



Workplace Compliance During

COVID-19

Pandemic

**A Collection of Guidance
for Schools and Districts**

Considerations and Best Practices for Reopening Schools

North Bay Schools Insurance Authority

380A Chadbourne Road, Fairfield, CA 94534

Phone: (707) 482-1830 Fax: (707) 428-1848

www.NBSIA.org

Contents

REQUIRED STEPS FOR WORKPLACES	3
Required Training – COVID-19	4
Required Postings – COVID-19	4
Federal Guidance/Directives – COVID-19:	5
US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	5
GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS & CHILD CARE	5
HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS AND DECISION-MAKING TOOLS FOR REOPENING	5
GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING	5
GUIDANCE TO PLAN, PREPARE, AND RESPOND	5
PREVENTION AND SUPPORT.....	6
OSHA.....	6
Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19	6
Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19)	6
Protecting Workers during a Pandemic	6
State Guidance/Directives – COVID-19:	7
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA - CALIFORNIA CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE.....	7
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH	7
Cal/OSHA	7
Local Guidance – COVID-19:	8
Napa County (Updated Regularly)	8
Solano County (Updated Regularly)	8
Yolo County (Updated Regularly)	9
Recommended Best Practices to Re-open Schools – COVID-19	10
Cushman & Wakefield - Recovery Readiness:.....	10
Alliant Insurance Services, Inc. Checklists:	10
CASBO State Risk Management Committee – Best Practices	10
All Topics currently in development to be released shortly	10
Training Materials	10
PROTECT YOURSELF	10
HOW TO SCREEN YOURSELF FOR SYMPTOMS	12
Supplemental Information - COPING WITH STRESS FOR WORKERS	13
Supplemental Information - CONFLICT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES FOR RESPONDING TO OTHERS	15

REQUIRED STEPS FOR WORKPLACES

From the State and Local orders – COVID-19

1) **Written Worksite Specific Plan:**

Local County Public Health will direct your workplace specific requirements, guided by the **State Public Health Checklist** (highlights herein) and CDC Recommendations.

- The person(s) responsible for implementing the plan.
- A risk assessment and the measures that will be taken to prevent spread of the virus.
- Training and communication with employees and employee representatives on the plan.
- A process to check for compliance and to document and correct deficiencies.
- A process to investigate COVID-cases, alert the local health department, and identify and isolate close workplace contacts of infected employees until they are tested.

2) **Employee Training:**

- Information on COVID-19
- Preventing the Spread
- Vulnerable/High Risk Individuals
- Self-Screening Instructions/Symptom Checks based on the CDC Guidelines.
- The importance of not coming to work if employees have a frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell, or if they or someone they live with have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- When to seek medical attention.
- The importance of hand washing.
- The importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work time

3) **Individual Control Measures & Screening:**

- Symptom screenings and/or temperature checks.
- Encourage workers who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.
- Encourage frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Provide disposable gloves to workers using cleaners and disinfectants if required. Consider gloves a supplement to frequent hand washing for other cleaning, tasks such as handling commonly touched items or conducting symptom screening.
- Strongly recommend cloth face covers.
- Close or increase distance between tables/chairs in breakrooms or provide break areas in open space to ensure physical distancing.
- Communicate frequently to customers that they should use face masks/covers.

4) **Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols:**

- Perform thorough cleaning in high traffic areas.
- Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces and personal work areas.
- Clean and sanitize shared equipment between each use.

- Clean touchable surfaces between shifts or between users, whichever is more frequent.
- Equip shared spaces with proper sanitation products, including hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes and ensure availability.
- Ensure that sanitary facilities stay operational and stocked at all times.
- Use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved list and follow product instructions and Cal/OSHA requirements.
- Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices before and after shifts and consider third-party cleaning companies.
- Install hands-free devices if possible.
- Consider upgrades to improve air filtration and ventilation.

5) Physical Distancing Guidelines:

- Implement measures to physically separate workers by at least six feet using measures such as physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs to indicate to where workers should stand).
- Reconfigure office spaces, cubicles, etc. and decrease maximum capacity for conference and meeting areas.
- Adjust in-person meetings, if they are necessary, to ensure physical distancing.
- Stagger employee breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, if needed.
- Reconfigure, restrict, or close common areas and provide alternative where physical distancing can be practiced.
- Limit the number of individuals riding in an elevator and ensure the use of face covers.
- Utilize work practices, when feasible and necessary, to limit the number of employees at the office at one time, such as telework and modified work schedules.

