for a reason and it is your duty to carry out those procedures. It is inevitable that people will test your ability and confidence in these situations. Backing down or showing favouritism in order to avoid conflict is not empathy and could undermine security. Empathy is more a question of approach, trying to understand the viewpoint of the other person and communicating your understanding to that person.

Showing empathy Ways that empathy may be signalled to the customer include:

- Where the customer is encouraged to speak openly without evaluation, judgement or criticism.
- Inviting the customer to expand on a particular point.
- Paraphrasing what the customer has said, to confirm understanding and show that you are listening.
- Repetition, echoing and reflection.
- The picking up of and responding to verbal and non-verbal cues, e.g. nodding.
- The use of statements on what has been observed or implied, e.g. "You were particularly upset about this, weren't you."
- Supportive comments linking you with the customer, e.g. "I can sense how angry you have been feeling about this."

It is worth considering that empathy can be both learned and rehearsed.

Strategies for solving problems

It is most unlikely that a problem will be resolved whilst there is anger and aggression in the air, so your first task is to address these issues. Once the aggression has been dissipated, it is possible to build an eight-point problem resolution plan as follows:

Step 1: Build a rapport and relationship with the customer. This will reduce the likelihood of further aggression, examples of emphatic statements are: "I understand what you are saying." • "Yes I know, how can I be of assistance?" • "Please don't shout or point, I'm here to assist you."

Simply parroting the statement and then following your own agenda will be valueless and will be seen as such. Such an approach would almost certainly cause conflict. Over-stating emphatic statements might also

be viewed as condescension. The empathic statement is important in signalling to the customer that you appreciate that they have a real problem that needs addressing and that you want to find a solution to their problem, with their assistance.

Step 2: Identify the nature of the grievance. How grievance appears to them • How and when grievance arose • What impact the grievance has on them • Source and type of grievance.

Step 3: Identify the customer's expectations. What are the customer's objectives? • What is the order of priorities? • When do they want to achieve their objectives by?

Step 4: Identify where needs converge. Where does what they want, match what you want? • What else can you offer them that you expect to offer them anyway? These will be seen by the customer as 'gains' and should improve the situation. Such gains might be 'negotiated' to achieve gains for the company.

Step 5: Identify possible areas of compromise. Know where you can compromise and identify where the customer is willing to. What are they prepared to give up to get an improvement? • If something cannot be fully achieved, can you go part of the way to meet them?

Step 6: Explain and rationalise the options that are available. There will be times, because of policy or the interests of the majority, or some other reason, that you cannot concede some things. You need to explain this in a positive way – highlight the benefits to both the individual and others, and point out where meeting the demands of the individual will have an obviously adverse effect on others. Never give your justification as "because I say so."

Step 7: Forecast the implementation process and lead times of available options. Project how long things will take and explain where delays may occur • Explain the impact of one action upon another.

Step 8: Negotiate, confirm and implement the mutually agreed solution. Agree a path forward • Confirm the agreement • Implement the agreement • Follow through until implementation is confirmed. Where parts of the implementation are being done by others, you will need to track their actions to ensure that all aspects of the agreement have been achieved.

**Negotiation tools** Tools that might be available to you in negotiating with the customer *may* include: The ability to apply pressure (preferably subtly and presented in such a way as the customer perceives a benefit from it) • The ability to offer compromises and alternatives that will go some way to achieving the objectives of both parties • The ability to offer limited incentives (do not offer 'secret' incentives, because they will not remain secret very long) • Identifying where the customer expectations coincide with company needs • Experience gained from previous similar incidents.

When with the colleague/customer you need to be aware of the limits to your authority and ability to make concessions or agree outcomes. The very worst thing that you can do is to offer a concession that it is not within your power to agree (unless it is done with the proviso "I'll ask if it's possible to do this", but if you do that, you will need to get it quickly ratified by someone in authority). Doing so will make you look foolish, lose you respect and may immediately throw you back into the arena of aggression.

**Win-Win approach to conflict** When resolving problem situations, the ideal solution is one known as the win-win solution. A win-win solution involves problems that have been resolved by achieving the following: All parties being involved in agreeing a solution in which all parties gain some benefit • An agreement is reached in a friendly way • Few or no reprisals will follow • Violence or aggression is not used.

**Benefits of Win-Win** The benefits of putting win-win solutions in place are that at the end of the process everyone should feel good. The more immediate and apparent benefits are: Everyone has a stake in the agreement, so there should be no resentment • Because of the mutual agreement, everyone should work for its successful implementation • It should be long lasting • The problem is prevented from escalating or recurring.

