

CALM

Listen Skills for Diffusing Anger

Godfrey P, Davis B. 1987

Calm Yourself First, Don't Get Defensive



- Suspend all judgment.
- Commit yourself to calming the other person.
- Remember that resolution cannot happen as long as the individual is angry.
- Be as relaxed as possible.
- Display an open style of body language (e.g., keep your arms out at your sides rather than crossed on your chest, uncross your legs, use positive facial expressions).

Acknowledge the Importance of What the Other Person Is Saying



- Make eye contact.
- Ask the other person to tell you more about the situation.
- Show your concern for the other person's needs.

Listen Actively



- Let the other person voice his feelings.
- Listen for information the other person is sharing.
- Do not interrupt.

Make Sure You Understand



- Clarify and summarize the other person's concerns.
- Use feeling words (i.e., empathize) that demonstrate your desire to understand the angered person.
- After summarizing, ask the other person if you have understood her position.

Source: Howard BJ. 2002. Calm: listening skills for diffusing anger. In Jellinek M, Patel BP, Froehle MC, eds., Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health - Volume II. Tool Kit. Arlington, VA: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health.