Required Training – COVID-19

- Training Information as required by the California Guidance, sourced from the CDC should be provided to all employees. The materials below contain optional supplemental information on Coping with Stress and De-escalation techniques when responding to others.
- Training Handout Materials**
- Training PowerPoint**

NEW ONLINE MODULE COMING SOON TO ALL NBSIA MEMBERS FROM TARGETSOLUTIONS

Required Postings – COVID-19

- Napa, Solano and Yolo County Social Distancing Protocol – See [Local Resources](#)
- Napa, Solano and Yolo County Required Posters – See [Local Resources](#)
- Entrance Symptom Screening Checklist - [Poster Template](#)

- [Workplace Safety Social Distancing Information - Poster Template](#)
- [CDC Available Print Materials](#) Federal Guidance/Directives – COVID-19:

US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers

- [Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- **[Interim guidance for employers with workers at high risk](#)** – updated: May 19, 2020

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS & CHILD CARE

- **[Guidance for Child Care, Schools, and Youth Sports](#)** – updated: May 19, 2020
- **[Interim Guidance for Resuming School and Day Camps](#)** – updated: May 19, 2020
- [Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [FAQs for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents](#)

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS AND DECISION-MAKING TOOLS FOR REOPENING

- **[Considerations for Opening Schools](#)** – updated: May 19, 2020
- [Schools decision tool](#)
- [Childcare decision tool](#)
- [Youth programs and camps decision tool](#)

Should you consider opening?

Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?

Is the school ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness?

Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

The purpose of this tool is to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.



GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Decision Tool](#)

GUIDANCE TO PLAN, PREPARE, AND RESPOND

- [K-12 schools and child care](#)
- [Child care programs that remain open](#)

- Worker safety and support

PREVENTION AND SUPPORT

- Talking with children about COVID-19
- Checklist for teachers and parents
- Tips for parents while school is out

OSHA

Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) developed this COVID-19 planning guidance based on traditional infection prevention and industrial hygiene practices. It focuses on the need for employers to implement engineering, administrative, and work practice controls and personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as considerations for doing so.

Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Employers of workers with potential occupational exposures to coronavirus should follow these practices:

- Assess the hazards to which workers may be exposed.
- Evaluate the risk of exposure.
- Select, implement, and ensure workers use controls to prevent exposure, including physical barriers to control the spread of the virus; social distancing; and appropriate personal protective equipment, hygiene, and cleaning supplies

Protecting Workers during a Pandemic

Principles of worker protection:

- Consistently practice social distancing.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Maintain hand hygiene.
- Clean surfaces frequently

State Guidance/Directives – COVID-19:

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA - CALIFORNIA CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

Businesses may use effective alternative or innovative methods to build upon the guidelines. Review the guidance that is relevant to your workplace, prepare a plan based on the guidance for your industry, and put it into action.

When complete, you can post the industry-specific checklist (below) in your workplace.

Before reopening, all facilities **must**:

1. Perform a detailed risk assessment and implement a site-specific protection plan
2. Train employees on how to limit the spread of COVID-19, including how to screen themselves for symptoms and stay home if they have them
3. Implement individual control measures and screenings
4. Implement disinfecting protocols
5. Implement physical distancing guidelines

It is critical that employees needing to self-isolate because of COVID-19 are encouraged to stay at home, with sick leave policies to support that, to prevent further infection in your workplace. See additional information on government programs supporting sick leave and worker's compensation for COVID-19.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

- [COVID-19 Updates](#)
- [California Department of Public Health - School Guidance on Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19, March 7, 2020](#)

Cal/OSHA

- [Cal/OSHA Interim General Guidelines on Protecting Workers from COVID-19](#)
- [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 General Checklist for Office Workspaces](#)
- [This Guidance for Office Workspaces](#) provides guidelines to create a safer environment for workers.

Review the guidance, prepare a plan, and post the checklist for office workspaces in your workplace to show customers and employees that you've reduced the risk and are open for business.

Local Guidance – COVID-19:

County variance Local health jurisdictions that meet the criteria set forth by the California Department of Public Health and follow the process in the [county guidance](#) may move further ahead in Stage 2 of the [resilience roadmap](#).

- [Track your County's Data](#)
- [CDC Directory for Health Departments](#)

Employee Safety

For assistance in answering the following questions please find your county guidelines below.

- How will your business screen employees for illness? What is your plan if an employee becomes ill during a shift? What actions will be taken if an employee reports illness?
- How will your business contribute to contact-tracing if notified that an employee or client has tested positive for COVID-19?
- Who will be the designated person in charge for COVID-19 contact tracing at your business?
- Does your business have flexible time-off/sick-leave policies in place?
- Can your business compartmentalize employees into groups/shifts that do not interact with each other?
- What measures will you implement for hand hygiene for employees, customers, and worksite visitors and how will this be maintained?