Examples of Win-Win situations

Situation	Possible Win-Win solution
You are in the reception area when you hear a colleague shouting and making unreasonable noise	When requesting they might like to reduce the volume, you may highlight details of future meetings they are due to attend later and suggest they would prefer less noise to conduct such.
Two colleagues are arguing over the use of the photocopier	When you speak with them you could suggest the one who is waiting uses the fax machine to copy their documents

## 5. Good practice to follow after a conflict situation

Post incident reactions	<p>Need to talk through experiences • Incessant rambling • Descriptions of visual and physical experiences may seem extreme • Attempt to analyse and rationalise their own actions and draw lessons.</p> <p>Look out for symptoms of shock (discussed earlier). The symptoms are normal and can be purely psychological.</p>
Sources of help and support	<p>Learning from incidents and the ways in which we have dealt with them, plays a fundamental part in the process of risk assessment, reduces the risk of conflict in the future and helps us to introduce better methods of dealing with conflict situations. Emotional support following an incident is available in the form of: Work colleagues • Management • Company or site occupational health advisors • Victim Support groups • Counsellors.</p> <p>Those involved in providing emotional support are trained to deal with situations involving violence including post-traumatic stress relating to violent incidents, and may be sought through employers, the phonebook or on the internet. Some employers may provide access to such facilities through confidential hotlines or internal intranets, details of which will usually be publicised locally.</p> <p>Debrief and counselling should take place in a separate secure area. Where the incident is major and where the incident has involved many different actors of both genders from a range of disciplines, this process obviously becomes more complex - but it is equally important.</p>
Value of accessing help	<p>Intelligent and proactive use of such facilities is important in reducing or mitigating the effects of involvement in such incidents. Violent incidents are quite often beyond the realm of 'normal' human experience and we may need help in understanding what has happened to our colleagues and ourselves.</p> <p>Prompt use creates a number of benefits: Helps dealing with shock • Support and reassurance • Lessons and experiences can be analysed and assessed quickly • Early intervention by experienced and competent professionals can reduce the effects of post-traumatic stress • Early opportunities to process information on experiences can enhance the security professionals skill set • There is less likelihood of incidents entering the realm of gossip and folklore, particularly in the form of incorrect or misleading rumours or misinformation.</p> <p>Such assistance may also be needed where people who may have experienced the incident indirectly, possibly as part of a post-incident investigation. This may be the case where large quantities of CCTV footage have to be intricately examined.</p>
Importance of reflecting and learning from conflict situations	<p>It is important to learn from situations that have caused conflict and try to establish the cause of the problem and solutions or measures to prevent it from reoccurring. Reflecting and learning from past conflict situations will enable security staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the cause</li> <li>• Identify ways to eliminate or prevent the cause</li> <li>• Assess how well the situation was dealt with to analyse effective or non-effective strategies and tactics, identify team and individual strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Assess what they could have done better</li> </ul> <p>It is important that we learn from events, especially 'near misses'; where we came close to having an incident, but it was avoided or terminated by events or interventions outside of our control. The learning process can be facilitated by sharing and discussing the incident with your colleagues.</p>

When considering an event, be honest with yourself as it might help you or others in the future:

- Reflect on the time it took to deal with the situation
- Identify the effects or the risks faced by others, including the aggressor
- Did the action(s) taken assist or make the situation worse?
- Would further training/mentoring be required?
- Are resources for such situations correctly targeted?

Learn from your mistakes, build upon your successes and share them with your professional colleagues, so that they may all learn from them.

Importance of sharing best practice

Sharing information and best practice will: Reduce the risks or recurrences of situations you have found yourself in e.g. risks of assault on you or colleagues • Enable your employer, you and your colleagues to learn from incidents, adapt to changing circumstances, culture and attack methodologies • Introduce a level of development and continuity into work practices • Develop a more accurate understanding of what is expected • Assist in the correct targeting of resources.

Importance of contributing solutions to recurring problems

As we have seen earlier in health and safety, both employers and employees have legal duties to create and maintain a safe working environment. These duties include investigating and analysing health and safety incidents and 'near misses' with a view to developing safer working practice from lessons learnt. This process also links in with the requirement to maintain comprehensive and up-to-date risk assessments – a process in which both employers and employees are required to take part. Incidents of violence at work would fall under this heading.

There is then, a legal compliance requirement in reporting and investigating incidents of violence at work. However, the benefits of doing so go well beyond the requirements of the law. Understanding the factors that create the potential for violence or conflict in the workplace, and understanding the effectiveness of the management measures that we use to reduce and manage violence or conflict, is essential in making the workplace a more pleasant place to conduct business.

The security team they will have an important role to play in this process, based on a range of vital experiences and views gained from the practical application of the existing processes. The experiences gained by the security staff will be almost unique both in quantity and quality, and this input will be valuable in:

- Assessing the effectiveness of existing procedures.
- Improving existing procedures and developing new ones.
- Identifying choke and flash points, particularly those that appear regularly.
- Creating safer working environments.
- Identifying training and development needs.
- Reducing stress in the workplace, particularly in regard to front line workers.
- Improving the customer experience generally.