

## **Crisis Prevention**

The following "10 tips for Crisis Prevention" were adapted by Yale University Libraries from those provided by the National Crisis Prevention Institute:

### **Remain calm and be empathetic.**

- Try to show respect.
- Do not be judgmental.

### **Clarify messages.**

- Make sure you understand what is being said.
- Repeat your request if necessary.

### **Respect personal space.**

- Don't stand too close for comfort.

### **Be aware of body position.**

- Don't stand straight in front of another person or appear to block his/her avenue of escape.
- Keep your nonverbal cues non-threatening.
- The more an individual loses control, the less the person listens to your actual words.

### **Permit verbal venting where possible.**

- Let the angry person blow off steam.

### **Set and enforce reasonable limits.**

- State what you will permit.
- Offer a choice of actions or alternatives if you can.

### **Avoid overreacting.**

- Strive to remain calm, rational and professional.
- Avoid the use of humor, sarcasm or personal remarks.

**Avoid using physical techniques (pushing, grabbing, etc.) except when personal safety is at risk.**

- Physical techniques can only make things worse, and may lead to subsequent lawsuits.

**Ignore challenging questions.**

- Do not respond to challenges to your authority, training, intelligence, policy, etc.
- Do not argue with outrageous statements.

**Be a team member when confronting a disturbed patron.**

- Get help and do not try to handle the situation alone.
- Give support to another staff member who has had to confront a disturbed patron.
- Alert other staff members when strange behavior occurs.

**Be aware of techniques for coping in a crisis situation. Be calm, empathetic, and respectful of personal space. Set limits, ignore outrageous statements, and let the customer vent. Request help and give support to co-workers.**

**Laurie's personal tip:**

**Suck air! You can't say something wrong when you're breathing in . . .**