Napa County (Updated Regularly)

[Napa County Public Health](#)

[Napa County Office of Education](#)

[Essential, Outdoor, & Additional Businesses in Napa County May 18, 2020](#)

[Social Distancing Protocol for Essential Businesses](#)

Signage at each public entrance of the facility to inform all employees and customers that they should:

- avoid entering the facility if they have COVID-19 symptoms
- maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another
- sneeze and cough into a cloth or tissue or, if not available, into one's elbow
- wear face coverings, as appropriate
- and not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact.

Solano County (Updated Regularly)

[Solano County Public Health](#)

[Solano County Office of Education](#)

[Masking Guidelines](#)

Reopening Guidance

Yolo County (Updated Regularly)

Yolo County Public Health

Yolo County Office of Education

Shelter-in-Place Order

All businesses with a facility in the County, except Essential Businesses as defined below in Section 10, are required to cease all activities at facilities located within the County except Minimum Basic Operations, as defined in Section 10. For clarity, businesses may also continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors performing activities at their own residences (i.e., working from home). All Essential Businesses are strongly encouraged to remain open. To the greatest extent feasible, Essential Businesses shall comply with Social Distancing Requirements as defined in Section 10 below, including, but not limited to, when any customers are standing in line.

Social Distancing Order

For purposes of this Order, “Social Distancing Requirements” includes maintaining at least six-foot social distancing from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands.

Face Covering Order

The purpose of this Order is to require a Face Covering, as defined in Section 4, below, in a variety of different settings that present a transmission risk for the COVID-19 virus.

By way of example only, this Order is intended to promote safety in the following settings:

- For individuals engaging in Essential Activities;
- For individuals visiting and working at Essential Businesses;
- For individuals seeking care at Healthcare Operations or while engaging in certain types of public transit or transportation; and
- For those working at or seeking services from entities engaged in Essential Infrastructure work, Minimum Basic Operations, or Essential Government Functions.

Altogether, the intent of the requirements set forth in this Order is to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the public health impact of the virus. All provisions of this Order must be interpreted to effectuate this intent.

Recommended Best Practices to Re-open Schools – COVID-19

Cushman & Wakefield - Recovery Readiness:

- [A How-To Guide for Reopening Your Workplace](#)
- [The safe six checklist](#)

Alliant Insurance Services, Inc. Checklists:

- [Alliant Education Workplace Reopening Essentials Checklist](#)
- [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Facilities](#)
- [Business Reopening Plan Checklist-Communication](#)
- [Business Reopening Plan Checklist-Disinfection](#)
- [Business Reopening Plan Checklist-Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Business Reopening Plan Checklist-Property](#)
- [Business Reopening Plan Checklist-Staffing & Training](#)
- [Business Reopening Plan Checklist-Supplies](#)

CASBO State Risk Management Committee – Best Practices

All Topics currently in development to be released shortly

Training Materials

PROTECT YOURSELF:

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 illness. More information on [Are you at higher risk for serious illness](#).

Know how it spreads

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Steps Everyone Should Take

Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home. If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.
- Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
- Do not gather in groups.
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.
- Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
 - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover coughs and sneezes

- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect

- [CDC/EPA Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance](#)
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.

The Healthy Schools Act requires additional training for all school employees using disinfectants

California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) - [Training Online](#) – simple registration, free courses available. *Basic IPM for the Classroom and Office Environment.*

HOW TO SCREEN YOURSELF FOR SYMPTOMS:

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fsymptoms-testing%2Findex.html

What you need to know

- Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms.
- Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

Watch for symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms* may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention

Look for emergency warning signs* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

Caring for yourself or others

- [How to protect yourself](#)
- [How to care for someone who is sick](#)
- [What to do if you are sick](#)

More Information

- [Older Adults](#)
- [People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](#)

Supplemental Information - COPING WITH STRESS FOR WORKERS:

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/mental-health-non-healthcare.html>

Whether you are going into work or working from home, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably changed the way you work. Fear and anxiety about this new disease and other strong emotions can be overwhelming, and workplace stress can lead to burnout. How you cope with these emotions and stress can affect your well-being, the well-being of the people you care about, your workplace, and your community. During this pandemic, it is critical that you recognize what stress looks like, take steps to build your resilience and manage job stress, and know where to go if you need help.

