

FOCUS: DE-ESCALATION & CONFLICT PREVENTION

WHY THIS MATTERS: VERBAL AGGRESSION TOWARD RESTAURANT STAFF HAS RISEN SHARPLY SINCE 2023; 75 % OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES REPORT WEEKLY INCIVILITY.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS



Escalation Clue	Customer Agitation	Verbal Aggression	Physical Cues
What You Might See/Hear	Fidgeting, pacing, clenched fists, raised voice	Insults, profanity, threats	Rapid breathing, slamming objects
Immediate Action	Calm tone; open stance	Safety position; call support	Code Yellow; Disengage

4-STEP DE-ESCALATION MODEL

- **Acknowledge & Empathize;** “I can see this is frustrating.”
- **Clarify the Issue;** Ask open questions; paraphrase.
- **Offer Options;** Provide two reasonable solutions.
- **Close & Follow-Through;** Confirm agreement; thank them.

LANGUAGE THAT CALMS

- Instead of “That’s our policy.” → try “Here’s what I can do to help.”
- Instead of “Calm down.” → try “Let’s figure this out together.”
- Instead of “You’re over-reacting.” → try “I understand this is important to you.”

WHEN TO DISENGAGE & CALL FOR HELP

- Threats of physical harm
- Weapon displayed or suspected
- Escalation continues after two attempts



STAY CALM, STAY SAFE