

## Managing Challenging Patrons: Security for the New Library Environment – An Infopeople Webinar

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### TOOLS FOR TENSE SITUATIONS

Workplace violence prevention is a complex, national and international issue, involving many stakeholders, including HR, OSHA, and law enforcement. **(We can't fix what we don't know about.)**

There should be consequences for perpetrators and support for victims.

Type 1: Criminals

Type 2: Taxpayers and people who receive our services

Type 3: Current or former employees

Type 4: Domestic violence involving an employee

We're all in charge of safety and security here, not just the police or Sheriff. You don't have to confront bad people doing or getting ready to do bad things; just call 911 or 9-911 when it appears necessary.

Protect yourself – Manage your stress and anger by slow, deep, and controlled breathing – Work smart and get help when you need it – **QTIP**

Use your intuition; don't let other people talk you out of it.

Use Venting and Validation and Alignment

Listen for "third-party leakage" from potential threateners and **have the courage** to tell someone who can intervene. Look for "behaviors of concern."

Read people's facial expressions and body language quickly and connect it to any cultural differences, like eye contact or social space.

**If you see something, say something.** Tell your boss, co-workers, or the Police. Don't wait or talk yourself out of what you've seen. Be a professional witness.

**Introduce** yourself – **Explain** why you're there – **Ask** for compliance.

Use good communication skills and high-risk customer service skills with your challenging patrons.

Be careful around alcohol and stimulant drug users. They can be erratic.

When you're face to face, over the counter, or in the field, stay in **Condition Yellow**. Don't assume because they were cooperative before they can't be dangerous now.

Use "high-risk communications skills," space and distance angles, proxemic barriers, venting and validation, the Assertive Whisper, and physical movement.

Set boundaries over the telephone, especially for patrons who curse or threaten you. Watch your tone for condescension.

**Stop saying, "Calm down!"** Use other phrases that show empathy.

Use code words with each other like, "Go call Mr. Blue or Dr. Green." This should send your co-workers to a safe place to call 911 immediately.

Remember the three elements of the **Run – Hide – Fight** video. Evacuate (Evade) far away from the building, and not to a staging area. Shelter in Place (Barricade) in a room you can lock or block. Protect yourself as best as you can (Defend).

Have the **COURAGE** to tell our stakeholders when you need help with any safety or security issue. You can make a difference.

***Thanks for being an information shepherd.***