Recognize the symptoms of stress you may be experiencing

- Feeling irritation, anger or in denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed

- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

Know the common work-related factors that can add to stress during a pandemic

- Concern about the risk of being exposed to the virus at work
- Taking care of personal and family needs while working
- Managing a different workload
- Lack of access to the tools and equipment needed to perform your job
- Feeling that you are not contributing enough to work or guilt about not being on the frontline
- Uncertainty about the future of your workplace and/or employment
- Learning new communication tools and dealing with technical difficulties
- Adapting to a different workspace and/or work schedule

Follow these tips to build resilience and manage job stress

- Communicate with your coworkers, supervisors, and employees about job stress while maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet).
 - Identify things that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.
 - Talk openly with employers, employees, and unions about how the pandemic is affecting work. Expectations should be communicated clearly by everyone.
 - Ask about how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- Identify those things which you do not have control over, and do the best you can with the resources available to you.
- Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible — ideally one that is similar to your schedule before the pandemic:
 - Keep a regular sleep schedule.
 - Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, coworkers, family, and friends.
 - Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
 - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
 - Practice mindfulness techniques.
 - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.
- Know the facts about COVID-19. Be informed about how to protect yourself and others. Understanding the risk and sharing accurate information with people you care about can reduce stress and help you make a connection with others.
- Remind yourself that each of us has a crucial role in fighting this pandemic.
- Remind yourself that everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting.

- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns, how you are feeling, or how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting you.
 - Connect with others through phone calls, email, text messages, mailing letters or cards, video chat, and social media.
 - Check on others. Helping others improves your sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as depression and anxiety.
- If you feel you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescription drugs) as a means of coping, reach out for help.
- If you are being treated for a mental health condition, continue with your treatment and be aware of any new or worsening symptoms.

Know where to go if you need help or more information

If you feel you or someone in your household may harm themselves or someone else:

- ❖ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Toll-free number 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
- ❖ The Online Lifeline Crisis Chat is free and confidential. You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area.
- ❖ National Domestic Violence Hotline: Call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224
- ❖ If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety:
- ❖ Disaster Distress Helpline: Call 1-800-985-5990 or Text TalkWithUs to 66746
- ❖ Check with your employer for information about possible employee assistance program resources.
- ❖ If you need to find treatment or mental health providers in your area: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Find Treatment

Mental Health Resources:

- ❖ CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19) Stress and Coping
- ❖ American Psychological Association
- ❖ National Alliance on Mental Illness

COVID-19 Resources:

- ❖ NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic
- ❖ CDC COVID-19
- ❖ CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | Website: [cdc.gov/info](https://www.cdc.gov/info)

Supplemental Information - CONFLICT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES FOR RESPONDING TO OTHERS:

Source: <https://vividlearningsystems.com/safety-toolbox/conflict-de-escalation-techniques>

First, calm yourself before interacting with the person:

- If you're upset, it's only going to escalate the situation. Calm down and then begin to look at the situation and how you can intervene safely.
- Take a deep breath.
- Use a low, dull tone of voice and don't get defensive even if the insults are directed at you.

Becoming aware of your situation is also critically important. This can include:

- Other people in the room,
- Objects; such as chairs, tables, items on a table,
- And the space around you, like exits or openings, and if you are blocking the person so that they are made to feel trapped.

Try to look as non-threatening as possible:

- Appear calm and self-assured even if you don't feel it.
- Maintain limited eye contact and be at the same eye level. Encourage the customer to be seated, but if he/she needs to stand, stand up also.
- Maintain a neutral facial expression.
- Place your hands in front of your body in an open and relaxed position.
- Don't shrug your shoulders.
- Don't point your fingers at the person.
- Avoid excessive gesturing, pacing, fidgeting, or weight shifting.
- Maintain a public space distance, which is 12 feet or more.

Make a personal connection. Something as simple as asking, "What's your name?" can diffuse a situation quickly:

- People respond positively to their own name and can make the dialogue more personal.

Listening to the persons concerns. - Acknowledge the other person's feelings without passing judgment on them:

- Empathy needs to be shown during conflict situations. Even if you do not agree with the person's position, expressing an understanding why that person feels a particular way will help resolve the conflict.
- Clarifying, paraphrasing and open-ended questions all help to ensure that the person is aware you have understood their frustrations completely.
- Ask to take notes.
- Ask for their ideas or solutions.
- Help them talk out angry feelings rather than act on them.

Shift the conversation to the future, create hope, and you make yourself less threatening:

- Using "what" and "we" helps include the person in those future plans.

ARTICLE: [5 Things "Difficult" People Are Really Saying](#)